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# Fairlington Commons Newsletter

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3367 S. Wakefield Street, Arlington, VA 22206

July 2000

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## Pool Party Scheduled!

**O**n Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, Fairlington Commons is once again hosting our annual End-of-Summer Swimming Pool Party. As in past years, all residents, Co-Owners and tenants alike, are invited to partake in the fun, which begins at 6:00 p.m. at the Swimming Pool on the Wakefield Circle.

This year's event is our sixth annual Swimming Pool Party, and features Commons provided hot dogs, hamburgers, and sodas, as well as an opportunity to sample the salads, desserts, and other dishes provided by those attending. Past parties have been a great success, with participants having more than enough to eat and a great time renewing acquaintances and making new ones.

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We do need to locate a gas grill for the barbecue - last year's grill moved with its owner! If you'd be willing to loan us a grill, or if you'd like to help with food or other arrangements, or if you just need additional information, please contact Cathy Malin at 931-9260.

Oh, if it should happen to rain, we'll simply hold the party at the same time on Sunday the 10<sup>th</sup>.

## This Newsletter

**I**t's been a while since we've published one of these Fairlington Commons Newsletters. If you're reading this, it's because you live in or own property in Fairlington Commons, or, as the long-term residents call it, "The Commons."

Those who are new to our community might ask, "What is the Commons?" Well, it's the 23 acres of land between I-395, South 34<sup>th</sup> Street, and South Utah Street. It's the 229 condominium units that are situated on that land, and its the tennis court, swimming pool, and basketball court located in the Wakefield Circle. Its your condominium association, your home, and this is your newsletter.

## Condominium Fees

**T**hat check you write once a month, the one to pay your condominium fees. It pays for your water, sewer, trash, recycling, grounds keeping, snow removal, streetlights, structural maintenance and insurance, recreational facilities, administrative costs, and the myriad of other expenses incurred in operating and maintaining our community. Your condominium fees haven't increased in the past four years, and although an increase is eventually inevitable due to inflation, your board of directors is trying to hold the line by tight fisted, cost effective management.

Every Co-Owner agrees in writing, at the time of settlement, to pay condominium fees, and, if they aren't paid on time, late fees. It's your obligation as a part of living in the Commons. Trouble is, there are always a few Co-Owners who seem to disregard their obligations. We're working on a few of those now, in cooperation with our attorney and the Courts of Arlington County. Non-payment of condominium fees isn't fair to the other Co-Owners, it deprives us of the goods and services necessary to the operation of our community, and it will not be tolerated.

## Out and About

Next time you're at the pool, say hello to our lifeguards, Jeff Malin and Jessica Evans. Jeff grew up here in our community. His mother, Cathy, coordinates our annual pool party, and for years helped manage our pool.

Jessica's aunt and uncle lived in our community, and although they've moved on, Jessica has become a part of our life here through her work at the pool. Both will be off to college in August, Jeff as a sophomore, and Jessica as a freshman.

The guy with the green thumb who keeps the pool plantings watered and smiling is Bob Schuster, Member at Large of our Board of Directors. The other guy who floats in and out – no pun intended, and who's always tinkering with something, is Bernie Weaver, Board President and Pool Manager. Oh, say hello to Kathy Spitz too. She can usually be found exercising in the pool or walking Earl, her black Scottish terrier. Kathy writes and delivers our pool passes – a summer long job!!!

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### Trash

No, not the tabloid kind, but what you put out along the curb every Monday and Thursday evening. Some of us have been abusing the trash pickup rules, so here they are again for those who are new to our community, or who suffer from senior moments when it comes to remembering them. At the risk of sounding Draconian, we all need to pay a bit more attention to these rules – some of our neighboring associations assess fines or seek legal action for disregarding their rules regarding trash pickup – an option that is open to the Commons as well. Please help keep our community neat, clean, and sanitary by observing the following:

**Collection Times** - Trash is picked up on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Recycling is picked up on Friday mornings only. Trash and recycling must be at the curb or customary pickup point no later than 7:00 a.m. to ensure pickup. Residents are permitted to place trash and recycling at designated pickup points after 9:00 p.m. the previous evening. Trash and recycling not out by 7:00 a.m. on designated pickup days should be held for the next scheduled pickup. **Do not put it out late because it will not be picked up!!!**

**Recycling** - Newspapers should be bundled in paper bags or tied securely with strong twine. Bundles may include inserts and magazines. Glass bottles, jars, and aluminum cans should be rinsed and may be commingled in paper bags or a recycling container.

**Approved Containers** - Trash placed for pickup shall be in heavyweight plastic bags only. Dark colored plastic bags are recommended.

**Trashcans** – Trashcans will not be used to place trash at pickup points. Additionally, trashcans and recycling bins are not to be stored in the *General Common Element*, defined as any area outside of a unit, fenced patio, or deck. They may be stored inside units, within fenced patios, or on decks. Storage of trash cans and recycling bins on or beside front porches or outside of fenced patios or decks is not permitted.

**Abandoned Cans and Bins** - Recycling bins remaining at recycling pickup points more than 24 hours after the designated 7:00 a.m. pickup time will be considered abandoned and will be confiscated. Any trashcans or recycling bins otherwise discovered in the general common element will also be considered abandoned and will be confiscated.

**Questions about Trash or Recycling** - Questions about trash, recycling, special pickups, or other trash or recycling related subjects should be directed to AAA/Rainbow Recycling and Trash Removal Services at 703-818-8222 or to the Fairlington Commons Board of Directors at 3367 South Wakefield Street, Arlington, VA 22206.

## Protect Your Home!

Unfortunately, there are those co-owners who, through lack of understanding or ignorance of our By-Laws, believe that the Commons is a welfare state in which they have no responsibility for the protection and maintenance of their property. Unfortunately, nothing could be further from the truth.

Section 2 of our By-Laws places the responsibility for repairs to the interior of the family unit squarely on the shoulders of the Co-Owner. In addition, it clearly states that Co-Owners shall reimburse the

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Commons for any expenses incurred in repairing or replacing any common element damaged through the Co-Owners fault.

The Board of Directors attempts to take a middle of the road position with regard to liability for repairs, and expects that each Co-owner will exercise reasonable and prudent judgment with regard to protecting their investment in the Commons. To assist you in that regard, here are some tips learned the hard way by Co-Owners in the Fairlington Commons school of hard knocks:

**Insurance**. Invest in a good, comprehensive, condominium owners or renters insurance policy. If your unit burns, floods, or suffers major disaster, our insurance policy only restores the structure to its original condition at renovation. Those fine new cabinets that you installed, the wall-to-wall carpet, the fancy wallpaper, etc, is not covered by our policy, nor are your furnishings or personal possessions. Purchase a good Insurance policy, and keep it in force!!!

**Sewer Coverage**. While you're insurance shopping, get sewer backup insurance. It doesn't cost much, \$10 to \$25 a year, and if your basement ever fills up with, well, you know what, you'll be glad that you had it.

**Be Observant and Proactive**. If the downspout extension in your patio becomes detached from the downspout, or if something has broken, do not expect us to discover it during our next séance. Inspect your property periodically, and if something's amiss, repair it, or drop a note requesting maintenance in the silver mailbox by the pool. If you send us a note, please provide your full address and phone number. We'll either repair it, or we'll advise you if it's your responsibility to have it repaired.

**Your Air Conditioner Will Get You!** Check your air conditioner's condensate line to be certain that it is not clogged. Every year, several units suffer severe water damage because the condensate line from the air conditioner has become blocked with dirt, bugs, etc. If your air conditioner condensate line becomes blocked and causes a flood - you pay! The commons has no liability. And, if you live in a building with adjacent units, and the flood damages your neighbor's unit, you pay for that too. If you don't know how to check the condensate line yourself, there are many good, competent air conditioning service companies in our area. Believe us when we tell you that the service call is a lot less expensive than a damage claim or a neighbor's lawsuit.

**And So Will Your Windows!** If you've got separate storm windows, it's your responsibility to make certain that the drain holes located in the bottom of the window frames are open. They tend to become clogged with dirt or paint, and can cause water to collect, which has led to collapsed ceilings and walls for which the Commons is not liable. If you need assistance clearing the drain holes or freeing stuck windows, our painter, John Healy, is more than willing to assist you. And yes, he really does do windows.

## Commons Parking

The number of parking related complaints brought to the attention of The Board of Directors has increased over the past year. Co-Owners and residents are reminded that compliance with the following parking rules will provide equitable availability of parking resources for all Commons residents and relieve the Board from the necessity to take more stringent measures to enforce them.

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### **Conformance with Virginia and Arlington County Law.**

All vehicles parked in Fairlington Commons Parking lots must be in full conformance with the laws of the State of Virginia and the County of Arlington. The Arlington County Police have been granted written permission to enter Fairlington Commons Parking lots for the purpose of enforcing the law. Any vehicle not in conformance with the law will be reported to the Arlington County Police for appropriate action. Any vehicle parked in our parking lots that is not in conformance with Virginia and Arlington County law will be towed.

**Storage.** Vehicles may generally not be stored in Fairlington Commons parking lots. Any vehicle parked in a parking lot and not moved for more than 45 days will be considered a stored vehicle and will be towed. Residents who plan to be absent for more than 45 days and who wish to leave a vehicle in their regular parking lot should coordinate in writing with the Board of Directors prior to your absence. The south (walled) side of the upper Utah Street Parking lot has been designated a vehicle storage area, however, no vehicle may be stored there without the written permission of the Board.

**Tandem or double parking.** Arlington County law has designated the center portion of our parking lots as fire lanes that must be kept open for the passage of emergency vehicles. To conform to this law, vehicles may not be parked one behind the other, only one vehicle may be parked in each marked space, and vehicles may not be parked outside of marked spaces. Motorcycle owners should contact the Board of Directors regarding parking for their vehicles.

**Two Cars Per Unit.** No unit may park more than two cars, including guests, in a parking lot. Any cars in excess of the two car limit must park on the street.

**Vehicle Repair or Maintenance.** No vehicle repair or changing of fluids is permitted in the parking lots, however, checking of fluid levels or replacement of a flat tire is permissible. Vehicles with significant fluid leaks must be removed from the parking lot until repairs can be made.

**Recovery of Towed Vehicles.** If your vehicle is towed from a Fairlington Commons parking lot, you must contact Frank’s Towing at 703-412-1111 to recover it. If your vehicle is towed from an Arlington County Street, you must contact the Arlington County Police Department for information on how to recover your vehicle.

## Fairlington Commons On-Street Parking

The laws of the State of Virginia and the County of Arlington govern on-street parking within Fairlington Commons. Enforcement of those laws is provided by the Arlington County Police Department, which patrols our community on a regular basis. Your Board of Directors is not a police agency - residents are encouraged to report violations of Arlington County on-street parking regulations to the Arlington County Police.

In addition to compliance with applicable laws, residents and their guests are requested to park courteously by not parking too closely to other vehicles, not taking up two parking spaces, parking in front of their own units to the extent possible, parking their second cars away from their units, and

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requesting guests traveling with them out-of-town to not park directly in front of neighboring units.

## Community Appearance

Over the past several years, many steps have been taken to maintain or improve the appearance of the Commons. Parking lots have been paved. Curbs have been repaired. Painting is done more frequently. The tennis court, swimming pool, and basketball court have been renovated, and increased attention has been directed towards building and grounds maintenance.

Even with all of this effort, the continued assistance of each and every Co-Owner and Tenant is required if we are to continue to maintain the appearance and value of our community. The following items are of particular interest to the Board and will continue to receive emphasis:

- Storage of personal items in the General Common Element is not permitted. In Fairlington Commons, the General Common Element is defined as any area outside of a residence, patio, or deck. Common areas in our apartment buildings are also considered to be General Common Element. Personal items found in the General Common Element are subject to confiscation without notice.
- Unapproved exterior improvements continue to be a concern. While we’re all for maintaining our property in the best possible condition, the uniform appearance of our community must also be maintained. Co-Owners contemplating any exterior improvements, including window or door replacements, plantings, etc., must secure written Board permission before accomplishing

any work. The Board will direct and can enforce the removal of any unapproved exterior modifications or improvements.

### Commons Facts

- 229 Units – 2<sup>nd</sup> Smallest Association
- 23 Acres – Largest on South Side
- Self-Managed
- First Virginia Condominium

## Annual Meeting Scheduled

The annual meeting of the Fairlington Commons Council of Co-Owners will be held Thursday, October 12<sup>th</sup> in Room 10 of the Community Center, 3308 South Stafford Street, beginning at 7:30 p.m. The primary purpose of the meeting will be to elect board members and to discuss topics of mutual interest to Commons residents.

This year, one seat on the Board of Directors is up for election. Anyone interested in running for the Board of Directors should notify Board President Bernie Weaver prior to Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup> in order to be included on the proxy ballot.

The proxy ballot will be mailed to all Co-Owners with the formal meeting notification. Mr. Weaver may be contacted by telephone at 703-671-7024, or by mail at 3367 South Wakefield Street, Arlington, VA 22206 - the mailbox at the pool. You must be a resident Co-Owner to serve on the Board. If you are interested in additional information about responsibilities and time required,

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please contact a Board member with your questions.

### Tree Planting

As many of you know, the Board is planning to plant trees in selected locations throughout the Commons in the fall. In preparation for that activity, we are currently compiling a list of locations where Co-Owners would prefer to have trees planted.

Over past years, we have lost many trees due to factors over which we have little control, specifically age or disease. We have also lost many trees due to Co-Owner neglect in not adequately watering.

The Board has explored, on several occasions, the possibility of contracting with our grounds keepers for tree watering services. Unfortunately, those services are too expensive to be feasibly implemented in the Commons.

If you would like to have a tree planted, and have not previously informed the Board, please do so in writing. To be considered, your request must include a statement indicating the name of the individual who will be responsible for watering the tree. Requests for tree planting should be delivered to the mailbox in front of the pool at 3367 South Wakefield Street. Tree planting requests will not be accepted over the telephone.

Several Co-Owners previously submitted written request to the Board indicating a desire to have a tree planted adjacent their unit, and stated in their request that they would assume responsibility for watering and care of the tree. Those Co-Owners will not need to resubmit their requests. Co-Owners who previously submitted a request for a tree to the Board who did not comply with these requirements will need to resubmit their request.

Submission of a written request does not guarantee that a tree will be planted adjacent your unit this fall. Trees will be planted based on availability of funds, Board members time to manage the activity, and availability and suitability of the specific type of tree for the location in which it is intended.

## Concrete Work Delay

Many of you are aware that the Commons has a concrete replacement program through which damaged or deteriorated areas of our sidewalks and other infrastructure are replaced on an as-required basis. This work is accomplished for us by C.B. Turley Concrete Construction Company, a local, family operated business that has made its mark by providing quality workmanship for a reasonable price. By scheduling our concrete work during off-peak construction times, we are able to recognize significant cost savings.

Unfortunately, the extremely wet spring and summer weather has severely impacted scheduled replacement of concrete in the Commons. We are working with C. B. Turley to reschedule this work, which will be accomplished as soon as possible.

As previously stated, areas in the Commons where work is scheduled are selected on an as-required basis, with the most badly deteriorated areas or areas where safety is a primary concern being given highest priority. While it would be wonderful if several million dollars would suddenly appear that we could use for replacement of all of our concrete – reality tells us that we will need to continue incrementally replacing our concrete, usually during the early spring and late fall of each year. Over this spring and summer, the Board has taken a bit of a figurative beating from Co-Owners or tenants concerned over concrete repairs. Please be

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assured that we are doing all that we can in coordinating with our contractor to ensure that appropriate repairs are accomplished in as timely a fashion as possible.

While it may be unpleasant to wait for repairs to be economically and properly accomplished, forbearance would certainly outweigh the alternatives of sloppy or improper workmanship by a new or unknown contractor or increased costs that would be directly passed to owners and tenants in the form of higher condominium fees and rent.

## Commons Contractors

Following is a list of contractors most frequently employed to perform work about the Commons. Residents are reminded that the Board of Directors must authorize all work for which the Commons is expected to pay **prior to the work being performed**. All work to be performed at Commons expense shall be requested in writing by submitting a note to the Board of Directors at the pool mailbox at 3367 South Wakefield Street.

*If you have a plumbing emergency – please contact William Anderson immediately and directly.* He has been authorized by the Board of Directors to perform such work. The Board of Directors will determine who is responsible for payment of plumbing related work in accordance with Commons By-Laws.

Residents are reminded that before any changes or alterations are made in the exterior appearance of our buildings, for any reason, the Board of Directors must approve such changes. Any unauthorized alterations, changes, or improvements may be removed at the Co-Owners expense.

<b>Plumbing</b>	William Anderson 703-836-4716
<b>Accounting and Disclosure Papers</b>	Marsha Murphy 703-370-9100
<b>Certificates of Insurance</b>	Jerry Wagner 703-631-2882
<b>Lights &amp; Smoke Detectors</b>	Harry Hue Tran 703-207-3446
<b>Trash and Recycling</b>	Rainbow Waste 703-818-8222
<b>Grounds Maintenance</b>	BladeRunners 703-273-8873
<b>Carpentry</b>	Patrick McCloskey 301-218-0210
<b>Painting and Brickwork</b>	John Healy 301-888-1041
<b>Pest Control</b>	Callaghan's 703-799-4600
<b>Tree Work</b>	Guardian Tree 703-550-6900

**Fairlington Commons Board of Directors**

President	Bernie Weaver	671-7024
Vice President	Hugh Baumgardner	931-3973
Secretary	Brian Wegner	379-3156
Treasurer	Jeff Hull	578-9717
At Large	Bob Schuster	931-0201