



The Grove at Huntley Meadows

State of the Association, 2012 Report

Presented by Jim Preston, President, The Grove at Huntley Meadows HOA

Dates to Remember:

February Board Meeting,
Thursday, February 28,
7:00 - 9:00 PM

Yard Waste Pickup resumes
Wednesday, March 6

March Board Meeting,
Thursday, March 21, 7:00 -
9:00 PM

Community Clean-up,
March 30, 9:00 - 11:00 AM
Meet at the Pool House

Pool Opens - May 25th
Be on the lookout for pass
applications and get them
back quickly

The Annual Meeting of the Grove at Huntley Meadows Homeowners Association was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 6th, 2012. Following the approval of the minutes from last year's annual meeting and introduction of board members, Mr. Mike McClanahan, Chief of Staff for Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay, spoke to the 20 attendees. He gave an update on the state of the district as it relates to our neighborhood. Jon Short was reelected to the board by acclamation. The board still has one vacancy for Member-at-Large.

Among 2012's Foremost Undertakings:

- **A major landscaping project was undertaken** in the spring and was completed in the fall. A new gathering place was created on the corner of Cyrene and White Heron Trail, with benches, paving stones and scenic features. New trees and bushes were planted in various spots around the Grove to fill in some of the more sparse locations in the area. Dave Mikkelson, our Vice President, took the lead on this project and made sure everything was done in accordance with the contract. Thanks, Dave!
- **Two new umbrellas were purchased** for the pool, which should provide more shade around the deck. The interior of the pool was resurfaced and the lights were repaired to allow for night swims.
- **New recycling totes were ordered** due to overwhelming requests for covered containers. These were provided at no charge (for one time) to our residents, and should reduce the chances of trash blowing around the neighborhood.

Inside this issue:

State of the Association		1
Neighborhood Watch Update		1
President's Message		2
How I Came to the Grove...		2
Community Parking Issues		3
Community Cleanup Info		4
Classifieds		4

Neighborhood Watch Update *Gwen Mallard-Winter, Chair*

Our Neighborhood Watch Program will have a different look and objectives. Our focus will be on crime prevention, safety, awareness and education. As we move forward, our initial objectives will be on organizing our team, program development and incorporating best practices. For now, our immediate attention will on the following:

- Creation of a mission statement
- Development of a Neighborhood Watch Program Flyer that will be distributed to current and new residents
- Monthly block captain meetings
- Block captain coverage for each street

New Programs

- Mt. Vernon Officer Ride Along Program for block captains to further the crime prevention education process.
- Fairfax County Law Enforcement Explorers Program for youngsters age 14 -20.
- Mt. Vernon Police Citizens Academy Program - a fascinating 12 week program limited to approximately 30 people that want to learn about all aspects of the law enforcement.
- Americas Night Out Against Crime - Annual National Night Out (2013) - Over 37 million people participated in this national event in 2011.

The Grove at Huntley Meadows

President's Message Jim Preston, President

Happy 2013!

You may be wondering why you haven't received a newsletter since August. Our Communications Chair, Donna Jarvis-Miller, who's done such a terrific job at creating this document over the past few years, has had some professional changes in her life which have taken up most of her time. She's not able to continue in her role as editor of the newsletter, but she has graciously agreed to become the Chair of the Social Committee. We truly appreciate all of the time and effort Donna has put in on our behalf. Please join me in thanking her for all of her hard work.

That brings me to my next point: is anyone interested in taking over the newsletter? We've evolved into a quarterly publication, so it probably takes five to six hours every quarter if you're familiar with desktop publishing. We use Microsoft Publisher, which is pretty easy to use, but if you have no creativity like me, it's a painful process. Please send a note to us at board@gathm.com if you'd like to help out.

We continue to hold monthly board meetings on the third Thursday of each month. We're always interested in hearing from you to be sure we're on the right track. Because we have your interests at heart, we need to know if you're happy about the way we're managing the association. If you're not, we need to hear that, too. Please come to the meetings, or send us an email at board@gathm.com; we'll be sure to discuss your concerns and get back to you with an answer.

Finally, I wanted to announce that the Grove at Huntley Meadows was named Runner Up for Association of the Year by the Washington Metropolitan chapter of the Community Associations Institute, which encompasses HOAs in the northern Virginia, DC and Maryland areas. I'd like to offer my thanks to our committee volunteers and the rest of the board: Dave Mikkelson, Vice President; Ann Marlin, Secretary; and Jon Short, Treasurer. And we couldn't keep things running smoothly without Victoria Garner and Nicole Tavano from Cardinal Management!

Please join me in welcoming **Gwen Mallard-Winter** as our new Neighborhood Watch chair. Gwen has some great ideas to energize this committee, and with the recent vandalism we've seen in the community, we're very glad for her help. If you'd like to be a part of this worthwhile endeavor, please contact her at NeighborhoodWatch@gathm.com or through the Board at board@gathm.com. Watch for news about upcoming Neighborhood Watch meetings!

How I Came to the Grove by Gwen Mallard-Winter

This is the first in what we hope will be an on-going series where our residents share their experiences of how they found our community. If you'd like to describe how you came to live here, please send a note to board@gathm.com

Eight years ago, my husband and I lived in Crystal City and were looking for a new home with lots of green space, since I am an avid gardener. We had spent months looking for the right community and could not find "that special place" to lay our roots down. Just when we were about to give up, we saw a small sign on the side of the road in front of the McDonalds, around the corner on Route 1. That sign piqued our interest because it said, "new homes", and we had not seen any other new developments in this area. We decided to follow the arrows for the new homes around the corner. It led us down Cyrene Blvd,

past South Meadows Condos. Then we hit a dirt road which led us to a beautiful open forest, where there was a trailer. At the time, our development wasn't built; it was a forest with one large dirt road carved out. We had no idea it was protected space and part of Huntley Meadows Park. We could not believe that we had stumbled upon this hidden gem of green space only 20 minutes from Crystal City.

After getting out of the car, we knocked on the trailer door, but nobody was there. So, we sat in the forest and called the number posted on the trailer. A Centex sales man

name Eric (whom we befriended for years until we lost touch) answered the phone. We had him on speaker phone and inquired about the process for purchasing one of the townhomes, especially an end unit. He indicated to purchase one of the 10 homes, we would have to return to the trailer in 24 hours and it would be first come, first serve, when the trailer opened its doors that day. We knew what that meant; we would have to sleep in the dark woods overnight to get our dream home.

Continued on Page 3

The Grove at Huntley Meadows

Community Parking Dave Mikkelson, Vice President

Our community was planned with sufficient parking to accommodate at least one car in the garage and one in the driveway; some homes have more availability. We also have spots in the common areas—170 spots for the 285 townhomes and single-family homes. As you can see, there isn't enough room for everyone to have a vehicle in the common parking areas. Therefore, parking availability relies on some common practices and courtesy.

To help insure common parking remains available for our residents, the Association has a parking policy in place. One important reason for this policy is to preclude our lots being used for long-term storage, especially for abandoned vehicles, non-residents

and commercial vehicles. This is why our parking policy has certain restrictions, to include: not allowing a vehicle to remain unmoved in a common lot parking space for more than 14 consecutive days without Board approval; not allowing spaces to be reserved; ensuring every vehicle's registration and safety inspection is current; not allowing inoperative vehicles; or the storage of recreational vehicles or trailers. To make this policy even more effective, we ask each resident to help monitor and report violations to the Board and management by contacting the Board at board@gathm.com with a description and license number of the vehicle.

In some townhome areas of our community, the common parking lots get filled up. As a common practice and courtesy, as well as for reasons of security, the Board recommends making the garage your first parking choice, followed by the driveway, and finally the common parking lot. If necessary, street parking along Lindberg and Cyrene allows for overflow. For those living on Great Swan Court or White Heron Trail, we ask that you consider the needs of other residents and their guests by parking at least one vehicle in the garage and/or driveway if you own more than one.

If we all do our part, we'll have enough parking for all of our residents and their occasional guests.

How I Came to the Grove, continued...by Gwen Mallard-Winter

We quickly drove back to our apartment in Crystal City and picked up pillows, a blanket, flashlights, water, crackers and peanut butter. Our plan was to be the first in line for a house. However, we drove back and one other car was already parked in front of the trailer, and they had signed a list that Centex had posted on the door. We immediately jumped out of our car and signed on line 2. At this point, we didn't care if we got the end unit, we simply wanted to purchase one of the beautiful homes. So my husband took the day off from work and waited in the forest behind the other car protecting our place in line.

After getting off work, I brought him dinner and joined him by sleeping in our car, in the dark forest overnight. Before dark, there must have been approximately 30 cars in line behind us for only 10 houses. Also, in the wee hours of

the morning, even more cars came and left after seeing the number of people already there in line. Throughout the evening, we had a tailgate party and met our potential neighbors. One of my future neighbors didn't think he had a chance of purchasing a home because of the number of people in front of him. But, I kept encouraging him to stay and I am glad he did. Because he was able to realize his dream and purchase a home too! By the way, we did get an end unit, which affords me the extra space to do my gardening. So, we quickly built our deck with two decorative cross beams that were uniquely designed for us, from which to hang my beloved plants and flowers.

Eight years later, we still laugh about that night in the woods. Since that time, homes have been sold and purchased, and there are only 4 orig-

inal owners from that overnight in the dark woods! We are blessed to live in this green space with an abundance of trees, birds and butterflies. It's a beautiful community that borders on Huntley Meadows Park. And, I happen to think it is definitely one of the best kept secrets in Northern Virginia!

Now that you have read our story, I would encourage you to submit your article about how you found the Grove at Huntley Mead-



The Grove at Huntley Meadows

Home Sale Tips & Tricks *by Dave Mikkelson, Vice President*

Editor's note: Dave is the person responsible for scanning, converting and formatting all of the documents on the web site...a very time-consuming job!

Before selling your home in our association, you'll want to consider the following to make the closing process as smooth as possible. In our community of 215 townhomes and 70 single family homes, we have approximately 20-25 re-sales each year. That makes the closing process routine for our management company, but not an everyday event for homeowners.

When the right buyer comes along, Virginia Code specifies information that must be provided by the seller, including the association's governing documents, policies, and financial status. Fortunately, most of this information is now conveniently located on our community website at gathm.com under the documents tab in a folder labeled resale. This not only gives you or your realtor important information about our community, but can inform prospective buyers about the policies of our community and assure them of our financial strength.

The remainder of the information required for closing will require a bit more time. This includes an exterior inspection and a property financial report, which are accomplished by our management company. To initiate the

process for home sale closing, Cardinal Management Group, Inc. has contracted a web based system for ordering with HomeWise. You will need to setup a login at their site, www.homewisedocs.com, and step through the website procedures to place your order prior to closing. You will be ordering the VA Resale Disclosure Bundle, which costs \$225.00, payable at closing. To avoid a \$50 rush fee, you must order 14 days in advance of the delivery date needed, keeping in mind the buyer would like time to review the documents prior to the day of closing. Also, you may need time to resolve any discrepancies noted in the report.

Although realtors will be aware of the legal requirements, don't assume they will be aware of our community website (gathm.com) or the procedures for ordering the resale package, so pass this information along to them. Moving is already stressful, so awareness of this resale process can avoid unnecessary stress or even delayed closings.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the board of directors at board@gathm.com.

Reminder from the Covenants Committee... *Bo Marlin, Chair*

Per the Grove Policy Resolution 2009-03, trash containers and recycling bins/totes must be stored out of view (i.e., in the garage or behind the residence--and not on the driveway or behind shrubs/bushes) at all times except when out on the curb for pickup on Sunday/Wednesday evening--and then *no earlier than 6 pm--and* removed as soon as possible the next day.

For general "curb appeal" and increased neighborhood safety/security, please check your front yard pole lamps frequently to ensure they are working. If they are out, please replace the bulb(s) as soon as possible. If you are

having problems with the bulbs burning out in a matter of days or weeks, check the kind of bulbs you are using. Heavy duty, outdoor bulbs work best and will last the longest.

Seasonal holiday decorations are permitted as long as they are displayed no earlier than 30 days prior to the holiday and then removed no later than 30 days after the close of the holiday. A number of Christmas wreaths (and some outdoor lighting) have been observed that need to be removed as soon as possible.

Quick Landscaping Notes...

It doesn't seem possible, but it's time to start thinking about lawn maintenance. With the unusually warm winter, we're likely to have weed issues again unless you used a pre-emergent herbicide and fertilizer last fall. Unfortunately,

some experts say it's too late to try to fertilize now, because you'll run the risk of just feeding the weeds. There are herbicides you can use once the weeds appear, but for now, it's best to let the grass get established before going

The Grove at Huntley Meadows

Neighborhood Watch Committee News *by Gwen Mallard-Winter*

Happy 2013!

The Neighborhood Watch Program has been re-organized and re-energized! We are a “non-patrolling” group of volunteers that meet monthly (1st Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm, Mount Vernon Government Center) to discuss crime prevention matters to keep our community safe. We now have Neighborhood Watch Block Captains for five streets in our community. *However, we are in need of residents to volunteer to be Block Captains for Great Swan Court.* Your status, as to whether you are a renter or owner, is of no significance. More importantly, we are all residents and neighbors in The Grove at Huntley Meadows. Your volunteer service would only involve a few hours of your time each month. The safety of our automobiles, homes and community is the responsibility of all residents. If you would like to contribute and make a difference, please join us as a Block Captain and/or as a volunteer to work with the board. Send an email to neighborhoodwatch@gathm.com with information on the best way and time to contact you. Couples are welcome, too! Block Captains are important resources for our community. In the event of a weather emergency or other emergency situations, the Block Captains will be an important point of contact for your street.

By now you should have received a mailer from the NWP. This informational document is an overview about our NWP. Please keep this handy as it contains good reference material and the non-emergency police number (703) 691-2131. In the next few weeks, two Block Captains will be knocking on your doors during the day on Saturday or Sunday for a ten minute chat. We will be introducing ourselves to you, review-

ing the NWP Informational Document, answering any questions and confirming whether you want to share your email address with us for HOA matters and emergency correspondence. For example, during Storm Irene, Fairfax County Emergency Operations passed on important alerts that were immediately shared with residents in community email blasts. *If we do not have your email address, you will be unable to receive those important alerts and could miss out on vital information. If you choose to share your email address with your Block Captain(s), it will be added to the HOA email master file and kept confidential. Block Captains will not maintain your email address.*

To keep crime low in our neighborhood, we need your help with the following five important items:

Keep your outside light on all night.

Thieves prefer to work under the cover of darkness.

Please remove all high theft items (laptops, notebooks, cell phones, money, etc.) from your automobiles.

Make sure your car is locked. Unlocked cars ensure the thieves a supply of goods to steal.

Confirm your garage door is down and locked.

Lock the doors to your home.

Our crime statistics from January – November 2012 are as follows:

There were only 31 calls recorded by the Mount Vernon Police District from our community. Below is a summary of those calls.

- Minor purchase of tobacco (1)
- Animal running at large (2)
- Wild animal (1)
- Assault - simple (4)



- Destruction private property (2)
- Fraud – impersonation (1)
- Larceny (1)
- Larceny – theft from automobile (3)
This number is actually higher due to thefts that were not reported to the Fairfax County Police.
- Parking Violation (2)
- Domestic Dispute (3)
- Lost/found Property (2)
- Police Service (2)
- Telephone Threats/Abuse (1)
- Trespassing (2)
- Suspicious Person (2)
- Suspicious Event (1)
- Suspicious Death (1)

Note: This death was connected to the elderly gentlemen that got lost during Storm Irene. He was found weeks later expired in Huntley Meadows Park in our community.

We are fortunate to live in a community with a very low crime rate and want to ensure it stays that way. The criminals tend to stay away from communities with active neighborhood watch organizations.

The Grove at Huntley Meadows



The Grove at Huntley Meadows HOA
Cardinal Management Group Inc.
4330 Prince William Parkway, Suite 201
Woodbridge, VA 22192

Property Manager: Victoria Garner
Phone: 703.569.5797 | v.garner@cardinalmanagementgroup.com

GATHM.com

Community Clean-up

Come join your neighbors and help keep the Grove clean! Gary Kosciusko will provide gloves, bags and direction to all who come to the Pool House at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 30th. The more people who come to help, the quicker we can pick up the loose trash that tends to collect around the common property areas. We work for an hour or two, and get the satisfaction of helping to maintain our beautiful environment.

Please join us—and bring the kids! It's a great way to teach them civic responsibility and share family time!



Last year's crew (from left):
Julie McCay, Silke Taylor,
Monica Bamford, Jim Preston,
Bo Marlin, Gary Kosciusko



Maridol Garcia-Joy
Realtor
Direct 703-655-0777
maridol@LNF.com
Alex/Kingstowne Ctr



A Grove at Huntley Meadows resident.
Ready to serve all your
Real Estates needs;
selling, buying, rentals,
property management.
Let me sell your home in the shortest
time and with the highest net to YOU!

 To see my web page go to:www.maridolgarciajoy.LnFre.com

MIKE NIES
Owner
(703) 590-3187



Picture Perfect Home Improvements
Remodeling Basements, Bathrooms, & Kitchens
Tile, Carpentry, Interior & Exterior Painting,
Drywall Repairs, Powerwashing & Decking
Handyman Service Available



Free Estimates
www.pphionline.com
Licensed • Bonded • Insured





CLIMATROL
Heating & Cooling Corp.
703.981.6664

Jose Arias **\$59.95**
HVAC Technician

Licensed and Insured
www.climatrolHVAC.com

P.O. Box 6333
Alexandria, VA 22306
Email: office.climatrol@cox.net

Maintenance • Repair Service • Installations