

Walnut Hill Quarterly

July 2007

Produced by the Walnut Hill Homeowners Association

Summer Edition

From the President

Dear Fellow Walnut Hill Neighbors:

I hope this finds you preparing to enjoy the relaxed, longer days of summer. May your summer travels be safe, pleasurable and restful.

The Walnut Hill Homeowners' Association 2007 annual meeting took place in April, during which time the following Board members were elected:

Tracy Carney – President
Valerie Mawdsley – Vice
President/Secretary
Charlie Errico – Treasurer

If this Board looks familiar to you, it's because it is the same as last year! On behalf of the entire Board, thanks SO much for your vote of confidence in our leadership! Other community leadership roles will be filled as follows: Charlie Errico has agreed to continue to head the Grounds Committee; Dave Deal will head the Covenants Committee; Valerie Mawdsley will chair the Newsletter Committee; and Denise Errico will lead the Social Committee.

Since many of you were unable to attend the meeting, I wanted to inform you of a couple of significant issues that were addressed:

- As previously communicated, we are required to conduct a reserve study every five years to analyze our community's assets and to assess the adequacy of our replacement reserves. Mason & Mason Capital Reserve Analysts conducted this study in January and concluded that our replacement reserves are currently insufficiently funded. Accordingly, the Board recommended a \$50 per quarter dues increase effective January 1, 2008, to

\$269 per quarter, in order to provide for adequate funding of our replacement reserves. Those in attendance overwhelmingly approved this recommendation.

- Based on my discussions with Fairfax County and Mason District officials, the nine Seville homes located to the north of our property remain under construction with an uncertain completion date. I have been assured that the contractor's bond will not be released until our community's retention pond is restored to its previous condition by the contractor, including remediation of silt issues. Plans for the proposed Sandals Estate Park community, which will be located on the Buddhist Temple site adjacent to our community, have thus far not been approved by the county. It is believed that plans for the community will ultimately be approved; however, revised plans have yet to be submitted.

Also, other matters related to grounds, social activities and our community newsletter were addressed at the meeting and are communicated elsewhere within this newsletter.

As a reminder, the Covenants Committee should review and approve any project that substantially impacts your home's exterior or grounds. Sherry Crum, who serves as our representative from Capitol Property Management, will coordinate the Covenants Committee's review and approval of your project and will help ensure that all projects are considered in a timely manner. Sherry can be contacted at scrum@capitolcorp.com or (703)707-6404.

We welcome your ideas and suggestions as to how we can improve and enhance our community. And, we welcome your help and involvement in making Walnut Hill a better place to live.

Yours in service,
Tracy Carney
carneys@cox.net

Property Management Contacts

Should you have any concerns regarding Walnut Hill, contact Sherry Crum at Capitol Property Management:
3914 Centreville Road, Suite 300
Chantilly, VA 20151
phone: (703) 707-6404; fax (703) 707-6401; email: scrum@capitolcorp.com

Our Community

Grounds Committee News

By Charlie Errico

A big THANK YOU to Chuck and Mary Fields for replacing the broken and missing fence rails along Annandale Road!

In late May, seven new crape myrtles were planted on the common ground. Crape myrtles are hearty and provide color throughout the summer and early fall. At present, there are three trees that did not make it through the winter. They will be removed in June and overgrown trees will be trimmed. The large holly in the entry circle has been shaped and fresh annuals will be planted for our residents to enjoy when they enter Walnut Hill. The members of the grounds committee and the board officers walk the ground on a regular basis. We have identified several sink holes and erosion problems that we have asked our landscape company, Cedar Run, to address. With so much common ground, there will always be new issues to resolve. If you see a problem, please do not hesitate to contact Charlie or Valerie. Cedar Run will normally, weather permitting, cut and trim the common area on Mondays. They have been very receptive to our feedback and now have a pretty clear understanding of where the common ground ends and individual home owner's property begins. With the warm weather now well underway, we all look forward to greeting our neighbors as they walk through the grounds. We are committed to making our little community a safe and attractive enclave for both people and animals alike.

Social Committee News

By Denise Errico

By the time this newsletter goes to press, the year's first progressive dinner will have occurred. Approximately thirty people have eagerly agreed to attend with three couples hosting the event. The next newsletter will report on the scrumptious menu and the good times that were shared by all. Plans are also underway for our annual fall cookout. We will provide more details on this event in our next newsletter.

Radon – the hidden threat...part deux
by Dennis Williams

From Wikipedia: The [United States Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) strongly recommends action for any house with a concentration higher than 148 Bq/m3 (given as 4 pCi/L), and encourages action starting at 74 Bq/m3 (given as 2 pCi/L). EPA radon risk level tables including comparisons to other risks encountered in life are available in their citizen's guide.^[5] Nearly one in 15 homes in the U.S. has a high level of indoor radon according to their statistics. The U.S. Surgeon General and EPA recommend all homes be tested for radon. Since 1985, millions of homes have been tested for radon in the U.S. (Editor's note: Interesting, nobody defines what the abbreviations mean, e.g., "Bq/m3" and "pCi/L," although the latter is something like pico Curies per liter.)

OK, the EPA strongly recommends action at 4 pCi/L or above, and recommends action starting at 2 pCi/L. So what was the outcome of our test? **Our test results: 1.5 pCi/L; below the lower threshold.**

This probably means that we may do an annual check. In the April 2007 Newsletter I gave full kit details, but to remind a Radon Gas test kit by Pro Lab is available at Home Depot for \$19.95. Perhaps we should all test our homes periodically.

WHHA

Board of Directors

Tracy Carney,
President
Valerie Mawdsley,
Vice-President and
Secretary
Charles Errico, Treasurer

Newsletter Crew

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The Capitol Management website includes a community web page for each client. You can check out the web site at: <http://www.capitolcorp.com/index.htm>.

Click on "The CPM Community" graphic in the top right-hand corner of the home page, and then click on Walnut Hill Homeowners Association.

In the Area

If you like to play golf, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf to phone in or go online and reserve your tee time at the Fairfax County public courses.

Recently the American Gas Association participated in the official launch of the nationwide 811 call-before-you-dig number. As you all should know, excavation damage to underground pipelines is the number one safety issue for distribution pipelines. And excavation damage to other underground facilities, such as power, cable and telephone lines are at the very least disruptive. Nationwide, the average is one hit a minute and a significant number of these incidents are caused by the excavator digging without requesting underground facility locates. Now, all excavators – including those of us who like to build decks or plant or remove bushes and trees – should be able to remember to dial 811 to get lines marked.

The storm water drains that we see at various intervals in the curbing along the streets of Walnut Hill are designed to direct storm water away from the houses and into either the settling pond or the wetlands. They serve the vital function of keeping the water out of our basements. Nothing but water should be in the drains. In my wanderings around the property, I've noticed beer cans, dog dirt (albeit in plastic bags), Dixie cups and other types of refuse at the outlets of the storm drains. The pond is full of this stuff. These things pollute the environment, trash the neighborhood and generally make Walnut Hill a less attractive and less healthy place to live. Please put the trash in the trash barrels and save the environment.
-- Submitted by a concerned homeowner

What Makes a Deer Tick?

[Editor's Note: The author is not a medical professional and is not authorized or qualified to make a medical diagnosis or give medical advice. The information in this article was compiled from the web sites of the Virginia Department of Health and the Fairfax County Health Department.]

Although we live inside the Beltway and in an urban environment, we are surrounded by woods and parkland where many annoying creatures, including deer ticks, may be found. Deer ticks can transmit Lyme disease (named for Lyme, Connecticut, where it was first identified). Deer ticks are smaller than common dog or cattle ticks, sometimes no bigger than a pinhead. Notwithstanding their name, deer ticks also feed on rodents and small mammals. They are most likely to transmit Lyme disease after feeding for two or more days. Transmission of Lyme disease from an infected tick to a human is unlikely to occur before 36 hours of tick attachment. Thus, daily checks for ticks and prompt removal of an attached tick will help prevent infection.

Within 2 days to a few weeks after being bitten by an infected tick, most people (about 60%) will develop a circular or oblong rash. It usually increases to 2 to 3 inches in diameter, sometimes larger. In addition to, or instead of the rash, infection may produce a fatigue, headache, fever, stiff neck, muscle aches, joint pain, and swollen lymph nodes. Anyone who develops any of these signs and symptoms, especially after being bitten, should promptly seek medical attention. Lyme disease is easily treated with oral antibiotics such as tetracycline or penicillin.

More information about Lyme disease is available on the web at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd.

Help VDOT and Fairfax County Maintain Roads, Signals, Signs from Gabe Goldberg

If you notice a broken traffic signal, missing or hidden sign, dangerous road hazard, or anything else road- or traffic-related needing attention -- do you know what to do? Here's an easy solution: Call or email our Fairfax County supervisor's office at (703) 560-6946 or provdist@fairfaxcounty.gov. Micah Himmel is Supervisor Linda Q. Smyth's Administrative Aide responsible for street lights/signs, Fairfax County Department of Transportation, VDOT, snow removal (public and private), public works, and much more, as described on the staff Web page linked from Supervisor Smyth's Web site, <<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/providence/>>. Mr. Himmel is efficient, persistent, and courteous about pursuing various departments and agencies for results and explanations. It's easy to report problems and satisfying to see them quickly resolved.

Community Services Recommendations

This is purely *caveat emptor* and members should make individual decisions.

One of your neighbors has recommended Lynn Tobias as a pet sitter and dog walker. Her contact information is 703.560.0800 (home); 703.677.6335 (cell), LTOBVA@Yahoo.com

Joan Keenan has recommended Celia Limpiaz as a cleaning lady. She is extremely reliable and honest and has worked for more than four years for Joan. She can be reached at 571.239.2348

Please provide us with your recommendations! Thanks.

Thank you to those of you who have updated their email addresses. Please let us know

Police Ride Along by Gabe Goldberg

I recently spent a 12-hour shift riding on patrol with a Fairfax County police officer. This experience (and it needn't be the full 12 hours!) is available to anyone living or working in Fairfax County at no cost, by completing a simple application form at least a week or so before the desired date to ride along. I don't see the form online so it might be necessary to call or visit the station covering this area -- remember, while Walnut Hill is in the Providence supervisor's district, we're patrolled out of the Mason District station at 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale, Virginia, 22003, telephone 703-256-8035.

While we didn't catch bank robbers or apprehend international terrorists, the experience gave interesting insights into what happens in the ubiquitous patrol cars. The technology used and professionalism on display are quite a contrast to the 1950s "Car 54" television show (described in <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0054528/> but apparently not available from Netflix, too bad).

The shift started with roll call, with the sergeant and lieutenant giving patrol and special assignments and detectives outlining key open cases. Once on the street, activities were varied: making traffic stops and checking for additional violations, taking missing persons reports, investigating automobile accidents, assisting at school crossings, answering reports of fights, etc.

As a "ride along" you're able to get as up-close a view as you care to see -- I listened in on radio communication, observed computerized call dispatching and wants/warrants checking, and asked questions for the entire ride. It was especially interesting having done the ride along just before a CAC (Citizens Advisory Committee, first Tuesday of the month, open to all) meeting featuring a presentation on coming-soon technology, including automatic scanning and checking of license plates, voice control of all patrol car equipment, GPS guidance for routes and events, and much more.

Coming Soon....a Beth Moore Bible Study in our neighborhood!!!

Do you take God at His Word, believing what He has told us, or do you just believe in His existence and perhaps, the salvation He offers? Beth Moore, a nationally known Bible teacher, came face to face with this question well into adulthood and offers us a study to examine our belief system as well. **Believing God: Experiencing a Fresh Explosion of Faith** explores what it means to really believe God. Two classes will be offered in the neighborhood - one on Wednesday mornings and another on Wednesday evenings. Please call **Liz Bryant (703-876-4780; 7507 Silver Maple Lane)** to sign up or if you have additional questions. Sign up quickly! Classes will begin Wednesday, September 5 and run through November 7.

WHHOA Newsletter Submissions

If you would like to submit something that falls into one of the categories above, please do so by email or by personal contact with one of the Newsletter staff. We use the term "staff" loosely here because we all have day jobs. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit any submissions or not print a submission if it is not in the Community's best interests. Please, no anonymous submissions. Names and email addresses of the Newsletter staff are in the Newsletter. Submission dates, more or less, are:

For the April Newsletter – 1st of March

For the July Newsletter – 1st of June

For the October Newsletter – 1st of September

For the January Newsletter – 1st of December

Note: Capitol Management has agreed to post this Newsletter on their website for your future reference