



Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

COMMUNICATOR

Bi-Monthly Publication of the Communications Committee

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The Annual Community Beautification Program begins Monday, May 17
Visit www.ghi.coop/community/ for more information.



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

GHI ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MAY 19, 7:30 P.M.

BY: DAVID MORSE

Okay, some of you probably have never attended a GHI Annual Meeting. The very phrase may make you yawn. Even now, your eyelids are getting heavy. You’re thinking, “Why am I reading this?” Or perhaps, “Why should I go? What’s in it for me?”

Read on – there actually are a few good things in it for you:

You can vote to build your community. *Still smarting from Bush v. Gore?* Think voting makes little difference? Please think again. This is your home, your neighborhood, your cooperative. You can help make things work – and make them work for *you* – by participating.

This is “small-d” democracy, folks. There are no vast political machines blasting you with TV ads and robo-calls. A GHI candidate might be your next-door-neighbor. You can choose people whose judgment you respect. You are in charge. A few votes one way or another can decide a contest.

Of all the things in your life outside your control, this is not one of them!

- **You can schmooze.** Catch up with old acquaintances, make new ones, discuss the candidates or the issues, or compare how your shrubs fared after the big snow. Or not. It’s up to you.
- **You can learn** about the Buildings Committee’s work on energy-saving upgrades and what other committees are doing by visiting their display tables.
- **You can decide** who you will vote for after listening to candidates for Board of Directors and Audit Committee give brief presentations about themselves. You’ll also be deciding on proposed bylaws changes.
- **You can pick out a native plant from** the Woodlands Committee at their annual plant giveaway.
- **You can win a DOOR PRIZE!** Three lucky winners will each receive \$100 off their monthly co-op fee. Four more will get a \$25 coupon for the Co-op supermarket. And five members will each get a \$20 coupon for the New Deal Café. But you have to show up to win!

But wait – there’s more. The winners of GHI’s first-ever Haiku Contest (the only one on the planet sponsored by a housing cooperative) will be crowned at the Communications Table!

For details about the upcoming election and pre-election events, see the chart on p. 7.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY SUZETTE AGANS

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IN SEARCH OF ...

**Are you between the ages of 20 and 59,
looking for an affordable home
in a well-maintained and active community?**

Does this sound like someone you know? Statistically, it describes our newest GHI members. Most 2009 buyers of GHI homes learned about the cooperative through family, friends and co-workers. GHI members – that means *you*-- have the greatest impact in promoting GHI homes.

Interesting facts about the 67 buyers in 2009:

They said they chose their unit because of unit size or the presence of an addition. Very few bought because of factors such as an attached garage, central air conditioning, a basement, large bedrooms, price, or hardwood floors.

Other facts:

- They chose to live in Greenbelt because of the community, proximity to work and nearby family.
- 50 percent of the new members work in Washington, D.C.
- 12 newcomers are teachers, 5 are data analysts, 3 are statisticians, researchers and library media specialists - occupation categories called "knowledge workers."
- Yearly household income varied: 24 percent were in the \$20-49,000 range, 39 percent were in the \$50-79,000 range, and 33 percent in the \$80-100,000 range. (Average household income in the DC area is \$85,000 and in Greenbelt the average is \$62,000).
- 60 of the 67 units sold will have 1 or 2 occupants.
- Homes sold for an average of \$170,000 for masonry homes and \$130,000 for frame homes.

One conclusion: It seems that in 2009, GHI attracted knowledge workers with middle-level incomes comparable to the region's average, who value community, family, and friends, and who desired the maintenance services GHI provides.

I moved to GHI in 2004 because, like any good knowledge worker, once I verified the data, I knew it was the right place for me.

See you around town,
Suzette M. Agans
President

Occupational and qualitative data from questionnaire filled out by new members and those leaving GHI. Data on income in Washington D.C. and Greenbelt from www.census.gov.

Communicator Staff

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

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

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 at 7:30 pm, except during the summer when meetings are held once a month. Please check the calendar on page 8 or the GHI website for details. With the exception of executive sessions, all meetings are open to the membership.

During January and February 2010, the Board took the following actions:

Policies

- Approved a budget of \$8,415,506 for 2010.
- Approved \$423,203 to renew the business owners' insurance package for 2010.
- Formed an ad hoc committee to review WSSC Pipe Replacement Project Plan.
- Reaffirmed the engagement of the auditing firm of Murphy & Murphy, CPA, LLC to perform the GHI/GDC consolidated audits for 2009 (the last year of a three-year contract for \$16,000).

Committee Reports, Referrals and Expenditures

- Approved an expenditure of up to \$3,000 for the Buildings Committee for measuring instruments to record environmental and energy consumption data in GHI units.
- Referred proposed rules regarding security equipment on GHI homes to the Architectural Review Committee.
- Received reports from the following committees: Companion Animal, Finance, Marketing, Communications, Member and Community Relations, Buildings and Architectural Review.

Exceptions to Regulations

- Approved a proposed gardenside addition at 14X Ridge Road.

Contracts Entered Into

- Renovation of 2D Northway Road: Greenbelt Builders, \$18,805.
- Reglazing of GHI bathtubs: Porcelain Tub Restoration, \$13,000
- Waste Removal at GHI compound from 6 cubic yard container: Allied Waste Removal, \$110/month.
- Waste Removal at GHI from 30 cubic yard container: Environmental Alternatives, \$371/per 5-ton load.

Other Items

- Approved 6 new memberships and 5 name changes to mutual ownership contracts.
- Approved yard plats for 8 Court Plateau Place, and 6 and 8 Courts Research Road.
- Received a report on the 2009 Community Beautification Program.

Updates to Your GHI Members' Handbook

Several changes/modifications were made to the rules and regulations during the latter part of 2009. Please place the inserts that are included with this issue of the *Communicator* into your Handbook to ensure that you have current information.

Remove page 61-90/62-90 -insert new page 61-09/62-09.

Remove page 62a07 -insert new page 62a-09/62b-09.

Remove page 63-09/63a-07 -insert new page 63-09/63a-07.

Remove page 63d-93/63e-98 -insert new page 63d-93/63e-09

Remove page 64-09/65-05 -insert new page 64-09/65-09

FREE-ROAMING CATS ARE A NUISANCE AND A DANGER

BY COMPANION ANIMAL COMMITTEE

The CAC receives more complaints about cats roaming free than any other type of member complaint about animals. However, it is against county, city and GHI regulations to let cats roam outdoors. Fines can be imposed and cats impounded with a hefty fee for redemption.

Not only is it a violation of these regulations, it is unsafe for roaming cats. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) estimates that the average life span of an outdoor cat is less than three years. Even indoor-outdoor cats face far shorter life spans on average than their safely confined counterparts. According to a survey by the HSUS, most veterinarians recommend keeping cats indoors, citing dangers from vehicles and disease. Other outdoor hazards include poisons, abuse from angry or disturbed people, extreme weather, fleas and other parasites, predation from dogs and wildlife and even theft (for example, individuals nab cats to sell for experimentation or to use as bait to train dogs forced to fight).



Additionally, free-roaming cats nationwide kill several hundred million songbirds and more than a billion small mammals and other wildlife annually. Some free-roaming domestic cats individually kill over 100 wild animals each year. Free-roaming cats also cause destruction to gardens and property.

Cats can and do live fulfilling, healthy and interesting lives inside the homes. Products such as harnesses, strollers and special cat enclosures also are available that will let your cat safely experience the great outdoors.

Be a good neighbor and a responsible guardian and keep your beloved feline companion safely indoors.

More information available from www.hsus.org.

GHI BRIGHT IDEAS

BY SYLVIA LEWIS

Blizzard conditions and ice caused lots of problems for GHI members just two months ago. Donna Hoffmeister, Court Liaison for 6 Court Plateau Place, was concerned with the ice formed from the melting snow that ran down into the rain garden. She asked, "Any chance that we could get a barrel from GHI, that we could keep filled with sand, to deal with the ice we seem to get with any snow fall whatsoever?"



Matt Berres (add his GHI title) listened to her concern and suggestion. He responded, "We tend to avoid sand, as cleanup afterwards can be arduous and the sediment will wash out into streams causing major turbidity problems." He did promise to do his best to contain ice melt runoff in that court and to get the backhoe in there to move more of the piled-up snow. Perhaps part of the review of this year's blizzard could include consideration of how members can pitch in to help ease the overall stress on the cooperative. Donna's proactive search for solutions could be passed on to other court liaisons and members.

To submit a "Bright Idea"
call 301-474-3635
or e-mail Sylvia Lewis
at revs.lew@verizon.net

or

mgmtoffice@greenbelthomes.net

EXCEPTIONS TO GHI REGULATIONS

BY ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Often members propose construction (for example, an addition, shed or fence) that departs from the guidelines in the GHI Rules and Regulations. The Board of Directors (BOD) has taken the individual member’s right to present alternate considerations into account with a process for dealing with exceptions.

The BOD must approve exceptions to the regulations. The generally accepted process is to request that a review of the exception and a recommendation from the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) to be presented to the BOD. The member must request that the ARC review the exception, stating in the request the applicable reasons why the exception should be allowed and including supporting documentation.



The member’s request will be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled ARC meeting. The member is given two opportunities to verbally present the rationale for the merits of the exception. After two no-shows of the member at two ARC meetings, the ARC will discuss and vote on the exception and send a recommendation to the BOD. Justification of the ARC recommendation with both pros and cons is presented to the BOD.

The exception will be placed on the agenda of the next available BOD meeting. BOD members will receive all documentation provided to the ARC as well as the ARC’s recommendation. The BOD will evaluate all documentation and the member’s verbal statements regarding the exception. On-site visits are made at the member’s unit prior to the meeting. The BOD decides on the exception request by making a motion and taking a vote using common parliamentary principles.

Meetings of the ARC and BOD are open to GHI members. Attending meetings shows the GHI cooperative in action.

Census Takers Coming to GHI in May

Census forms were misdelivered to most GHI homes. This requires a door-to-door follow-up, so census enumerators will be knocking on most GHI doors in early May. Even if you filled out and returned a form please help these workers verify the information for your address. The workers will have official IDs and only ask the questions that were on the original census form. (Census undercounts can have adverse consequences for the city, county, and state, including reduction of federal funds and representation in Congress.

GHI’s “Harbingers of Spring” Haiku Contest Winners

by Anna Socrates

We had so many lovely haikus to choose from, we chose TWO winners:

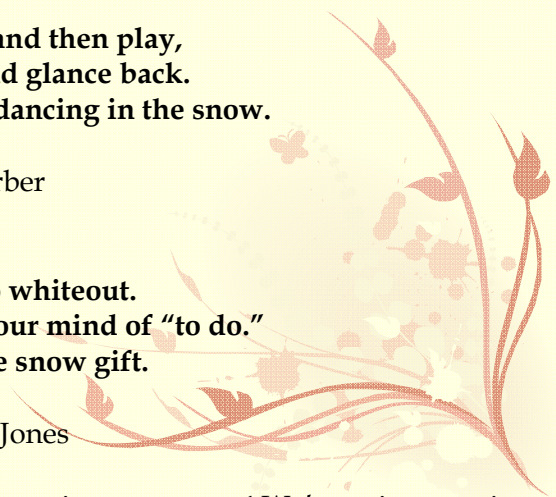
**A jump and then play,
a leap and glance back.
My dog dancing in the snow.**

Betsy Barber

**Peer into whiteout.
Empty your mind of “to do.”
Savor the snow gift.**

Elaine S. Jones

But everyone is a runner-up! We’re going to print all the entries in a booklet that we’ll hand out at the Communications Committee table at the annual meeting. We’ll also “crown” the two winners at the table.



WHAT IS GDC AND WHAT HAS IT GOT TO DO WITH GHI?

BY SYLVIA LEWIS

GDC is the Greenbelt Development Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of GHI formed in 1953. All the Directors of GHI also serve as the Board of GDC. According to its Mission Statement, the GDC *“exists as a benefit by which GHI acquires and manages property and businesses.”* It promises *“to strive to provide the highest quality services to its customers while returning a benefit to GHI. GDC will have a positive impact on and be a responsible member of the Community.”*

It was for this purpose that in 1953 GDC purchased two apartment buildings (Parkway Apartments), 52 garages, and some undeveloped land. GHI is able to expand its professional expertise by managing the GDC properties and returning the fees for this service to our cooperative. In addition GDC makes it possible for our cooperative to protect part of our larger community. The Greener Greenbelt Initiative, a partnership between GHI and two other organization that organized the 2007 charrette, envisioned an expansion of GDC properties and activity to benefit the environment and the financial health of GHI.

HOMESTEAD TAX CREDITS

In the future GHI members may have to apply individually for the Homestead Tax Credit. However, unlike non-cooperative homeowners, GHI has not yet received application forms and we have been informed that this tax credit is in place for us again this year. Members will be notified as soon as we have more information.

WHO'S WHO IN GHI: STAFF

BY BRENDA C. LEWIS, SPHR

Melvin Williams, Purchasing Agent

Melvin interviewed for his job five years ago, and noticed that GHI was very friendly. Although the warehouse can be a solitary place, he does not mind the quiet at all. But when he's not working, he prefers being the life of the party.



Melvin wants to leave his mark by taking ownership of his job here. Currently attending Kaplan University, Melvin has only a little more than a year before obtaining his degree in Business Management. His hobbies include light reading and playing computer action games. It is, therefore, no surprise to learn that *Avatar* and *The Dark Knight* are two of his favorite movies.

Melvin is single now, but when he is ready to start a family, he will be looking for someone with brains, realistic goals, and good values. And yes, she must be pretty too. Melvin's real-life hero was always his twin brother, Kevin, who died just a few years ago. He has an older brother, Andre, and one sister, Lela.

When asked about the one thing he wanted GHI members to know, his response was that he is happy to help at all times, and is dedicated to meeting your needs.

LESSONS FROM THE SNOWSTORMS

BY GRETCHEN OVERDUFF,
GHI GENERAL MAANGER



The big snow storms are behind us, and spring is finally here. We made history with the amount of snow that fell and learned some lessons, too!

Although GHI has a written snow removal plan and reviews the process for clearing each court at the beginning of each winter, we were not prepared to remove such large quantities with our in-house resources. Armed with 20 men, 4 plow trucks, and a backhoe, GHI maintenance staff worked tirelessly to open up all 150 courts. At times the task seemed impossible due to the deep drifts, lack of places to pile snow, and tightly configured courts. We understand how frustrating the situation was for many members, and it was equally frustrating for staff. But we all weathered the storms, and in the process we received many useful suggestions from members that will help us refine and enhance our emergency snow removal procedures.

Staff is looking into a way to communicate with all members in emergencies. Updates were posted on the Greenbelters' Yahoo group, but not everyone is a subscriber. Staff will be working with the city on issues of shared concern. The use of volunteers is being considered and the purchase of additional equipment will be budgeted for next year. Hiring the services of a contractor to assist staff during heavy snowfalls is a very expensive option that has been considered in the past. Current budgetary constraints have prohibited this option, however.

While the spring flowers are beginning to bloom, we have not forgotten the need to prepare for future emergencies. A task force has been created and a written snow removal plan will be presented to the Board sometime in the next few weeks. Please watch the *Greenbelt News Review* for future Board agenda topics, and the *Communicator* for a summary of the revised plan. We appreciate all your suggestions and ideas and thank you for your patience during the February blizzards.

Candidates for Election	
Board of Directors	4 open seats (2-year term)
Audit Committee	3 open seats (1-year term)
Nominations & Elections Committee	5 open seats (1-year term)
Pre-election Events	
Candidate biographies	Published in Greenbelt News Review, May 13
Candidate Forum	Municipal Building, (Friday, May 14, 7:30 p.m.); cablecast live and rebroadcast on city cable channels (Comcast 71 and Verizon 21); live streaming video on city website, later on demand
Voting in Person	
Board and Audit Committee	After meeting recess Wednesday night; next day in GHI Board Room 7-10 am and 5-8 pm
N&E Committee	During meeting (nominated from floor)
Bylaws change	During meeting (presented from floor)
Other Voting	
By proxy (for voting during the meeting)	Get forms from the Director of Member Services; return to: (a) the GHI Office by 5 pm on Thursday, May 13 , or (b) Board Secretary Ed James at 56D Crescent Road by Friday, May 14 .
By absentee ballot (for voting for candidates only)	Get ballots from Director of Member Services (from noon, Thursday, May 13, until noon, Tuesday, May 18); return by 5 pm on May 18 .

GHI Sellers Notes

GHI members who sold their membership rights and equity in their homes last year did so because: they wanted a larger house, they needed for space for a growing family, or because of job transfer, retirement, or death. The top three destinations for members moving were Greenbelt, Silver Spring and out of state.

-From GHI member questionnaires

Free Health Screenings Offered May 26

On May 26, the AARP/Walgreens Tour is scheduled to come to Greenbelt from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The tour is delivering free health screenings and health education to communities across the country with special emphasis on diverse and underserved areas. The screenings will aid early detection and prevention of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and osteoporosis. They include total cholesterol levels, blood pressure, bone density, glucose levels, waist circumference, and body mass index. This event is open to the public and will be held at the Greenbelt Municipal Center parking lot at 25 Crescent Road from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

It's a Date: May/June 2010

May 3	Companion Animal Grief Support Group Coffee Social	7pm 7pm
May 4	Pre-Purchase Orientation	7:15 pm
May 5	Member & Community Relations Committee N& E Committee	7pm 7:30 pm
May 12	Architectural Review Committee	7:30 pm
May 13	Board Meeting	7:30 pm
May 17	Communications Committee	7pm
May 18	Yard Line Committee	8:30 am
May 19	Annual Membership Meeting	7:30 pm
May 20	Investment Committee Finance Committee GHI Elections	6:45 pm 7:30 pm
May 22	Yard Sale Pre-Purchase Orientation	8:30-12:30 11 am
May 26	Buildings Committee Companion Animal Committee	7pm 7:30 pm
May 27	Board Meeting	7:30 pm
May 31	Memorial Day - GHI Offices Closed	
Jun 1	Member & Community Relations Committee	7pm
June 5	Pre-Purchase Orientation	11 am
Jun 7	Companion Animal Grief Support Group	7pm
Jun 8	Yard Line Committee	8:30 am
Jun 9	Architectural Review Committee	7:30 pm
Jun 13	House & Garden Tour	
Jun 16	Woodlands Committee	7pm
Jun 17	Investment Committee Finance Committee	6:45 pm 7:30 pm
Jun 21	Communications Committee	7pm
Jun 29	Yard Line Committee	8:30 am
Jun 30	Buildings Committee Companion Animal Committee	7pm 7:30 pm

2010 GHI Maintenance Schedule

Jan-Sep	Verizon FiOS installation
Jun-Sep	Slate Roofs / Copper Gutters & Downspout [34 & 35] at 7 Ct. Crescent (C-F, J-K), 2 Ct. Gardenway (G-K), 2 Ct. Hillside (A-B), 6 Ct. Ridge (G-H, L-M, S-T), 13 Ct. Ridge (J-M, S-V), and 14 Ct. Ridge (A-D, W-Z).
May-Sep	Community Beautification Inspections
Apr-May	Spring Concrete Repairs
May-Aug	Trim Painting
May-Aug	Replace frame home porches
May-Jun	Spring Gutter Cleaning
Jun-Jul	Addition Roof Repairs
Jun-Jul	Concrete Porch Roof Repairs
Jul-Aug	Underground Utility Repairs
Jul-Sep	Parking Lot Repairs at 12 Ct. Ridge, 69 Ct. Ridge, and 2 Ct. Research
Sept-Oct	GDC garage door replacement
Oct-Nov	Fall concrete repairs
Nov-Dec	Fall gutter cleaning

GHI ANNUAL COMMUNITY YARD SALE

Date: May 22

Time: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Place: Outside GHI offices on
Hamilton Place



Cost to reserve a table is \$10.
Call 301-474-4161 to reserve table.

Sponsored by the Member & Community Relations Committee

COMMUNICATOR SUBMISSIONS

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

**May 20 is the due date for
articles for the July/August 2010 issue.**

Maintenance Department Notice:

Maintenance reception desk is **CLOSED** for lunch
between noon and 1 pm daily.

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

**SAVE THE DATE
GHI ANNUAL HOUSE
AND GARDEN TOUR
Sunday, June 13**

