



Fall Issue 2009

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Community Calendar



Annual Block Party
Saturday, September 12
12—4 p.m.
Pool House

Community Garage Sale
Saturday, September 26
8 a.m.—1 p.m.



Halloween Parade and Pizza Party
Saturday, October 24
11:30 a.m.
Pool House

October Wine Tasting
Date and Location TBD
Interested in hosting?
Email: social@gathm.com



~ A Message from the Board of Directors ~

After serving the residents of the Grove at Huntley Meadows for five years, Meredith Elkins has resigned as President of the Board of Directors. The remaining members of the Board thank her for her outstanding service and wish her well as she prepares to leave Alexandria and move to the northeast.

Meredith's tenure has brought the Grove from a brand new neighborhood to one that continues to grow and mature, and she has successfully navigated the many challenges we've faced over the years.

We know Meredith will succeed in whatever life brings; we'll definitely miss her, Kathy, Rusty and Buddy on their walks around the Grove. We can't thank you enough, Meredith, for your service to our community.

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HOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Shelle Mancl
Secretary

Dave Mikkelson
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George Karsadi
Member at Large

board@gathm.com

This newsletter is created by
The Grove at Huntley Meadows
HOA Communications Committee.

Donna Jarvis-Miller, chair
Karen Goraleski, Mike Hynes,
Samuel Kiendrebeogo,
Andre Lopez, Judy
Lopez, Tania Meireles, Clancy
Preston and Pam Roberts

Managing Editor
Donna Jarvis-Miller



Issue 14 Fall 2009

Establishment of HOA Covenants Committee and More Common Standards Violations

~ submitted by Covenants Committee

While perhaps a long time in coming, a Covenants Committee has been established to assist the Board in enforcing the general rules and regulations of the community. The Covenants Committee will focus on general maintenance and standards violations and leave requests for architectural design modifications and architectural standards violations to the existing Architectural Review Committee.

Some of the more common general maintenance and standards violations noted to date include: early curbside placement of trash and recycling containers (before dusk on the day before scheduled pickups) and removal as soon as possible after pickups; parking of unregistered commercial and unauthorized vehicles (to include trailers) in Association common areas (they must be registered with the management company), lots, and driveways; and in-operative yard post lighting.

Additionally, while not a specific Association parking standard, per Fairfax County and Virginia ordinances, parking on the wrong side of two-way roads is prohibited and according to the ordinances "Vehicles must be parked facing direction of travel lane."

As pointed out in the HOA Covenants, "maintenance affects the visual character and economic values of the property and neighborhood and, in some cases, safety." In these tough economic times and depressed housing market, it is in every homeowner's interest to preserve and protect their investment and limit their personal liability by keeping their properties up to the HOA standards.

If you need to register vehicles or are interested in being a member of the new Covenants Committee, please contact our Community Manager, Victoria Garner, at v.garner@cmgmt.com or any Board Member.

Board of Directors Update

~ submitted by Shelle Mancl, HOA Board Secretary

The Board of Directors of *your* homeowners association has reviewed and approved the following actions since the beginning of 2009:

1. Purchased new furniture for the pool deck, including tables, umbrellas, chairs and chaise loungers. The new

furniture is much sturdier and long-lasting than our former items, and more aesthetically pleasing. The pieces of the old set that were still in usable condition were sold to another HOA, with the proceeds assisting in the new furniture purchase. The Board also approved the purchase and installation of potted plants.

See Board Update, pg 3

Property Maintenance in Common Areas

The Board of Directors contracted with a new maintenance company, Palmer's Property Maintenance, to keep our common areas mowed, mulched and all around looking beautiful. Here is the schedule of work that will be done for the balance of this year. If you see something that is not being done, please contact Cardinal Management.

September/October:

- ⇒ Mowing on a 7-10 day schedule through October
- ⇒ Broadleaf weed control application on the lawns
- ⇒ Fertilizer application for the lawns (early)
- ⇒ Aeration & seeding of the lawns
- ⇒ Installation of Pansy flowers in the entrance beds (October)

November/December:

- ⇒ Fertilizer application for the lawns (late)
- ⇒ Liming of the lawns
- ⇒ Leaf removal

Helping Hands

"If the house next door is abandoned or not maintained, take a step and offer to help."

Every community, including ours, is feeling the pain of this recession. The Grove is more fortunate than others areas; we have not experienced the multiple abandoned homes and foreclosures seen elsewhere. Nevertheless, this has hit our community as well. When banks take over properties, they often may not realize they need to continue to pay the HOA monthly assessment. With the depth of the foreclosure crisis and their own financial problems, banks are struggling to keep up. As a result, our community has the potential to suffer.

There is something that we can do to minimize this economic fallout. We all want to come home to a community we can be proud of. If the house next door is abandoned or not maintained, take that step and offer to help. How? If there is realtor sign in the yard, check with the listing realty company to see if they have a crew maintaining the yard. If not, volunteer to mow the yard to help keep the neighborhood looking its best. Be sure to get permission in writing to avoid any possi-

ble trespassing charges.

With approval to access a property, there are simple things neighbors can do to improve the look. You can pick up trash, water the grass or flowers, pick up newspapers, door hangers and phone books. As a result, the home will be less inviting to thieves and will reflect better on all of us.

Keeping that neighborly spirit has never been more important than in times like these. Thankfully, as neighbors, we have one another. Don't get angry, help out.

Article provided by Cardinal Management.



(Continued from page 6)

How to tell if a plant needs dividing? Many perennials benefit from division every three to five years. A clump of plants should be divided if it is not flowering as well as in the past, if bare spots appear in the center of the clump, if plants in the clump flop over or if plants spread to the point of becoming invasive.

Fertilize the lawn.

Fertilizing is generally not recommended for plants heading into the winter, because it causes new growth that can be damaged by cold. But lawns are an exception and should be fertilized in fall. If you live in a mild climate and your grass has just endured a long, hot summer, fertilize it in mid-fall. In cool regions, fertilize in late summer or early fall with a lawn fertilizer especially made for fall fertilizing. The bagged lawn food intended for fall use stimulates root growth, better enabling grass to withstand winter. It also lets the grass store food that will get it off to a good start next year.

Plant spring-blooming bulbs.

Autumn is the right time to plant hardy, spring-blooming bulbs. Don't put it off too late; if the ground gets drenched by rains or freezes, the project will be difficult or doomed. Buy large, firm bulbs and plant them at the depth recommended by the vendor for your area. A rule of thumb is to sink them to a depth of two or three times their diameter. If you have a problem with rodents digging up your bulbs, sprinkle gritty gravel into the planting hole or encase your bulbs in hardware cloth before planting. Straw is an attractive nesting material for rodents; don't use it as a mulch around bulbs.

Dig and store tender bulbs and corms.

In cold-climate areas, fall is the time to rescue the bulbs and corms of tender summer plants such as caladiums, cannas and dahlias, which will freeze and die if left in the ground over the winter. Dig them up as the foliage turns brown in early fall, trim off the remaining foliage or flower stalks, let them air dry for a week and then layer them in paper bags filled with peat moss or vermiculite. Store the bags in a cool, dark place, such as a basement or cool closet. If the storage area is humid, dust the bulbs with the organic fungicide sulfur before bagging them and slit the bags for better ventilation. Check the bulbs monthly; discard any that look soft and sprinkle water on those that look shriveled.

Water and protect vulnerable plants from winter stress.

Contrary to what you may think, winter dormancy is not always a blessing to garden plants. Frozen ground locks up water, creating a drought situation, which can injure or kill plants. So give your plants, from perennials to trees, a good, long soaking before the soil freezes in late fall.

In cold climates where the ground freezes, a heavy, 4- to 8-inch organic mulch is wise -- mandatory in the case of plants of borderline hardiness. A winter mulch serves as a blanket, protecting the plants from freezing winds and frost-heaving, moderating soil temperatures and conserving moisture. If you get consistently deep snow cover, the need for a mulch is less dire, but it's still a good idea to apply one after the first hard freeze. Also, it is a good practice to place some evergreen boughs or loose hay over low-growing plants, such as groundcovers, to protect them from snow damage without smothering them.

If your winters are bitter or if you have shrubs or roses of doubtful hardiness, there are a number of things you can do to protect them. Wrap them loosely in burlap, form hinged plywood sandwich-board tents over them or make a fence-wire cage around them and stuff it with dried leaves or straw. If your winter is windy, apply a waxy leaf coating, called an antidesiccant spray (available from garden centers and catalogs), as well as a burlap screen to evergreens. Antidesiccants have the added advantage of making evergreens less appetizing to deer.

Prep your tools for next year.

After the growing season ends, get your tools ready for next year by practicing the following:

- Clean your tools, using soapy water. To remove stubborn mulch, soak the tool, then scrub with a stiff brush.
- Rub off rust with very fine sandpaper or with fine steel wool dipped into kerosene.
- Dry the tools with an absorbent rag or paper towels. Dampness can lead to rust and spoil moving parts.
- Sharpen cutting edges with a file or a whetstone. File from the outer edge to the center. Use downward strokes; hold the file at an angle. If an edge is hopelessly dull, have it professionally sharpened.
- Wipe metal surfaces with an oiled cloth (vegetable oil is fine). Or store metal tool ends in a bucket filled with coarse sand soaked in motor oil. To keep wooden handles from drying out, apply a light coat of boiled linseed oil and buff.

Article provided by Palmer Property Maintenance—a commercial property maintenance company serving northern Virginia.



Winterize Your Garden

Now is the time to cut back fading stalks, leaves and weeds and to clean up the garden before winter.

Removing debris reduces the likelihood of future problems. Spent foliage, left to flop over or fall off on its own, and decomposing plant debris left on the ground can harbor overwintering pests and diseases. In addition, a well-trimmed garden looks neater, and you'll have less grooming to do in the spring, when new shoots are trying to poke their way up.

Here's what you need to do to prepare your garden to withstand winter:

Remove weeds, debris and invasive plants.

Fall is when weeds go to seed -- pods and seed cases burst open to release them. If you don't have time to rake up crab apples, try collecting them with a shop vacuum. If there's no time to pull plants up by the roots, chop or clip off their heads before the seeds are released. Discard all seed heads in the trash pile, not on the compost heap. If you have a large weed patch, smother it over winter by covering it with a large sheet of black plastic weighted down by bricks or rocks.

Every once in a while, a garden plant finds the legs and begins to spread and take over the garden. By fall,

it will have long worn out its welcome -- whether it's Japanese knotweed invading a shrub border or forget-me-nots running rampant through perennial beds. Dig or pull intruders out completely and dispose of them. Or spot treat them with an herbicide. Follow label precautions regarding when and how to spray. And be careful not to overspray and affect innocent plants nearby.

Prep your soil to give plants a head start in spring.

After you remove all garden debris, weeds and invasive plants, it's easy to prepare beds for spring. There are advantages to testing the soil and amending it in fall. You'll have plenty of time to add needed amendments to the soil before cold weather sets in. The cool weather makes autumn a nice time to break new ground. Top beds off with a 3- or 4-inch layer of compost and leave it. Winter rains will leach nutrients into the soil to give your plants a head start in the spring, and when you prepare the soil, the topping will be easy to work into the soil at planting time.

Divide perennials now to ensure a trouble-free spring.

Fall is a good time to divide perennials for gardeners in most parts of the U.S. The plants are going dormant at this time and won't be shocked by cutting, chopping or transplanting. And the weather conditions are congenial -- the soil is still warm and autumn rains will supply a steady supply of water to the transplants. In the spring, they'll repay your efforts with a fresh, vigorous start. Spring is better for division in freezing climates, where winter temperatures are hard on transplants.

"Prep your soil to give plants a head start...Top beds off with a 3- or 4-inch layer of compost and leave it."



Communications Committee

Do you like to design newsletters and enjoy communications? You can put your talents to work with the Communications Committee by lending your design talents to help with getting the newsletter formatted for printing. We need someone who has either inDesign, PageMaker or a design program that can create high-resolution PDF files for the printer. Time commitment is approximately 15—20 hours per year. The newsletter is published six times a year and there are approximately four committee meetings a year. If you are interested, please email comms@gathm.com.

Covenants Committee

Are you interested in maintaining your property values? Do you like the clean look of our neighborhood? The Covenants Committee is for you! We're charged by the Board to help maintain the community standards we all agreed to. We won't need more than a couple of hours of your time per month. If you'd like to help us, or get more information, please contact Victoria at Victoria Garner with Cardinal Management at v.garner@cmgmt.com to join our committee.

There is a spot for you — *Landscape, Parking & Safety, Social, Covenants, Architectural Review and Communications Committees*—your HOA is looking for a few good volunteers!

Board Update (con't from page 1)

2. Purchased benches for the pool house lobby, along with baby changing stations for the locker rooms.

3. Evening adult-only swim hours were approved for this pool season, and will be considered for next season.

4. The Board approved research regarding adding a second level to the pool house. This addition would give the association their own meeting space, and be available for use by residents as a meeting or party room. The Board is entertaining presentations by several firms before committing to concept drawings and a formal proposal

5. In cooperation with the South Meadow HOA, we successfully lobbied for a Community Parking District along the county part of Cyrene and Lindberg. This action will prohibit trailers, boats, RVs, semi-tractor/trailer rigs, and commercial vehicles over 10,000 lbs GVW from parking along the street. Such vehicles are already banned from HOA owned streets, parking areas and driveways.

6. A revised parking policy has been approved by the Board and distributed to all members. A separate letter regarding the towing procedure has also been mailed to homeowners.

7. Parking bumpers were added to the parking spaces in the community.

8. A new landscape maintenance company has been retained. This company is well equipped to promote healthy grass in the common areas, and maintain community entrances.

9. New signs to advertise upcoming HOA events are being purchased.

10. A contract was awarded to provide cleaning services for the pool house during the swim season.

11. A contract was awarded to provide for community clean-up on a regular basis – we hope you all have noticed that there is less litter on the streets.

12. The Board is moving forward with plans to add more lights to community streets for safety and aesthetics.

13. The Board has retained the services of an investment broker to assist with managing association assets. Restructuring monies will ensure adequate FDIC protection, and adequate reserves for future community expenditures.



Be eco-friendly and register at www.gathm.com for community news and updates.

14. A new website is being prepared for use by the community – please ensure your email address is on file in an effort to assist with communications. Only official HOA business will be transmitted as these addresses are never shared, and “junk” email is prohibited.

15. A new reserve study, to catalog community assets and assess their condition, has been tasked to a company specializing in such work. This will enable the HOA to make decisions regarding repair and replacement of owned items and infrastructure.

15. A contract has been awarded for a vending machine in the pool house, stocked with snacks, water and juice. The HOA will receive a portion of all proceeds collected by the vendor.

The Board will continue to look after the community's interests, and encourages members to participate on committees and at monthly meetings to help better our community.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS TO ATTEND HOA MEETINGS
 Third Tuesday ♦ 6:30 PM ♦ 2511 Parkers Lane

SEPTEMBER 15

OCTOBER 20

NOVEMBER 17



Annual Meeting
 Tuesday, December 15
 Time and Location TBD



Did You Know?

Did you know that your pet's urine can and does cause "dead spots" in the grass where they choose to "relieve" themselves? While this may be a very natural "event" for your pet, it could be very aggravating to your neighbors who toil every weekend to maintain a healthy and well manicured lawn.

So what can you do to meet the needs of your pet and keep the peace with your "green" neighbors? Did you know you can buy chewable tablets for your dog that neutralize the potential for high pH (alkaline) urine that can damage grass? Nutri-Vet sells a product named "Green Grass" at most popular pet stores--and it works.

So if your pet is a "brown spot maker," be a good neighbor and pick up some "Green Grass" (or similar product) from your favorite pet store.

~ Article submitted by the Covenants Committee.



A message from Supervisor McKay

When I was growing up in Lee District, Springfield Mall was a vibrant and modern retail center with stores like Garfinkels and W. Bell Company. Times changed; other malls were developed and redeveloped, yet Springfield Mall's 80 acres of stores and restaurants remained fixed in time with an absentee owner who saw no reason to invest in his property. The results were all too obvious—B-list retailers, questionable security, and customers who preferred to shop at Tysons, Pentagon City, and anywhere that wasn't Springfield Mall. A few years ago Vornado Realty Trust, one of the country's largest owners of retail and office property purchased the mall, intending to rebuild it as a smart growth, mixed-use development with retail, office, and residential.

this project is that in addition to the office and residential mix there will be a fully renovated 2.1 million square foot mall.

This project is much more than a simple mall upgrade. This rezoning has the potential to change the image of Springfield, showcasing it as a regional center for business and shopping. It transforms the mall into an amenity for our community—one long overdue and welcome.



Have a comment or suggestion for the county? Supervisor Jeff McKay can be reached at leedist@fairfaxcounty.gov or (703) 971-6262,

"This rezoning has the potential to change the image of Springfield, showcasing it as a regional center for business and shopping."

~Supervisor McKay

Need to connect with the state, county or district offices? A quick reference guide to make connecting easier.

Fairfax County government web page
www.fairfaxcounty.gov

Lee District web page
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/lee/>

Lee District phone numbers
Office: 703-971-6262
Fax: 703-971-3032
Email: leedist@fairfaxcounty.gov

Commonwealth of Virginia web page
www.virginia.gov

For years, the community has asked that something be done about the state of the Mall and with the recent rezoning of the property the community will see its wish fulfilled. This project includes a number of community amenities including a grocery store, dog park, tot lot, athletic courts, fitness center, and state-of-the-art movie theater. A number of other community investments that are part of this case include construction of an artificial turf field for Lee High School, a substantial contribution to the Lee District Rec Center, \$4 million toward the Springfield Regional Road Fund, improved access to Metro from the Mall (estimated at about \$2.6 million a year), and \$200,000 a year for five years to enhance Springfield's TAGS circulator bus system.

The rezoning approved on July 13 by the Board of Supervisors on a 10-0 vote includes significant office space—especially desirable in these tough economic times. The most exciting part of



Community Clean Up

~submitted by Gary Kosciusko

Community Clean-up Day
Saturday, October 10
9 - 10:30 a.m.
(rain date, Sunday, October 11)
Meet at 8:50 a.m. at the pool house and long pants are recommended.
All supplies, including gloves, will be provided.
Questions? Call evenings (703) 765-0306
~ Gary

On Saturday, May 2nd, six stalwarts turned out for the Community Clean-up Event. The rain gods managed to hold back their fury during this, the most crucial portion of the day. For two hours, we scoured the approaches to the Community along Cyrene Boulevard and along the creek that runs parallel to Great Swan Court and White Heron Trail—areas that are, for the most part, visible to visitors entering our Community, but which areas are typically not addressed in normal weekly clean-ups. The two hours passed quickly, yet we

managed to collect 8 10-gallon bags of trash, plus 3 tires and about 30 pounds of assorted metal scrap. Clearly, the tires and metal had been overlooked in previous clean-ups. By no means did we have time to remove all the trash we saw in the woods adjoining Cyrene but we hope to tackle that in a future event. We hope you will join us when we turn out again in the fall.

Kudos Gary Kosciusko for organizing the community clean-up!

Take a splash in the pool before it closes for the season...

Monday—Thursday and Sunday

10:00 a.m.—8:00 p.m.

Friday—Saturday

10:00 a.m.—10:00 p.m.

Last day for swimming—Sunday, September 13