



Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

# COMMUNICATOR

Quarterly Publication of the Communications Committee

## INSIDE

75 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary In Review	1
President’s Message	2
Best Yards of 2012	3
Holiday Safety Tips	3
2012 Member Satisfaction Survey	3
Board Highlights	4
Clothes Dryer Safety	5
Proof of Insurance Letter	5
Microchipping Companion Animals	6
Can We Find You in an Emergency?	6
Ready for Snow?	7
Hoarding Policy	7
Sign Language Interpreters	7
Staying Warm, Saving Money	8
Carriers Needed	8
What’s Happening	8



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## Celebrating Community, Culture and Cooperation 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year in Review

By Kristin Fletcher

It would have been all but impossible to have missed a sampling of the expansive and creative work of Greenbelt’s 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee in 2012. Start with colorful new signs featuring the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary logo that were installed in Greenbelt’s neighborhoods – Old Greenbelt, East and West. A matching banner proclaiming “I Love Greenbelt” was also a regular sight.

Festivities officially launched on Sunday, January 8, with the dedication of the “Faces of Greenbelt” ceramic tile panel at the Community Center, an Artful Afternoon project spearheaded by artist **Mary Gawlik**. Three to four well-attended events then took place



*Greenbelt Gala toast: “Let us rejoice and be thankful for our city’s past and its legacy. Let us be willing to face present challenges as opportunities. And let us all look forward to an ever brighter future for Greenbelt.” Photo by Eric Zhang.*

each month throughout the year, with regular features in the *Greenbelt News Review* delving into early Greenbelt life through historical vignettes and personal reminiscences of Greenbelt’s pioneer families.

Events included everything from book and movie discussions to 30’s-themed music and theatrical performances and even a Labor Day Festival Retro Town Fair sponsored by the Greenbelt Museum. The museum also featured special performances of “Hometown Heroes: 75 Years of Extraordinary Greenbelt Women,” created and performed by **Alight Dance Theater** in June and July.

Some events complimented regular Greenbelt events, such as Artful Afternoons and the Utopia Film Festival, which included several 1930s



*Mayor Davis and James Roosevelt. Photo by Eric Zhang.*

(continued on page 5)

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GHI's new E-Newsletter includes the latest updates and any emergency alerts. To subscribe, go to [www.ghi.coop](http://www.ghi.coop) and click on "I Want To...Subscribe to GHI E-News" in the center of the page.

**President's Message:**

## Ask Not What Your Cooperative Can Do for You, but What You Can Do for Your Cooperative

(apologies to JFK)

Recently the Board of Directors reestablished two GHI committees and is currently seeking members to serve on these committees. Both committees offer fun ways to become involved (or more involved) in the activities of your cooperative. These committees are:

**The Member Outreach Committee**

In brief, the Member Outreach Committee is responsible for fostering a cooperative spirit, encouraging member participation in GHI, and providing avenues for member input. The committee, with the assistance of other member volunteers and staff, will plan and execute:

- Social events (e.g., new member socials, member picnics)
- Promotional events (e.g., GHI house and garden tours, GHI participation in Greenbelt's Labor Day Festival)
- Educational events (planning for member education in cooperative principles)

**The Marketing Committee**

In brief, the Marketing Committee responsibilities are to promote the cooperative, to attract new members to the cooperative, and to support members who are preparing to sell their homes. This committee will:

- Support pre-purchase orientations for prospective members
- Organize and conduct at least two open houses per year for homes on the market
- Create and maintain up-to-date marketing material
- Encourage inclusiveness and diversity
- Find opportunities to promote the cooperative
- Plan events to promote the cooperative
- Make connections with nearby large employers
- Connect with other cooperatives

If one of these committees sounds like your "cup of tea," give me a call (301-345-1612) or shoot me an e-mail ([suready@verizon.net](mailto:suready@verizon.net)). I'll be happy to tell you more about these committees and/or sign you up. And recruit a friend to join you – it's more fun that way!!

As you can see, these committees have a number of tasks to perform. If only one of them really grabs you, you can join the committee and lead a group of volunteers responsible for that particular task. Or you can be one of the volunteers who works on the task without serving on the core committee. We're happy to accept any level of commitment that you are able to make.

Enjoy the holidays and see you in 2013!

Cooperatively,  
– Sue Ready

## Best Yards of 2012

By George Bachman, Assistant Maintenance Manager

GHI is pleased to announce the winning selections for **Best Sunny Yard**, **Best Shady Yard**, and **Best Court** of 2012. The winners represent some of the best within our community and show what can be accomplished with imagination and care. Your fellow members first had to imagine such possibilities, and then care enough to turn their visions into realities. The individual members and court were each awarded a gift certificate to Behnke’s Nursery. Well done!



**Best Court:** 6 Crescent Road

**Best Sunny Yard:** 1A Plateau Place

**Best Shady Yard:** 12H Ridge Road



### Holiday Safety Tips

The holidays are here and GHI would like you to be safe, as well as happy! Here are some tips for having a safe holiday season:

- **Never leave burning candles unattended.**
- Never burn candles near evergreens. They should also be kept away from decorations, curtains, and furniture. Keep them on a stable, heat-resistant surface.
- Keep matches, lighters, and candles out of the reach of children.
- Avoid smoking near flammable decorations.
- Make an emergency plan to use if a fire breaks out anywhere in the home. See that each family member knows what to do. **PRACTICE THE PLAN!**
- Avoid wearing loose flowing clothes – particularly long, open sleeves – near open flames (such as those of a fireplace, stove, or candlelit table).
- Never burn evergreens in the fireplace. When dry, they burn like tinder. Flames can flare out of control, and send sparks flying into a room, or up the chimney where they can ignite creosote deposits.
- Properly dispose of Christmas trees. (You can take advantage of the City of Greenbelt’s Christmas tree disposal program. After cleaning them of all ornaments – including icicles – take them to designated areas that have a tree sign. The city will publish a list of those locations in the *News Review* and on their website. The trees are then recycled for mulch.)
- **Plan for safety.** Remember, there is no substitute for common sense. Look for and eliminate potential danger spots near candles, fireplaces, trees, and/or electrical connections.

For more tips on holiday safety, see “Holiday Decoration Safety Tips,” a reprintable publication of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (online at [www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/611.pdf](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/611.pdf)).



## 2012 Member Satisfaction Survey

With a goal of continually improving the services provided to members, GHI staff requests that you complete the enclosed survey form (on yellow paper) to give feedback on the quality of services you receive. Please return the completed forms by **January 11, 2013** to **Sheri Swaim** in the manager’s office of the administration building at 1 Hamilton Place.



## Board Actions in Brief

Full minutes may be viewed in PDF format at [www.ghi.coop/about-ghi/board-of-directors/minutes](http://www.ghi.coop/about-ghi/board-of-directors/minutes). Members may also stop by the GHI office to read the minutes.

The Board meets twice a month on Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m. at in the Board room at the GHI administration building, except during the summer when meetings are held once a month. Except for executive sessions, all Board meetings are open to the public. For details, see the calendar on page 8 or visit [www.ghi.coop](http://www.ghi.coop).

During months of July through September 2012 the Board took the following actions:

Approved 13 new memberships and authorized changes to 14 mutual ownership contracts.

Approved yard plats at the following locations: 4, 6 and 8 Woodland Way; 18 Ridge Road, 1 Laurel Hill Road, 23 Ridge Road; 62A Crescent Road, 8F Southway.

Approved end addition at 33D Ridge Road.

Approved purchase of boiler room at 4C Ridge Road.

Approved the changes to GHI's website that were recommended by the website subcommittee and directed the manager to implement them, once approved by the full Communications Committee and staff as needed.

Allow the replacement of the existing picket fence at the perimeter of the serviceside and end yards at 32F Ridge Road.

Established Thursday, May 16, 2013, as the date for next year's Annual Meeting.

Did not approve, upon further examination, the proposal for solar photovoltaic systems for the administration building complex and directed staff to inform Kenergy that GHI will not sign an agreement for the project.

Requested the following changes to the playground proposal:

- Two regular seats on the swing instead of the proposed one tot and one regular.
- A more accurate aerial view of the playground's layout site.
- A sign to be posted at the playground stating it is closed 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.
- Addition of two more benches.
- Building of the two playgrounds for ages 2-5 and 5-12 adjacent to one another.
- The installation of a water fountain.
- Not to build the proposed playground too close to homes.

Requested the manager to present the recommendations of the taskforce on the subject of unauthorized rentals to the GHI membership for comment, over a period of 30 days.

Directed the manager to enter into discussions with the City of Greenbelt to eliminate significant encroachment problems by re-designating the city right of way at the following locations:

11A & 11H Hillside  
13A-D Hillside  
35A Ridge End Addition  
7J Ridge End Addition  
9A-D Hillside

### Member Requests

Approved permanent installation of a yard swing modified with screened framing and roof at 46E Ridge Road.

Allowed the installation of bay windows on both the service side and the end (street side) of the addition at 11A Laurel Hill.

Endorsed the "Sign Language and Oral Interpreters for Deaf Residents of GHI" Procedures.

### Rules and Regulations

Granted an exception to Rule to allow a shed roof with a pitch of 4:12 on the existing screen room.

### Expenditures

Approved a Real Estate Tax refund of \$122,987 for 2012 and 2011 Real Estate Tax to co-op members as a reduction on their December 2012 co-op fees and in proportion to the Real Estate taxes they paid in year 2011. Refunds shall be made only to those persons who were members on December 31, 2011. For persons who were members on December 31, 2011 but are no longer members, refund checks shall be sent to them in December 2012.

Approved the following allocation of 2011 year-end excess revenue over expenses: \$149,879 to the frame replacement reserve, \$25,562 to the frame contingency reserve; \$87,480 to the masonry replacement reserve, \$15,013 to the masonry contingency reserve; \$4,382 to the larger homes replacement reserve and \$7,705 to the larger homes contingency reserve.



## Clothes Dryer Safety; Be Mindful, Be Safe

By Joan Krob  
Director of Member Services

Recently, a member voiced concern about a possible fire threat because a neighbor routinely leaves home with the clothes dryer running. Indeed, leaving a dryer running when you are not home or when you are sleeping is not a good idea. Several factors contribute to dryer fires – poor installation, use of improper duct materials, equipment installed too close to the wall, and the buildup of lint. If not removed, lint accumulates over time. This reduces airflow, which causes the appliance to operate at elevated temperatures and increases the chance of malfunctions and/or lint fires.

### Warning Signs:

- Clothes take an unusually long time to dry.
- Clothes are hotter than usual at the end of cycle.
- Outside of dryer is unusually hot.
- The damper or flapper on exhaust termination doesn't open or barely opens when the dryer is on.
- The laundry area feels warmer or more humid than normal.

If you are in the habit of leaving your dryer running when you leave home or retire for the night, be aware that a fire could occur. And as everyone knows, fires can cause irreparable harm to you, your neighbors, and the cooperative, with property damage, injury, and/or death.



Chef Lou's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary cake. Photo by Eric Zhang.

## 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

(continued from pg. 1)

films. Others were stand-alone, with three key events taking center stage with hundreds in attendance: the Greenbelt symposium, "Sustaining Greenbelt's Legacy," on April 27-28 with English planning historian **Dr. Mervyn Miller**; an address by **James Roosevelt, Jr.** about his grandmother, Eleanor Roosevelt, on September 22; and

the Gala Dinner Dance on October 13 at Martin's Crosswinds, featuring **Peaches O'Dell** and her orchestra.

Continuing to celebrate the richness of Greenbelt through January 7 is the "Our Greenbelt" Photography Show at the New Deal Café. On Sunday, December 16, Greenbelters are invited to enjoy the 75<sup>th</sup> closing ceremonies with holiday music presented by the Greenbelt concert band at Greenbelt Community Center. There are also still plenty of 75<sup>th</sup> souvenirs available for purchase. For more information visit [www.greenbeltmd.gov/75](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/75).

*Our thanks to the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee for a tremendous job and to **Betty Timer**, committee publicity chair and **Megan Searing Young**, curator of the Greenbelt Museum, for their contributions to this article, and to **Eric Zhang** for a fantastic photo blog of Greenbelt in 2012. Visit Eric's blog at <http://greenbelt2012.wordpress.com> for more photos of Greenbelt in 2012.*

### Communicator Submissions

Have an idea for a story? Like to submit an article? Photo to share? Send your ideas to Sheri Swaim at [mgmtoffice@ghi.coop](mailto:mgmtoffice@ghi.coop). Articles are due by January 25 for the Spring 2013 issue.

## Coming Soon: Proof of Insurance Letter

In January 2013 or soon thereafter, many GHI members will receive a letter from their mortgage lender asking for proof of insurance for 2013. The letter will ask for "property insurance on the collateral," "hazard insurance," "Group Master Policy," "Master Insurance Policy," or "condo insurance." This is the insurance GHI carries on the structure of your unit, *not* the HO6 policy that members are encouraged to have for their personal property and liability. Please pay attention to this letter, because if your lender does not receive proof of insurance by a certain date, they will purchase the insurance on your behalf and charge you for it.

We can easily take care of this process for you. Please forward the letter from your lender to **Delisha Wise** in the Finance Department, and she will take care of getting the necessary proof of insurance to them in a timely manner. If you have any questions, please contact Delisha at 301-474-4161, x136, or email [dwise@ghi.coop](mailto:dwise@ghi.coop).

## Emergency Preparedness: Microchipping Companion Animals

By the Companion Animal Committee

One of the more important steps you might take when developing a disaster preparedness plan for your companion animals is to microchip them, even if they always wear collars. If you are separated from your animals and they lose their collars, it can be very difficult to reunite you with them. This might be particularly true during the disruption caused by a disaster or other emergency.

A microchip is a tiny transponder that uses radio frequency waves to transmit information. It's about the size of a grain of rice. The microchip is implanted just under the skin between the animal's shoulder blades. Once a microchip is implanted, it should work for 25 years. The microchip contains a registration number and the phone number of the microchip registry for that brand of chip. The chip can be read and displayed on a handheld scanner. The person using the scanner can call the registry and obtain the guardian's name and phone number.

It should not be difficult to find a veterinarian who will implant a microchip for a fee. The procedure does not require anesthesia and is easily done. Once the microchip has been implanted, it is very important that you register your animal with the microchip company. You will either be charged a one-time or annual fee depending on the brand. In addition you will be provided with a tag for your animal's collar that contains the chip number and the registry phone number.

The cost varies depending on the vet and the registry subscribed to. In this area it usually varies from

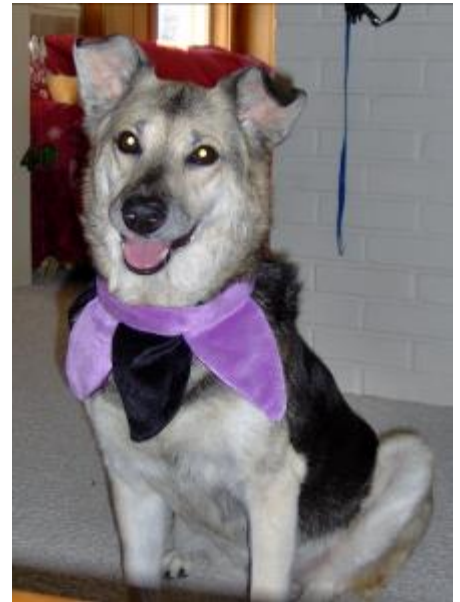
\$60 to \$80. Some registries don't charge to list the animal in only the local community.

One of the issues with microchips is that there are different types using different frequencies. It may be worthwhile to contact local animal shelters to determine what brands of microchips they are able to scan. There are universal scanners

and the companies that manufacture them usually provide them to animal shelters and animal control agencies for free or for a small cost. Even these scanners, however, might not be able to read all chips.

If you are the guardian of a retired racing greyhound or a retired service or police dog, don't be surprised if your dog already has a microchip. Retired racing greyhounds may have several, as they are often microchipped each time they race at a new track.

If you move, remember to contact the company that registers the chip to update your information. You may be charged a small fee to process the update. It is also important to remember that microchips do not replace collars and tags.



*Princess, a senior adopted dog, was microchipped 3 years ago.*

*Photo by Melissa R'kingsley.*



### Can We Find You in an Emergency?

Does your home have house numbers on both the garden side and service side that are highly visible from the sidewalk or parking lot? GHI rules require members to have house numbers and letters that are a minimum of three inches high on both sides of their homes. This not only assists the maintenance workers, but also assures your home can be quickly identified by police, fire, and rescue professionals in case of an emergency. The GHI warehouse stocks self-adhesive letter and numbers for members. They are available free of charge. Stop by the warehouse or contact **Melvin Williams** at 301-474-4161, x134 during business hours.

## Are You Ready for Snow?

Winter is fast approaching and with it the need to be prepared for snow. Managing winter weather is a cooperative endeavor in GHI. Staff is responsible for plowing courts and clearing common sidewalks connecting homes. First priority is given to courts and serviceside walkways. Once those have been cleared staff will turn to gardenside and common walkways. GHI snow removal efforts will begin once four inches of snow have accumulated. For snowfall of up to eight inches, GHI's goal is to clear all courts and primary sidewalks within 12 hours once snowfall has subsided.

Members are responsible for removing snow and ice from sidewalks within their yard boundaries, on both gardenside and serviceside. On shared walkways between individual units, responsibility is shared by adjacent neighbors. Members are encouraged to lend a helping hand to neighbors who may be physically or otherwise unable to clear sidewalks.

GHI members can help support snow removal efforts by avoiding piling snow on any portion of plowed streets or courts. Placing snow in these areas only hampers snow removal efforts, increases costs for all members, and creates a nuisance for other members



*Photo by Kelly Lawson*

or visitors to the court (including mail carriers and other service providers). When clearing off cars, please place snow toward the curb or common areas in the court.

### Know Before the Snow

Please [visit http://ghi.coop/content/winter-storm-event-procedures](http://ghi.coop/content/winter-storm-event-procedures) for an overview of GHI's Winter Storm Event Procedures.

## Did You Know? GHI Has a Hoarding Policy

In August 2011, the Board of Directors developed a policy to deal with the growing issue of hoarding in our community. Hoarding of objects or animals creates an unsafe and potentially hazardous living situation for both the resident and their neighbors. (The full policy can be viewed on GHI's website at [www.ghi.coop/content/hoarding-policy](http://www.ghi.coop/content/hoarding-policy), or search for "hoarding.")

Staff met with mental health expert Helen Barnes, of Barnes Geriatric Services, to understand how to best address hoarding conditions in GHI units. Ms. Barnes provided a number of resources for reference and trained the entire staff.

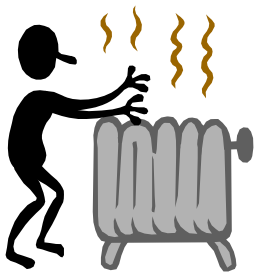
For more information on hoarding and chronic disorganization, contact the following organizations:

- International OCD Foundation ([www.ocffoundation.org](http://www.ocffoundation.org))
- Institute for Challenging Disorganization ([www.challengingdisorganization.org](http://www.challengingdisorganization.org))
- The Organization People ([www.theorganizationpeople.com](http://www.theorganizationpeople.com))



## Sign Language Interpreter Services

Deaf or hard of hearing members can request a sign language or oral interpreter for a GHI event. Inserted in this issue are the procedures for making such a request. The Interpreter Request Form is available on the GHI website at [www.ghi.coop](http://www.ghi.coop). For additional information, please contact GHI Member Services at [memaa@ghi.coop](mailto:memaa@ghi.coop) or call 301-474-4161, ext. 140.



## Staying Warm and Saving Money: Weathering Winter

By Matt Berres  
GHI Maintenance Director

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 to lower heating bills.**
- Seal and insulate thru-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 your exterior doors' 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 an energy gobbler 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 your baseboard heaters. Keep furniture and other items away from heaters. The more air that gets to the heating element, the more heat is dispersed. Use a vacuum with a brush attachment to clean dust, pet hair, and dirt off of heating element. Dust buildup will significantly reduce heater effectiveness.

See more tips and more details at

[www.ghi.coop/content/tips-and-resources-being-warmer-your-ghi-unit-winter-january-7-2012-workshop-greenbelt](http://www.ghi.coop/content/tips-and-resources-being-warmer-your-ghi-unit-winter-january-7-2012-workshop-greenbelt)

### CARRIERS NEEDED

GHI Member Services is seeking carriers to take over newsletter routes or to serve as substitutes. A carrier (minimum age 12 years) is paid 15 cents for each newsletter delivered to a home; routes vary from 64 to 193 homes. To sign up or to receive additional information, please contact **Monica Johnson at 301-474-4161 ext. 140.**

## WHAT'S HAPPENING!

*Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held at the GHI Administration Building on Hamilton Place, and are open to all GHI members and visitors.*

December			
Sat	1	11:00 am	Pre-Purchase Orientation
Thu	6	7:30 pm	Board Meeting
Fri	7	--	OFFICES CLOSED
Wed	12	7:30 pm	Architectural Review Committee
Thu	13	7:00 pm	Finance Committee
Mon	17	7:00 pm	Communications Committee
Mon	17	7:30 pm	Nominations & Elections Cmte.
Mon	17	7:00 pm	Pre-Purchase Orientation
Tue	18	7:30 pm	Companion Animal Committee
Wed	19	7:00 pm	Woodlands Committee
Thu	20	7:30 pm	Board Meeting
Fri	21	--	OFFICES CLOSED
Tue	25	--	OFFICES CLOSED--Christmas
Wed	26	7:00 pm	Buildings Committee
January			
Tue	1	--	OFFICES CLOSED--New Year's
Fri	4	--	OFFICES CLOSED
Tue	8	7:30 pm	Nominations & Elections Cmte.
Wed	9	7:30 pm	Architectural Review Committee
Thu	10	7:30 pm	Board Meeting
Sat	12	11:00 am	Pre-Purchase Orientation
Tue	15	8:30 am	Yard Line Committee
Tue	15	7:30 pm	Companion Animal Committee
Wed	16	7:00 pm	Woodlands Committee
Fri	18	--	OFFICES CLOSED
Mon	21	--	OFFICES CLOSED--MLK Day
Tue	22	7:00 pm	Pre-Purchase Orientation
Wed	23	7:00 pm	Buildings Committee
Thu	24	7:30 pm	Board Meeting
Mon	28	7:00 pm	Communications Committee
February			
Fri	1	--	OFFICES CLOSED
Tue	5	8:30 am	Yard Line Committee
Sat	9	11:00 am	Pre-Purchase Orientation
Tue	12	7:30 pm	Nominations & Elections Cmte.
Wed	13	7:30 pm	Architectural Review Committee
Thu	14	7:30 pm	Board Meeting
Fri	15	--	OFFICES CLOSED
Mon	18	--	OFFICES CLOSED--Presidents' Day
Tue	19	7:00 pm	Pre-Purchase Orientation
Tue	19	7:30 pm	Companion Animal Committee
Wed	20	7:00 pm	Woodlands Committee
Thu	21	6:45 pm	Investment Committee
Thu	21	7:30 pm	Finance Committee
Mon	25	7:00 pm	Communications Committee
Wed	27	7:00 pm	Buildings Committee
Thu	28	7:30 pm	Board Meeting

*(Dates are subject to change)* Maintenance service is available – for emergencies only – outside of normal maintenance hours or when offices are closed. Call 301-474-6011.