



In the Know

Winter 2015—Issue 37

We all like to be informed when something will affect us, whether that is an approaching hurricane, a road closure, a community event, etc. Our community regularly needs to convey information to all residents (homeowners and renters). Our most cost effective and timely means is through the use of email.

Recently we have heard that some were unaware of announcements that affected them. The reason is simple. To get the information, you must provide your email address. This can be done by going to our website at www.gathm.com and signing up. This will automatically add your email to the community list. We currently have 220 subscribers; however, we have 285 units in our association. Each community email that goes out also has an “unsubscribe” option, so when you move from the community, you can easily be removed from the list. Please note that email addresses will not be shared with outside parties.

This does not mean we currently rely solely on email. For events planned well in advance, we may also: post the information on our website; publish the information in our newsletter; post the information on

our community Facebook page (we currently have 80 members); mail letters or postcards; post information on our bulletin board at the pool house; or place the message boards out at the community entrances. All of these actions take time and effort of volunteers and some of them cost us money as well.

Some communities have been able to go completely electronic. Think of the savings if we could email the newsletter and post it on our website instead of mailing 360 newsletters to all residents and homeowners at a cost of about \$4/ newsletter... three times per year. Then add in all the other mailings and we start talking real money. This is more than enough savings to prevent the next increase in annual assessments.

Whether it is staying informed, helping to keep costs down, or helping to decrease the workload for our volunteers, if you haven't signed up at our website to get put on the email list, please do it today. If you have an issue with signing up at the website, please email board@gathm.com with your name, address and email address and we will add you to the list.

Upcoming Events

Annual Member's Meeting
Thursday, December 3, 2015
7:00 PM

Board of Directors Meeting
January 21, 2015
7:00 PM

Visit www.GATHM.com for a full calendar of community events.

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Message from the President

Dave Mikkelson



What a successful summer for our community. Although our wet spring

turned into a

hot, dry summer, the pool saw record numbers with zero incidents, National Night Out had the best attendance to date, the block party went well with tents to protect us from a little rain, and maintenance and improvement projects continued to progress. I will provide a few updates from these summer projects and then provide some information on future projects and events.

One of our maintenance items from this summer was the crack filling and sealing of our community-owned streets. This not only improves the appearance of our streets, but extends their lives as well. This project highlighted an area we need to work on: getting everyone on our email list. We as a community paid to have too many vehicles towed out of the common parking areas because individuals didn't know or forgot to move their vehicles. Hard copy notifications were mailed to every homeowner

and renter so there was a significant effort to make everyone aware. Please take the time to get signed up at our website which will put you on the community email list.

Decorative road signs for the community were finally approved by both the county and VDOT and we received our permit in September. We hope to have the signs installed before winter arrives. Also before winter we have contracted to have lights installed near our townhome cluster mailboxes on Grey Goose Way and Audubon Meadow Way, which did not have sufficient light. This will add light for retrieving mail as well as improve safety. We are continuing to pursue an expansion to the landscape maintenance contract for the townhome front yards. We will provide more details as we get them.

Between now and the pool opening for next year, we plan to have the fabric replaced on the pool furniture. After 6 years, the current fabric is starting to break down from direct sunlight and chlorine. The pool house is also in need of remodeling. Management will put together a request for

proposal to gather bids from contractors for construction in April 2017. If you enjoy working with contractors on remodeling projects, consider volunteering to be a point of contact to help make the many decisions that will be required with this project. Both the cost for the furniture fabric replacement and pool house remodeling projects will be covered from reserve funding per our reserve study plan.

This December 3rd at 7 p.m. will be our annual member's meeting. This is not a board of directors meeting but a meeting of our homeowners for certain business as outlined in our bylaws. We hope you are able to make the meeting but if not, please remember to send in your proxy card to ensure we have a quorum. In previous years we have been close and it would be very costly and time consuming to reschedule the meeting. As an incentive for attending, we also offer light refreshments, celebrity speakers, and door prizes. We hope to see you there.

See you around the neighborhood!

Vacation Rentals and the Grove?

My neighbor rents out his house quite frequently to groups on vacation. The noise at times gets out of control. Isn't there something the HOA can do about this?

The good, the bad, and everything in between concerning vacation rental services such as *Airbnb* and *VRBO* have been in the news in recent months. We've heard great stories of folks visiting exciting places like Napa Valley and staying in an *Airbnb* rental...we've also heard horror stories about tenants who have rented out rooms without a landlord's knowledge right here in Arlington resulting in thousands of dollars of damage! Unfortunately, there seems to be no shortage of those stories.

While it may seem tempting to rent out your home to make some quick cash, especially in the D.C. area where special events that draw crowds occur all the time, short-term leases are not permitted in the Grove at Huntley Meadows. This rule helps maintain continuity, quality of life, and safety within our community. The

Grove is a quiet, stable environment – and our residents like it that way! Legal restrictions occur in many cities, counties, and other municipalities in an effort to keep residential properties for permanent resident purposes, just like in The Grove.

The Grove's Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions states in Article V, Section 12: "Any lease agreement between a Lot Owner and a lessee shall provide that the terms of the lease are subject in all respects to the provisions of this Declaration, the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and any rules and regulations of the Association, and that any failure by the lessee to comply with the terms of such documents shall be a default under the lease. All such leases shall be in writing and shall be for an initial term of not less than six (6) months."

So, what does such a statement mean for us as residents of the Grove? It means that any lease we enter into (whether as a landlord or as a tenant) must meet certain rules. The lease term must be a minimum of 6 months, must be signed/ documented in writing, and must adhere to the guidelines of the community. With these rules in mind, neighbors can count on anyone moving into the community to continue our wonderful quality of life here in the Grove! If you have any questions about lease agreements, please don't hesitate to contact The Board or Cardinal Management.



Text to 9-1-1 Now Available in Fairfax County *abbreviated story from The McKay Messenger*

On September 22, Fairfax County's 9-1-1 center began accepting Text to 9-1-1 calls for service. Fairfax County is the first jurisdiction in Northern Virginia--and one of the largest 9-1-1 centers in the country--to implement this service.

Reminder: It is ARC Standards that Basketball backboards must be stored out of view from the front of the home during December through February.



Text to 9-1-1 is available within Fairfax County and the towns of Herndon, Vienna, Clifton, and the City of Fairfax. It works similarly to how 9-1-1 voice calls are handled and it's easy to use--you just enter 911 (without dashes) in the **To** or **Recipient** field and type your emergency. 9-1-1 will text you back to acknowledge receipt and ask any necessary questions.

It's important to note that Text to 9-1-1 is intended primarily for use in certain emergency situations. The technology is still limited and calling 911 will almost always ensure a faster emergency response. Remember this important phrase: **Call if you can. Text if you can't.**



Fall Home Maintenance

Gary Kosciusko

Fall! A time for things like pumpkins, leaves turning colors, hot beverages in the morning, and our fall Community clean-up. However, as of this writing, we haven't held our clean-up event yet (scheduled for October 17th), so I thought I'd remind you of some of the things you should do to prepare for winter. If you don't have a commercial service caring for your lawn, now is a good time to "winterize" by aerating it and then applying lawn fertilizer. This assumes, of course, that

you already have a decent lawn to begin with, and not one that's overgrown with weeds or crabgrass (if you have that problem, it's best to start from scratch). Anyways, aeration involves poking small holes in the lawn about two to three inches apart. The tools most commonly used are a spike aerator or a plug aerator, either of which can be rented from a rental center, a lawn and garden center, or home improvement store. You might consider sharing the rental cost with a neighbor who wants to do the same thing. Always follow the directions for the tool's use. When you're done poking holes with the tool, go ahead and apply lawn fertilizer according to the directions on the package; a little fertilizer goes a long way. Then, when the rains come, the aeration holes will deliver the dissolved nutrients to the roots and will promote healthy growth before the lawn goes dormant. Another thing that will help your lawn flourish is to sprinkle new grass seed and spread some lawn soil on top...not enough soil to smother the existing grass...just enough so that the loose soil can fall in between the blades of grass or cover bare spots in your lawn.

If making an exterior modification, it is always a good idea to reference the ARC Standards. This can help avoid getting a violation notice and doing the work twice.

Another important thing that is often overlooked is shutting off the water supply to outside faucets before winter sets in. Each line to an outside faucet should have its own shut-off valve. Once you close the valve, go outside and open the faucet(s) so that the water drains out. Finally, it's necessary to open (counter-clockwise) the tiny circular bleed valves on the pipe near the shut-off valve so that all the remaining water can drain. If you don't follow this procedure before the freezing cold weather sets in, your pipe(s) going to the outside could freeze and burst, causing expensive water damage to the inside of your home. In the spring, after the danger of freezing has passed, just do the procedure in reverse to restore the water supply to your outside faucets. If you're still not sure how to do these procedures, just ask a neighbor who has done it.



Getting Ready for Winter

Paul Kennedy

Fall is a great time of year to get your house ready for winter by performing periodic maintenance that will not only freshen-up the look of your home, but will provide protection for one of your most valuable investments for several years.

Often, pressure washing will clean up stained rain gutters and may save the cost of painting them. A thorough pressure washing is a good way to start your fall exterior cleanup.

since our community was built, chances are it's long overdue to have a properly prepared paint job. This is also a good time to inspect and re-caulk wood seams and windows. Exterior trim house painting is important for several reasons. In addition to enhancing curb appeal, fresh paint also serves as one of your home's primary lines of defense against moisture, dry rot and insect infestations.

If your exterior painted trim hasn't been repainted

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Eek! I've Got Family and Friends Coming to Visit!

What is There to Do Around D.C.?

It's that time of year . . . the air is cool and crisp, school is back in session, and the holidays are right around the corner! That means many of us will be traveling to visit family – and many of us will have family and friends coming to visit us here in D.C. While it can be stressful entertaining our guests, have no fear! Listed below are just a few ideas of things you can do in the next few months – right here in the D.C. area.

- Take a stroll through Huntley Meadows. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park/>
- Visit George Washington's Mount Vernon: take the National Treasure Tour, tour the estate and mansion itself, take a Watercolor Class, enjoy the Mount Vernon Salutes Veterans event, or visit the Horses & Hounds exhibit. You can plan your visit at www.mountvernon.org.
- Love the Theater? Check these shows out: *Alice in Wonderland* at the Synetic Theater, *Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End* at the Arena Stage, *Oliver!* at the Arena Stage; *Akeelah and the Bee* at the

Arena Stage; *Cinderella* at the National Theater, *A Christmas Carol* at Ford's Theater, and *Bright Star* at the Kennedy Center.

- Visit the Capital Maritime Musical Festival.
- Attend a Washington Redskins game or Washington Nationals game and cheer on our home teams!
- Visit the Alexandria Film Festival. <http://alexandriafilm.org/>
- Veterans Day concert on the National Mall.
- Tour ICE! and Christmas at the Gaylord National Resort.



What's the Deal With Bike Riding?



Riding your bike is not only fun – it's a great workout! You can burn calories while getting to work or just playing around with the kids. But riding

bikes requires responsibility and taking some safety precautions. One of the most important things to remember for drivers and bikers alike is that bicyclists and motorists have the same basic rights and duties regarding the laws governing traffic.

Just like motorists, bicyclists need to ride on the appropriate side of the road, signal when turning, pass only when safe, and obey traffic stops/signals. Motorists should understand and recognize that cars do not have the right of way when following a bicycle – we have to share the road. In addition to following traffic rules, bike

riders in Fairfax County should be aware that: "Any person under the age of fifteen years of age shall wear a protective helmet that meets the standards promulgated by the American National Standards

Institute or the Snell Memorial Foundation while riding or being carried on a bicycle on any highway, sidewalk, or public bicycle path." In fact, it's a good idea for everyone to wear helmets. If you'd like more information about laws for bicycling or safety tips, please visit the Virginia Department of Transportation's bicycle site at www.vdot.virginia.gov/programs/bk-laws.asp.

Within the city of Alexandria (such as Old Town), unless designated as a bicycle route, riding on the sidewalk is not allowed.

So, go on, grab your helmet and bike and get out there. The outdoors is calling!



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The homes in the GATHM community were originally painted with Duron “Curb Appeal” paint colors. Duron was bought by Sherwin Williams in 2004 and its “Curb Appeal” palette was eventually eliminated.

Since we do live in an HOA, we should always be aware that there are published guidelines for exterior maintenance or modifications. So how can a homeowner determine which paint colors conform to our community’s architectural standards? Cross-referenced, approved paint colors can be found in Appendix ‘H’, Paint Colors, of the GATHM Architectural Design Standards and Community Handbook, under the “Documents”/”Governing Documents” tabs on the GATHM website [www.gathm.com]. Other important painting information can be found on Page 22 of the handbook.

Other recommended periodic exterior maintenance includes cleaning out rain gutters to prevent leaks and dry rot, and resealing roof penetrations to avoid leaks around vents. Our homes are important investments for most of us and regular preventive maintenance can help preserve our home’s value and avoid costly repairs in the future!



Have a Happy Holiday Season, and a very Happy New Year!!!

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