



Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

COMMUNICATOR

Bi-Monthly Publication of the Communications Committee

Administration: (301) 474-4161 • Maintenance: (301) 474-6011

E-mail: mgmtoffice@greenbelthomes.net • www.ghi.coop

© 2009 - Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

INSIDE

President's Message	2
Board Contact Information	2
Board Highlights	3
Cooperative Roles	4
Energy Audit Status	4
Finance Committee Budget Recommendations	5
Winter Tips	6
Who's Who at GHI	6
Verizon FiOS Coming to GHI	7
GHI Maintenance Corner	7
It's A Date	8
Maintenance Schedule	8
How to Submit Articles	8

ANNUAL PICNIC IS FUN FOR ALL

BY SYLVIA LEWIS

On a bright, breezy Sunday on October 4, nearly 200 GHI members, staff and friends gathered to share good food and fellowship. The Annual Picnic was planned by the Member and Community Relations (MC&R) Committee whose members worked hard to make every one from the



newest to the most senior members have a good time. A special award was given to Cindy Cutright, outgoing Chair of the Committee who, for several years, has overseen the picnic as well as GHI's participation in Greenbelt's Labor Day Festival and other events.

The picnic is also a time for local politicians, incumbents and challengers to get to know more about our great cooperative, and our members as usual were glad to tell them their hopes and concerns. State Legislator Anne Healey, County Council representative Ingrid Turner, and Nicki Schoultz, special assistant to Senator Mikulski, made the rounds among the tables, talking to everyone who was there. This year Mayor J. Davis, Greenbelt City Council members Leta Mach and Ed Putens, and challengers Emmett Jordan and Silkie Pope spent the afternoon socializing and finding out what our members would like to see from the new seven-member Council in the coming years.

Many factors went into the success of the picnic which was well planned by the Member and Community Relations Committee. The Cozy Kitchen in Thurmont provided great food; staff member Lenner Garner played music with the aid of satellites, his computer, CDs, and other wonders of the age; and staff member Lawrence Brady helped with heavy lifting. The M&CR committee members are: Cindy Cutright, Chair; Ed James, Board Liaison; Dorothea Leslie, Liz Welwas, Frank DeBernardo, Jane Menis, Irvin Wartell, Sarah Headley and staff liaison Joan Krob. A very big thank you to you all!

IMPORTANT:
Lock Out Policy insert.

Please complete and return to GHI.



Have an idea for a story?
Send GHI your story ideas. See page 8 for submission information.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY SUZETTE AGANS

GHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS:

Suzette Agans
President
(202) 460-1532
suzflower@yahoo.com

Patricia Novinski
Vice President
(301) 982-4488
novinski@aol.com

Ed James
Secretary
(301) 345-8479
edjames@greenbelt.com
edward.james@gmail.com

Sylvia Lewis
Treasurer
(301) 474-3635
revs.lew@verizon.net

DIRECTORS:

David Morse
(301) 938-2909
Voxfatui@aol.com

Diana McFadden
(301) 474-6787
Bowregard2003@yahoo.com

Ed Hickey
(301) 220-1966
Ronnie_ed@verizon.net

Errol Mazursky
(571) 262-9101
errol@elpnet.org

Tokey Boswell
(319) 331-2144
tokeyray@netscape.net

Communicator Staff

Ann-Marie Saucier: Editor/Layout
Kristi Fletcher: Copy Editor
Marat Moore: Editor
David Morse: Editor
Brenda Lewis: GHI Staff Support

Questions? Contact 301-474-4161 ext. 152 or blewis@greenbelthomes.net

Dear Fellow Members,

It seems that the financial turmoil occurring in the greater world is visiting us. The report by Treasurer, Sylvia Lewis, shows times are getting tough as the county and state seek to find sources of revenue. And the time of turmoil is now upon us. There are unknowns about our property taxes and unknowns about the how, when, if and what will be upgraded with rehab. This is where communication becomes vital. Board Member Tokey Boswell's article is one such communication, as it reminds us of the mechanisms that are in place to help us govern ourselves.

The elected Board of Directors works hard to ensure accurate communications occur with the greater membership. And yes I agree that sometimes GHI slips-- but it is always working to improve communications. The *Communicator* is one way GHI helps keep you, the membership informed. The Board also relies on Court Liaisons, email listservs via the yahoo groups, greenbelters and the greenbelt community, *Greenbelt News Review* and US postal service. Is this enough? It never seems to be enough. But you can do your part by keeping informed of events affecting your membership and GHI. The hard-working Communications Committee is exploring new means to keep you up-to-date so that GHI Board and staff can continue to share accurate information with the membership.

I hope you enjoy, learn from and discuss this latest issue of the *Communicator*.

See you around town,

Suzette M. Agans



Get Involved! Join a Committee!

- To join a committee, call Member Services at 301-474-4161 ext. 138 and ask for an application form or download a Personal Data Form from the website at www.ghi.coop by clicking on Committees.
- To be a Court Liaison, call Member Services 301-474-4161, ext. 138.
- To run for office, contact the Nomination and Elections Committee.
- To submit a "Bright Idea" e-mail Sylvia Lewis at revs.lew@verizon.net or at mgmtoffice@greenbelthomes.net or call 301-474-3635.

BOARD MEETING AND HIGHLIGHTS

The GHI Board meetings are held in the Board Room of the GHI Administration Building. Meetings are usually held twice a month on Thursday evenings, except during the summer when meetings are held once a month. Please check the calendar on the GHI website for details. With the exception of executive sessions, all meetings are open to the membership. During August 2009, the Board took the following actions:

Policies

- Revised the policy relating to the Fee Deferral Program, which enabled participating members to defer a portion of their monthly GHI fees by incurring a debt with GHI. (*Note: This program stopped issuing new loans some years ago*). The new policy changes the terms of the loan with GHI. If members with deferred loans with GHI want to refinance share loans (with outside lenders) on their units, they must either repay the GHI fee deferral loans in full at the time they refinance, or pay a new interest rate on the GHI loans – the going market rate – at compound interest – until the entire debt to is repaid.
- Approved changes to the rules pertaining to exterior painting (*insert enclosed with this issue for your Member's Handbook*).

Committee Reports and Referrals

- Architectural Review Committee examined existing rules in the Members' Handbook regarding fence heights and size limitations for sheds. The committee agreed that the current fence height of 42" and current size of wood sheds are appropriate.
- The Marketing Committee asked for a survey of former GHI guesthouse patrons during the past year to determine whether they would be willing to pay for additional services and amenities, such as Internet service.
- The Buildings Committee is working closely with the consulting firm *Ardently Green* on an energy audit as a preliminary step to crafting a long-range plan for energy and infrastructure upgrades.

Exceptions to Regulations

- Approved the installation of a two-board fence at 7F Southway and an at-grade deck to replace an existing masonry and wood patio.

Contracts Awarded

- For repairs of 5 Woodland Way - (Greenbelt Builders, Inc. \$22,971).
- For structural and plumbing repairs at 2C/2D Gardenway- (Greenbelt Builders, Inc. \$11,900).

Other Items

- Discontinued the Quarterly EZ Pay Drawing, which awarded prizes as an incentive to participation.
- Approved yard plats for 5 Court Gardenway, 7 Court Southway, and 56 B-J Crescent Road.
- Rejected a request from gardeners of Plot 11 in the City of Greenbelt-owned Hamilton Gardens to purchase water from GHI.
- Negotiated with Verizon on the appropriate placement of FDT boxes to accommodate the FiOS network to GHI homes (see story in this issue).

REVIEW THE MEMBER HANDBOOK!

The Architectural Review Committee (ARC) would like to remind you to *review the Members' Handbook BEFORE planning any changes to your home or yard*. This will save you – and GHI as well – time, money, and energy if you are thereby able to avoid seeking exceptions to GHI rules. (Every exception must be evaluated by both ARC and the Board of Directors and requires you to personally appear before both bodies. Careful planning, moreover, can help you limit the scope of your permit request, which may make it more likely to be approved). The handbook is available online at www.ghi.coop.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR ROLE IN THE COOPERATIVE?

BY TOKEY BOSWELL, GHI BOARD MEMBER

Everyone who is part of GHI has a role to play. The future success of the co-op depends on all members fulfilling their roles.

The Board of Directors protects the co-op's assets and sets direction for the co-op's future. We decide when additions should be allowed and how our homes should be heated. We make sure there is an adequate maintenance fund, and that it's invested appropriately. We accept or deny new members. Our role is to look at the big picture and represent the best interests of the membership as a whole.

The role of GHI management and staff is to implement the Board's decisions, and to keep things functioning smoothly day to day. They hire people and assign projects and tasks that need to be completed. The general manager, human resources director, chief financial officer, director of maintenance, and other managers keep the board informed about the co-op's operations and bring up any emerging concerns. Staff takes your calls and keeps your plumbing and electrical services in good working order. They are usually the ones who can answer your questions and respond to your concerns.



And you, as a member, have a role to fill, too! In addition to paying your co-op fees, being a responsible neighbor, and voting, your job is to *let us know what is going on!* There's much more to it than that, of course, and we'll talk more about members' roles in future issues of the *Communicator*.

Good decisions for GHI's future depend on adequate information, and you have a crucial role to play in providing that information. Staff, management, and the Board can't fix problems we don't know about, and we can't address issues that we haven't thought of. If you have thoughts on the future of GHI, find a Board member and talk about it! Thank you for being good cooperators, and for helping GHI management and directors to do their best.

STATUS OF ENERGY AUDIT OF GHI UNITS

BY ELDON RALPH

In April 2009, GHI hired Ardently Green, a Virginia-based consulting firm, to undertake a comprehensive energy audit of six GHI units comprised of one-middle and one end-unit for each of the frame, block and brick home groups. Ardently Green submitted its draft report in August. The audit involved a study of existing conditions in the six units, with recommendations for upgrades to the building envelope, insulation, heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. The draft report can be viewed on GHI's website at <http://www.ghi.coop/bldgs/index.htm>.

The Buildings Committee has reviewed the draft report and suggested changes that Ardently Green should incorporate in its final report. After Ardently Green submits its final report, the Buildings Committee will present recommendations to the Board of Directors on energy system and other improvements that should be considered for implementation. Members are encouraged to attend meetings of the Buildings Committee to participate in discussions on this topic. Meetings are generally held on the fourth Wednesday of every month in the GHI Administration Building Boardroom at 7.00 p.m.

Congratulations to our Labor Day Winners!

GHI won fourth place for Booth Entry. **Anthony Bates** was the winner of the 50/50 Lego guessing game, and took home \$32 as his share of the take. There were 279 Legos in the jar and Anthony's guess was 274. **Georgia Cornelison**, who resides in Greenbriar, took home the "Taste of Greenbelt" basket. She was ecstatic and confided that someday she plans to purchase membership in GHI as she finds our part of town so interesting.

Yardline FAQs on the Web

To help members understand the yard line process, the Ad Hoc Yard Line Committee has collected members' Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Together with answers, these FAQ's are on the web site at ghi.coop/YL/FAQ.htm.

FINANCE COMMITTEE TO MAKE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

BY SYLVIA LEWIS, TREASURER

In November the Board will vote on GHI's 2010 budget. The Finance Committee's review and recommendations are an important part of the decision-making process. GHI's major expenses fall into three categories: maintenance of our homes, staff salaries and benefits, and real estate taxes.

We all know that our housing stock is aging. Replacement of major components is paid for by the Replacement Reserve Fund, but the day-to-day repairs come out of the operating fund. This is an area we cannot skimp on. (Major rehab and upgrades are not included in the 2010 budget, but will be determined after the Board reviews the recommendations of the Buildings Committee and receives member input. See story on Buildings Committee project on energy audits on page 4.

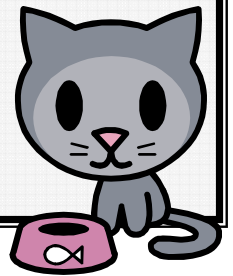
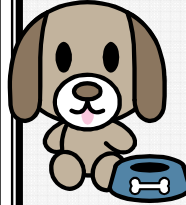
Staff salaries and benefits are a major factor in the budget. GHI has always prided itself on being a good employer. This is not only part of the philosophy of our cooperative, it is also necessary if we are to maintain a skilled and dedicated work force. Our staff does not receive cost of living or seniority salary increases. Salary increases are earned through an objective work performance review. We can control the size of the work force and limit salary increases, but the uncertainty of health care costs creates a greater challenge.

We urge you to come to the Board meetings to make your views known as the Finance Committee considers these factors in crafting its recommendations.

Green Companion Animal Tips of the Month

Adopt From a Shelter and Spay/Neuter

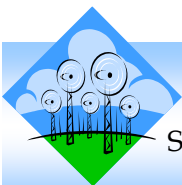
Some breeders have only one goal – to raise large quantities of purebred animals for profit. They have also gained notoriety for such misdeeds as overbreeding, inbreeding, poor veterinary oversight, lousy food and living conditions, overcrowding, and destruction of unwanted animals. Love knows no pedigree. Check out Petfinder.com to find your perfect match. Spaying and neutering not only mitigates the overpopulation problem. It also allows dogs and cats to live longer, healthier lives by eliminating the possibility of uterine, ovarian, and testicular cancer and by decreasing the incidence of prostate disease.



Why I Love Living in GHI



"People walk around with guitars and sit in trees and sing and nobody cares. You can sing loudly for no apparent reason."



Want wind power? Want to save money? Want to support Greenbelt?

Your choice has never been easier.

Sign up with Clean Currents today and lock in low-cost green power for 1 or 2 years.

Visit: <http://ghi.coop/SDP/factsheets.htm> for full details or call 301-474-4161 x132

STAYING WARM AND SAVING MONEY: TIPS FOR WEATHERING WINTER

BY MATT BERRES

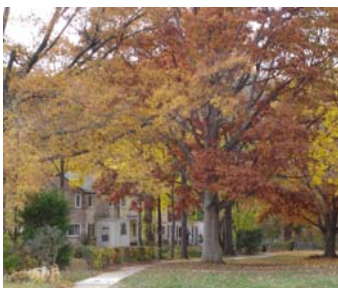
The winter heating season is just around the corner. Make sure you are ready. Here are a few simple tips that will save you money and keep you more comfortable.

- Remove air conditioners from windows for winter months. This is the single best way to cut down on cold drafts and lower heating bills.
- Seal and insulate through-the-wall air conditioners. Close the fresh air intake (if so equipped), install an exterior draft cover and/or interior blanket, and check the frame around the unit for cracks to caulk.
- Check each exterior door's weather-stripping. If you see light or feel drafts around the door call Maintenance to service the weather-stripping.
- Check your mail slot (if present) for leaks. Install self-stick foam around the lip or consider sealing the entire opening and installing an exterior mailbox.
- Weather-strip or seal your attic opening. An attic stairway is a energy gobble that allows warm air to escape. Installing self-adhesive foam around the lip of the pull down stair panel is a low-cost solution.
- Maximize the efficiency and performance of your baseboard heaters. Keep furniture and other items away from the heaters. The more air that gets to the heating element, the more heat is dispersed. Use a vacuum with a brush attachment to remove dust, pet hair and dirt from the heating element. Dust build-up will significantly reduce heater effectiveness.

For more tips and more details visit:

<http://ghi.coop/SDP/winterenergytips.pdf>

(Fall photo contributed by Philippe Orlando, Ridge Rd.)



WHO'S WHO AT GHI

BY BRENDA LEWIS

Shawnta Cermeno

Shawnta is the Administrative Assistant for the very busy Maintenance Department. She started working for GHI in September 2008. When you meet her you will find a very focused and customer service-oriented person who inspires confidence. GHI was the first position she took after returning from New Mexico. She especially likes her easy commute.



Shawnta is an exceptional designer and seamstress of children's clothing, which she sells on eBay and area boutiques. Her designs are popular, and she is sure she could win Project Runway - if they would let her specialize in children's clothing.

She also has begun a new hobby - photography, which she combines with her seamstress skills by taking photographs of her family and friends wearing her original clothing designs.

Shawnta and her husband Mike just celebrated their fifth wedding anniversary. They love spending time with their two daughters, Kaitlynn and Mica, and have just added an adorable kitten, Maxie, to the family. In the future, they want to visit Disneyland - when the girls are old enough.

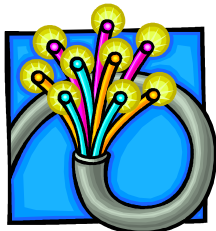
Shawnta finds GHI members to be very enthusiastic and environmentally aware. She wants you to know that she will always do her best - and looks forward to greeting you on the telephone or in person when you call or visit the Maintenance Department.

VERIZON FIOS COMING TO GHI

BY ELDON RALPH

GHI has entered into an agreement with Verizon for that company to install a fiber optic network within our community that will allow individual members to subscribe to Verizon's video, voice, and broadband Internet services. The agreement was signed after Verizon surveyed the entire cooperative and submitted detailed drawings to GHI that describe the methods of installation for the FiOS network.

At most locations, overhead fiber optic cable will be routed from utility poles to a Fiber Distribution Terminal (FDT) box, which will be attached to one unit in each row of buildings. At twenty-two buildings, however, the fiber optic cable will be routed underground and connected to the FDT boxes. On frame units, the FDT boxes will be mounted on or next to outside electric meter panels. For masonry units, they will be installed inside abandoned boiler rooms. Fiber optic cables will be routed from FDT boxes through the crawl spaces beneath the units.



When a member decides to subscribe to Verizon's FiOS services, a Verizon technician will install an Optical Network Terminal (ONT) box inside an interior closet; drill a hole through the floor of the unit; connect the fiber optic cable to the ONT box and connect the service outlets inside the unit to the ONT box.

Verizon proposes to begin construction of the FIOS network infrastructure before the end of this year and complete it within an eight-month period.

As soon as Verizon provides the information to GHI, members will be given more specific details on the project such as its start date; the dates that FiOS cable will be connected to specific buildings, and the locations where cable will be routed underground.

MAINTENANCE CORNER: HELP GHI HELP YOU

BY MATT BERRÉS

The GHI Maintenance Department's goal is to provide high-quality building services to you, the membership. Every day we respond to your service calls and strive to resolve requests in a timely fashion. But we can't solve problems we don't know about. We need your help.

Sometimes simple service calls become complicated challenges because problems have gone unreported for days, weeks, or months. For instance, a leaking toilet caught early might take less than an hour to fix. A leaking toilet left unaddressed may result in extensive damage to floors, ceilings, and walls that require major and costly intervention.

Be a home detective and save time, money and unnecessary disturbances for you. Below are some simple items to monitor. Report any suspicious items immediately.

- Check under your kitchen and bathroom sink periodically. Are there drips or moisture?
- Check around the base of your toilet. Is there any moisture? Does the toilet rock or sag?
- Lift the toilet tank lid. Do the two tank bolts look rusted?
- Check each exterior door's weather-stripping. Do you see daylight around the closed door? GHI will evaluate and replace faulty weather-stripping.
- Check your shower/tub tile. Wall tile is a member responsibility. Loose grout and tile may cause major wall damage. Damage caused by failing tile can lead to expensive repairs for you
- Check your outdoor spigots. Remember to turn off the inside valve for the winter and drain the line. A frozen pipe is an expensive and avoidable repair.

If you see any problems or need clarification, contact the Maintenance Department at 301-474-4161 x127 or <http://ghi.coop/services.htm>

It's a Date: Nov-Dec 2009		
Nov 1	Companion Animal Com. Grief Support Member & Community Relations	7:00 pm 7:00 pm
Nov 5	Board of Directors Meeting	7:30 pm
Nov 7	Pre-Purchase Orientation	11:00 am
Nov 10	Ad Hoc Yard Line Committee	8:30 am
Nov 11	Veterans' Day - GHI Offices Closed	
Nov 16	Communications Committee Pre-Purchase Orientation	7:00 pm 7:15 pm
Nov 18	Woodlands Committee Finance Committee Marketing Committee Architectural Review Committee	7:00 pm 7:30 pm 7:30 pm 7:30 pm
Nov 19	Board of Directors Meeting	7:30 pm
Nov 25	Buildings Committee Companion Animal Committee	7:00 pm 7:30 pm
Nov 26-27	GHI Offices Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday	
Dec 1	Ad Hoc Yard Line Committee Pre-Purchase Orientation	8:30 am 7:15 pm
Dec 3	Board of Directors Meeting	7:30 pm
Dec 7	Companion Animal Committee Grief Support	7:00 pm
Dec 9	Marketing Committee	7:00 pm
Dec 16	Woodlands Committee Investment Committee Finance Committee N & E Committee Architectural Review Committee	7:00 pm 6:45 pm 7:30 pm 7:30 pm 7:30 pm
Dec 17	Board of Directors Meeting	7:30 pm
Dec 22	Ad Hoc Yard Line Committee	8:30 am

A Personal Thank You from Bryan

I want to thank all those who sent cards, called or sent e-mails when I was recovering from a heart attack. My experience is that you can never give kindness away because it always comes back to you in some way. Your thoughts and prayers are appreciated.

I have often said that there are three work rules: "Show up," "Do your best," and "Never quit." Well, after 29 years I guess I have to add another: "Rest." I have learned a lot and want everyone to know that I appreciate the get-well wishes.

-Bryan Crick

Maintenance Department Notice:

Maintenance reception desk is **CLOSED** for lunch between 12-1 pm daily.

You can reach the main front desk reception for emergency calls during that time.

COMMUNICATOR SUBMISSIONS:

Please submit information for the next issue to Brenda Lewis at blewis@greenbelthomes.net (do not submit to individual committee members).

November 20 is the due date for articles for January/February issue.

GHI Maintenance Schedule	
2009	
Oct-Nov	Fall Concrete Repairs
Nov-Dec	Fall Gutter Cleaning
2010	
Apr-Sept	Slate Roofs, Copper Gutters and Downspouts
May-Sept	Community Beautification Inspections
May-Aug	Trim Painting
May-June	Spring Gutter Cleaning
May-June	Spring Concrete Repairs
June-July	Addition Roof Repairs
July-Aug	Underground Utility Repairs
July-Sept	Parking Lot Repairs

Free Notary Services Available at GHI

GHI has several staff members who can provide GHI members with notary services. Call 301-474-4161 and ask the reception desk if a notary is available prior to coming to the Administration Building. No charges are made for the services.

SUBMIT YOUR PICTURES



We are looking for pictures showing Greenbelt, GHI, and the surrounding areas to be used throughout Greenbelt and in GHI publications. Credit will be given.

For details, contact Brenda Lewis at blewis@greenbelthomes.net.

When submitting pictures, please submit them in the following formats: JPEGs or TIF file format, at least 250 resolution, and please include your name and address. If you do not have an electronic copy of your photo, please let the GHI main office know and they will assist you with scanning.