



The Grove at Huntley Meadows Newsletter

Issue 13 -- February/March 2009

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Homeowners' Association.

State of Association 2008 Report

Presented By Meredith Elkins, President of GATHM HOA

A ticle By Donna Jarvis-Miller

The Grove at Huntley Meadows Annual Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 2, 2008. Following the approval of the minutes, introduction of board members, statements from the candidates for open board positions and a presentation by Supervisor Jeff McKay, Meredith Elkins gave the State of the Association report to the residents:

2008 Accomplishments :

- **Solicited bids for and selected a new landscape contractor** - We realize that this change meant that townhome owners were now responsible for their lawn maintenance, but by making this change, we closed a liability loophole that placed the HOA at unnecessary risk.
- **Solicited bids for and selected a new pool contractor** - Last summer (2007), thanks to homeowner feedback, we were alerted to the poor service by the pool contractor, Continental Pool. Working with them this year, service has noticeably improved. We have received several compliments and only one complaint. Continental has been renewed for next year and we've asked for the same lifeguard crew.
- **Installed doggie waste stations** - hope the walkers in the neighborhood have noticed a reduction in the unsightly waste on our lawns and common areas.
- **Identified a new contractor to manually pick up trash and blown debris around the neighborhood** - hope everyone has noticed the difference!
- **Block party, 4 wine tastings, Halloween pizza party** - special thanks was given to Christina and Riley Pyles and the wine tasting hosts.
- **Tot lot clean up (underway) and remulching**, - this brings the lots up to the Consumer Product Safety Commission's recommended 12" of wood chips to protect children in the case of falls from the higher equipment.
- **Began to actively address covenant violations** (a work in progress!)
- **Restarted the Neighborhood Watch committee** - special thanks was given to Diane Riser and Julia McInniss.
- **Re-bid the trash collection contract to ensure competitive pricing** - residents were reminded replacement toters and recycling bins are FREE. Please let Victoria at Cardinal Management know if you are charged for these items.
- **Had deer crossing, tot lot and children playing signs installed.**
- **Postponed a dues increase until next year** (more on this later).

Continued on page 5

Your Community Web Site

By Jim Preston



The Grove at Huntley Meadows web site (www.gathm.com) is a basic web site and the cost is relatively small to the association. The Communications Committee wants to encourage every resident to register.

Here are some tips on navigating the site. The first time you try to access the site, you'll need the Grove password, which is "welcome". You'll complete the registration process, and finally, you'll be asked to create your own User ID and Password. You're now allowed to access the site.

Highlights of the site:

- Documents: Board meeting minutes, Architectural Review Committee documents, HOA Governing documents and more
- Calendars: different events throughout the year, from the social committee, the board, etc.
- Classifieds: you can post things for sale here
- Message Boards: Help wanted, play groups and other general interest topics

Part of the registration process includes giving us your email address. This will be a big help. We'd like to reduce the paper products we use, and if we can use email to get information to you, it's timely and environmentally friendly. So, please register and give us your email address.

Now, you may be thinking, "There's not a whole lot on the site," and you'd be right. The more people who use the site, the more content will improve.

The Lamp Post

By Dave Mikkelson

In darkness, the world can be a mischievous place. Being new arrivals into The Grove, my wife and I appreciated the security of a well lit neighborhood. Unfortunately, upon moving into our home, we found darkness in our front yard. Let me share with you the steps I took to repair my front yard lamp post.

My situation started with no light at all from my lamp post. The obvious answer says to replace the light bulbs. Unfortunately, it wasn't as easy as that to resolve the problem, so I continued to look for solutions. Was electricity reaching the lamp post? First, I checked the circuit breaker. This wasn't tripped, so I had to continue to investigate. Let me caveat by saying I'm no electrician. I could see the outside electrical outlet appeared to run on the same line as the lamp post, so I plugged a light into the outdoors and garage outlets. No electricity to the outlets. Tripping and resetting the circuit breaker did not work either. Then I noticed a test switch on another circuit breaker, marked bathrooms. These are all GFI switches, so I pushed the test button and it tripped both the bathroom and outside breakers. Interesting. Upon resetting both breakers, I noticed my light, still plugged into the garage outlet, was now on. Great, but so was my front yard lamp post... in the middle of the day.

At this point, I was in a situation that others in the neighborhood are currently experiencing; having lights that stay on even during the day. Great for keeping away the darkness, but now it was wasting electricity and bulbs with a light on 24/7.

After some investigating and conversations with my helpful neighbors, the problem now appeared to be a small electronic eye protruding from the post. The weather and years had not been kind to the small metal circuits, so its eye was no longer able to discern light and turn the lamp off. This meant replacing this small piece. Fortunately, Home Depot carried this small round part for about \$13, located between the electrical and lighting departments.

Replacing it was fairly straight forward and took about 20 minutes. Safety first, I tripped the circuit breaker. Then I removed the top lamp part by unscrewing the top and removing the glass enclosure. Three screws secured the light fixture to the post so I removed those, being careful not to lose them in the grass. Lifting up the light base showed black and white standard wires with end caps and a ground, all separately connected by color. I unscrewed the end caps and separated the wires, then set the light aside. The electronic sensor was secured by a plastic nut from the outside. With the nut off, I could remove the sensor from just inside the post. I inserted and secured the new sensor, being careful not to drop it down inside the post. Then I rejoined the wires, put the light and cover back on and reset the circuit breaker.

With everything back together, it was now just a matter of waiting for nightfall. Fortunately, darkness was held at bay by the light of my now properly working lamp post.

Visit the Grove at Huntley Meadows web site (www.gathm.com) and register today to receive important community updates and communications.

Want to see an upgraded web site? The more people who use the site will help us improve it and allow us to upgrade it! Email what you want to see on the web site to comms@gathm.com.

Board and Committee Member Biographies

By Jim Preston

Meredith Elkins, President: Meredith Elkins has served the Grove HOA since its inception in 2004. She began as the Communications Committee Chair, leading the team that brought the community its first web site and newsletter. In 2005, she was elected to the Board and served as Secretary. At the end of 2005, Meredith became Board President and has served in that role since. She lives on Grey Goose Way with her partner, Cathy, and the best dogs ever, Buddy and Rusty--who are likely better known in the community than she is! They have lived in the community since December, 2003.

Jim Preston, Vice President: Jim Preston is in his second year on the Board of Directors. He is currently serving as Vice President. Jim is a Southwest Airlines Captain and a retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel. He is married to his wife Clancy, and they have a daughter Michelle, a college student. The Prestons have lived in the Grove since August, 2006.

Shelle Mancl, Secretary: Shelle Mancl was recently elected to serve as a board member for the Grove HOA. Shelle will be serving in the position of Secretary. Having relocated in 2004 from the Twin Cities in Minnesota, Shelle and her husband, David, live on Great Swan Court. They really enjoy living in a milder climate, though they miss their two daughters, one son-in-law, and oh-so-adorable grandson very much. Shelle most recently chaired the Landscape & Pool Committee, and looks forward to serving as an HOA board member.

Dave Mikkelson, Treasurer: Dave Mikkelson is in his first year on the Board of Directors and currently serves as Treasurer. Dave is on military leave from United Airlines where he is a pilot. An Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, he is currently serving at the Pentagon. He is married to Kathleen who is also a Lieutenant Colonel in the Air Force. The Mikkelsons moved into the Grove in September, 2008.

George Karsadi, Member-at-Large: George Karsadi serves as Grove HOA's Member-at-Large. His background is in architecture, construction and contracting. He has a good working knowledge of the community's infrastructure and historical existence as the longest serving board member to date. He helps the board and community with contract negotiations and ensures contractor compliance with any project set forth by the community.

Donna Jarvis-Miller, Communications Committee Chair: Donna Jarvis-Miller serves as the Communications Committee Chair and recently moved to Northern Virginia from Ohio. Donna produces national trade shows and meetings for, Bostrom, an association management company. In addition to her current industry experience she has a background in marketing and public relations. She recently earned her Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) designation and is working on a Certification in Exhibit Management (CEM)-- two highly sought after certifications in the meetings and trade show industry. Her husband, Chris, currently lives in Ohio with plans to join her in the next few months.

Christina Pyles, Social Committee Chair: Christina has lived in the community since July 2006 with her husband Riley and two young boys, Connor and Logan. For the past five years, she has been a stay-at-home mom. She has participated as an active member of the social committee since June 2008 and currently serves as the chair.

Todd Jones, Architectural Review Committee (ARC) Chair: Todd Jones has served on the ARC for nearly four years; the last three as ARC Chair. He is an original homeowner at the Grove and has been a resident of Northern Virginia since his first semester at George Mason University in 1987. He is employed as a senior manager with a local accounting firm and is a Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Governmental Financial Manager. He would like to thank the many community volunteers for their hard work at the Grove.

Victoria J. Garner, Cardinal Management Property Manager: Victoria J. Garner holds a CMCA (Certified Manager of Community Associations) issued by The National Board of Certifications for Community Association Manager. Victoria just recently completed course requirements for the AMS Designation (Association Management Specialist). She holds an Associates Degree in Liberal Arts completed at NOVA. Garner has been in Community Management for five years and continues education courses provided by CAI (Community Association Institute) and hopes to one day hold a PCAM designation. She is married with a 9 month old baby and prides herself on family values.

Let's Practice Green Habits at the Grove

By Judy Lopez

The American Disposal Services recycling program parallels the Fairfax County recycling requirements. Fill your recycle bins with recyclable household materials to keep them separate from the trash as required by Fairfax County.

American Disposal Services will accept the following items making it easy to recycle.

- Container glass: bottles and jars including tops
- Metal food and beverage containers: cans and tins
- Plastic bottles and jugs including tops
- Aerosol cans
- Scrap metal: maximum weight of individual pieces - 50 lbs
- Cardboard: flatten or fold boxes maximum size of individual pieces - 3' x 3'
- Mixed Paper: junk mail, envelopes, office paper, newspaper, phonebooks, magazines, cards, cereal/cracker boxes, frozen food boxes (not contaminated with food), paperback books and hardback books
- Yard Waste (on seasonal basis)



To learn more about recycling trends and best practices visit

www.earth911.com

Resources:

American Disposal Services (703) 368-0500, www.american-disposal.com

Fairfax County Recycling Program Requirements, www.fairfaxcounty.gov

Trash and Recycling

Monday: Trash and Recycling

Thursday: Trash and bigger items

Huntley Meadows Park, The Wildlife Gem Next Door

By Kevin Munroe, Park Manager

You may not know that you live next to the largest park in Fairfax County – Huntley Meadows Park, at almost 1,500 acres. Managed as a wildlife sanctuary, this Fairfax County Park Authority property has the largest non-tidal marsh and one of the largest native meadow complexes in the DC area. Park staff work with 100+ volunteers to conduct wildlife surveys, water quality monitoring, invasive exotic plant removal, stream cleanups and native plant installations.

Without our volunteers, the park would suffer. Park staff orchestrates controlled meadow burns, deer management, stream bank restoration and wetland restoration. The park is treated as a natural gem and biodiversity reservoir that it is. Many species of birds, reptiles, insects and native plants live here in greater abundance than anywhere else in Northern Virginia. We can never forget that Huntley Meadows is part of a larger community.

We depend on good neighbors like you to volunteer at the park and to help us protect the many borders and edges that include the lines of the back yards of the houses along the west side of Lindberg Drive. Do your part to ensure that Huntley remains a healthy, protected, natural area and wildlife sanctuary for our grandchildren: reduce or better yet, eliminate pesticide and fertilizer use (all excess flows into the park's wetlands after a rain), do not dump or scatter any organic material, like leaves and grass clippings into the park's edges (bet you didn't know that leaf and grass piles can smother wildflowers, ferns and tree seedlings) and keep your cats indoors, at least from dusk to dawn (outdoor cats kill many songbirds and salamanders). Lastly, please don't litter and be sure not to

take any plants and animals from the park; species like box turtles, wildflowers and butterflies belong in their natural habitat. Even fallen logs are essential habitat for many animals and should always be left

Many species of birds, reptiles, insects and native plants live here in greater abundance than anywhere else in Northern Virginia.

in the park and not removed for firewood or any other purpose. As everyone knows, fires are never allowed in the park, nor, can guns or bows be discharged.

Fun activities to do right in your own yard that also provide food and habitat include butterfly gardens, bird feeders, and nesting boxes for flying squirrels, native bees, wrens and screech owls.

Using native berry-producing shrubs or installing a rain barrel are other actions that can help the streams and wildlife in your neighborhood stay healthy. For more info on these backyard conservation ideas, please visit the park on April 19th from 12PM to 4PM at the visitors center off 3701 Lockheed Blvd for our Eco-savvy Expo. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please contact Huntley Meadows Park at (703) 768-2525 or check out our website, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley/.

Learn more about attracting beneficial wildlife species visit Audubon Society of Northern Virginia's website and click on one of the wildlife species listed, www.audubonva.org/index.php/wildlife-fact-sheets.

State continued from page 1

Acknowledgement of Volunteers – Very few improvements would have happened in the neighborhood without the volunteers. All former and current volunteers were thanked for their service to their neighbors and the larger community. *Past Board members:* Cindy Ford, Mike Ford, Karen Goraleski, Scotty Knight, Jon Short, and Mark Wilson; *All Volunteers:* Clancy Preston, Cathy Duley, Shawn Frost, Monica Gamarra, Maridol Garcia Joy, Karen Goraleski, Mike Hynes, Todd Jones, Trish Karsadi, Lara Laufer, Rafi Laufer, David Mancl, Shelle Mancl, Julia McInnis, Tania Meireles, Donna Jarvis-Miller, Tom Montgomery, Leah Norton, Skip Norton, Christina Pyles, Anne Short, Michelle Thomas, Jo Koscuisko, Janice Rivera, Ken Rivera, Andre Lopez, Judy Lopez, Diane Riser and Kenyatta Williams.

Meredith reminded residents that all committees are looking for new members as existing members relocate or take on other duties. The committees for the community are: **Social; Parking and Safety; Budget & Finance; Communications; Landscape, Pool & Open Space; Architecture Review; Covenants.** The time commitment is flexible – if you have 2 hours a month or 10, you can help with web site maintenance, pool policy review, activities planning, neighborhood safety and parking concerns and a host of other things. That old saying is true: many hands make light work.

Residents were asked to indicate their interest and willingness to volunteer on the form that was passed around by Cardinal Management. Everyone was thanked in advance for their commitment to making our community better.

Bond release, gates and the stop sign

Centex, the builder of record, appears to be on track to come off bond in early 2009, pending a walkthrough by Fairfax County. *Bond* is the money paid to the County by the developer to insure the community is built to the site plan approved by the county. Once the builder comes off bond, the private portions of the community will fully become the financial responsibility of the HOA. Additionally, gates, required by the site plan, have been installed at the intersections of



Lindberg and Cyrene, and Grey Goose and Lindberg. We could not stop their installation, but the Board plans to explore our options and hold community meetings to get resident opinions about them.

The stop sign previously installed at the circle on Cyrene has been removed. Thanks to all for their patience while we worked with Centex and the County to remedy this situation.

The stop sign at the circle on Cyrene was installed by Centex as the demarcation point between public and private property. Note: at this writing, it has been removed.

2009 HOA plans:

- Extend pool hours to include night-time swimming on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.
- Purchase new pool furniture to improve the overall aesthetic of the neighborhood, as well as to make using the pool more enjoyable.
- Re-visiting landscape improvements including possible turf replacement in the common areas, hardscape and planting at the community entry points and other improvements.
- Improve ways to communicate with you, including permanent signage, a new web site and more regular print and email messages. Thanks to Donna Jarvis-Miller, who recently volunteered to be the Chair of the Communications Committee, a post which had been vacant for two years.
- The Board has already walked the community to identify areas which need additional “fill-in” lighting and will be working with Dominion to get that installed.
- The Social committee – with your help – will be planning an expanded schedule of community events (*see the calendar of events on page 7 in this newsletter*).
- Will continue exploring the possibility of retrofitting of the pool house into a community meeting space.



Dues increase

After the board reviews the budget with Cardinal then a determination will be made if dues will increase in 2010. In planning the 2009 budget, many line items were reduced in order to keep the budget balanced, knowing that additional funds could come from existing surplus in the operating account. This surplus is due to the delays Centex has faced in coming off bond and due to our not needing to pay for items such as snow removal and street and sidewalk maintenance. Once Centex comes off bond, the Board expects this surplus to quickly be put to good use. The Board will be studying the financial future of the Association in the coming months and will keep all members informed as we explore different increase options.



Q & A About Your HOA and Community

By Karen Goraleski

Why are boats and trailers allowed to park on Cyrene Boulevard?

The area of Cyrene Boulevard between the South Meadows Condominiums and The Grove at Huntley Meadows is owned by the county. As a public road, the parking of boats and trailers is permitted. The area of Cyrene Boulevard between the South Meadows Condominiums and The Grove at Huntley Meadows is owned by the county. As a public road, the parking of boats and trailers is permitted. For three years, the Association has worked to change the status of this road to a Community Parking District that allows for the parking of cars only. The end is finally in sight as a public hearing on our petition will be held March 30 at 4:30 pm. For more details, please visit [HYPERLINK "http://www.gathm.com"](http://www.gathm.com)



I heard that the single-family homes and townhomes have different homeowner's association dues rates? Is this true?

Yes. Homeowners on Lindberg Drive have some services provided by Fairfax County rather than our HOA because Lindberg is a county owned street. The difference in the lower HOA dues for single family homes reflects the portion of services provided by Fairfax County to the homeowners on Lindberg Drive. In other words, the townhomes have to pay for some services that are provided by the County to those living on Lindberg.

If the bond issuance is still being held, our community's homeowners do not have full control of how our community grows and develops. When will the bond be released?

Bond release has been a long, process in the Grove. As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, we believe bond release is on schedule for April. You may have noticed the gatges have been installed (as per the site plan) and our curbs have been re-painted. Release is contingent upon satisfactory completion of all builder/developer plans submitted to Fairfax County as agreed upon by the builder and the County. The Board will participate in a courtesy walk with the builder in order to ensure our concerns are on record. More details about that walk will be available once it's scheduled.

I'm all for wine tasting, but do my HOA dues go to paying for these? It seems that I am always seeing a sign for a wine-tasting.

No HOA dollars are used to support these events. These gatherings are hosted by a homeowner, at their own expense. Anyone that is interested can host one. We have had months where it was once a month, and have had months where there weren't any.

Architectural Review Committee

By Todd Jones, ARC Chair



The Architectural Review Committee (ARC) is charged by the HOA Board with reviewing applications for exterior modifications to your home and grounds. As a homeowner in the Grove, it is your responsibility to submit applications prior to performing certain exterior modifications to your home to ensure they are consistent with community standards.

If you have previously made a modification, such as constructed a deck or fence, and did not submit an application, you are encouraged to submit one so the management company will have a record of this activity. Keep in mind that unapproved modifications to your land and structure will be noted in the HOA resale package if/when you choose to put your home for sale.

The intent of the ARC review process is not to pick and chose what can or cannot be done to your home, but to protect our investments by helping to maintain a reasonable appearance of our community. Frankly, would you want to come home to find your neighbor had painted their front door lime green?

If you have any questions about the ARC Design Standards, please contact the ARC, we will be happy to answer any questions. If you are interested in serving, we currently have two openings on our committee and conduct nearly all our work by email.

2009 Social Calendar

Whoa! Slow Down!

January



17th - Wine Tasting
David and Shelle Mancel hosted the January wine tasting and several members of the community were able to attend. January's tasting had an "inaugural" theme which inspired everyone to come dressed in red, white, and blue to share a variety of wines from across the country.

April

4th -Easter Egg Hunt

Join the kids in the neighborhood to search for candy-filled eggs and see what prize your Golden Egg will win. Visit the association's website (gathm.com) for details on time and location. Send your child's name and age to social@gathm.com to let us know you are participating. Want to help volunteer? Contact the Social Committee at social@gathm.com.



18th - Community Garage Sale

8am - 1pm

Participating families host their own garage sale on their driveway and/or garage - advertising provided by TGAHMHOA. Please email social@gathm.com for more info.



May

16th - Wine Tasting

Hosted by Chris and Donna Jarvis-Miller, 7593 Grey Goose Way, 7 - 10 p.m.

July

16th - Wine Tasting

Hosted by David and Shelle Mancl, 7535 Great Sawm Court, 7 - 10 p.m.

September

8th - Block Party, 12 - 4pm

26th - Community Garage Sale, 8am - 1pm

October

TBA - Wine Tasting

24th - Halloween Parade and Pizza Lunch, 11:30am



Please remember to stay at the speed limit as you drive in our community. In particular, many cars entering and leaving the community via Cyrene have a tendency to speed. While the bend in Cyrene is slight, it is enough to prevent other drivers and pedestrians from seeing you and you seeing them. Add to this, the boats and trailers parked on both sides blocking your view, and you have a recipe for tragedy. Please be aware and slow down.



Volunteering - Make Your Community Your Own!

As a resident of Huntley Grove Meadows, you have an ownership in your community. Get involved with one of the many committees for as little as two hours a month.

Like planning parties and fun activities for groups? Join the Social Committee by contacting Christina Pyles at social@gathm.com. This committee plans all the community wide events for our families.

Wanting to make sure that the architectural standards are maintained? Become a member of the Architectural Review Committee by contacting Todd Jones at architecture@gathm.com

Communications more your style? Want to write an article for the HOA newsletter? Contact the Communications Committee at comms@gathm.com.

There are myriad ways you can volunteer to help make your community better. With many hands the work is light - so put your hands in the mix and become active in your HOA!



HOA Meeting Schedule

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Mount Vernon Government Center, 2511 Parker's Lane. Upcoming meeting dates are:

**4/21, 5/19, 6/16, 7/21,
8/18, 9/15, 10/20, and
11/17.**

The annual meeting is in December--- date to be determined.

Visit www.gathm.com for directions.

HOA Directory

**Architectural Review
Committee -**
architecture@gathm.com

Board of Directors -
board@gathm.com

Communications Committee -
comms@gathm.com

**Landscape & Open Space
Committee -**
landscape@gathm.com

Parking & Safety Committee -
parkingsafety@gathm.com

Social Committee -
social@gathm.com

Webmaster -
webmaster@gathm.com

Cardinal Management

**Victoria Garner
Community Manager**

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This is an official publication of The Grove at Huntley Meadows Homeowners Association. Publication of resolutions, rules, regulations, and meetings duly adopted or called by the Board of Directors serves as official notice to the membership and residents of meetings or the adoption and implementation of these enactments of rules for the purpose of enforcement.