
Fairlington Commons

Newsletter

3367 S. Wakefield Street, Arlington, VA 22206

June 2010

Great American Bake Sale

This will be the eighth consecutive year that the Commons has hosted "The Great American Bake Sale" in conjunction with the All Fairlington Fourth of July Celebration and Parade. Over the past seven years, our volunteers' efforts have raised more than \$5,200 for "Share Our Strength," a non-profit organization dedicated toward ending childhood hunger in America. The Fairlington Citizens Association (FCA) has also joined the Commons as a sponsor this year.

Long-time Commons resident Cathy Malin is the contact point for the Great American Bake Sale, and can be reached at 703-931-9260. Cathy needs the assistance of your baking services. You do not need to be an expert to participate, and every cookie, muffin and brownie can make a difference. Please assist by preparing home baked treats including cookies, brownies, muffins, loaf cakes, pies, or other baked goods – but please, no frostings or fillings. Volunteers are also needed in the sales booth on July 4th – that one small hour of your time spent helping to sell baked goods can make a difference!

The sale takes place in the North Fairlington Community Center Parking Lot on Sunday, July 4th beginning at 9:30 a.m. Baked goods can be delivered beginning at 9:00 a.m. So, come on out, meet your neighbors, and support this very worthy cause. And, if you can, please volunteer to help with baking, set up, and selling by calling Cathy!

Trash Violation Fines

Continued violations of our Trash and Recycling Rules have resulted in the Board establishing a policy at the June 10th meeting that provides for enforcement and collection of fines from repeat violators. Effective immediately, the first violation will result in a letter of warning to the Co-Owner of the unit responsible for the violation. Subsequent violations will result in a \$50 fine per occurrence assessed against the unit's condominium fee. Unpaid fines will result in the assessment of a late fee against the unit's condominium fees. Trash and Recycling Rules are posted on our Web Page at: <http://www.fairlington.org/CommonsTrashRulesOctober2009.pdf>. Unit Owner appeals of a notice or fine will be heard at monthly Board Meetings unless otherwise scheduled. The appeals process is included with the Trash and Recycling Rules.

Air Conditioner Condensate Drains

With the advent of hot, humid weather, many Commons residents have begun to use their Air Conditioners (AC) to cool and dehumidify their homes, daily removing many quarts or even gallons of water from the air inside. Now, here's the rub – that water must have a place to go or it will flood your unit or your neighbor's unit! Please, please, please make certain that your air conditioner is draining properly and that the condensate pipe leading from your AC unit has not been damaged or is not blocked by insect nests or accumulated dirt and debris. Our By-Laws are quite clear that the maintenance and replacement of AC units is a Co-Owner responsibility – which is to say that if your

AC drain is blocked and causes a flood, you are liable for any damage to your home, a neighbor's home, or to common property.

Temporary Board Member Changes

Arvy Myers, Commons Secretary, has been granted a leave of absence from our Board owing to temporary and unexpected work requirements at his place of employment. The Board has appointed former Secretary Bernie Weaver Acting Secretary to temporarily fill the position. Arvy plans to resume his duties as Secretary at the end of his four-month special assignment. The Board will revisit Arvy's status prior to the October Annual Meeting in the event that it becomes necessary to elect a permanent replacement.

Pool's Open

On Saturday, May 29th, our swimming pool opened for the 2010 swimming season. Co-Owners and Residents who anticipate using either the pool or our tennis court must be in possession of a Fairlington Commons Recreation Pass.

Recreation Pass Application Forms are available from the lifeguard at the pool if you have not already completed one. Recreation Passes will be available for pickup at the pool approximately one week after you submit your application form. If you have submitted your application but have not picked up your passes, please do so as soon as possible.

Once again this summer, High Sierra Pools, an Arlington company, is providing pool management services while Co-Owners Bernie Weaver, Kathy Spitz, Andrew Brodhead, Jason Rosenthal, and Debbie Griffin assisted in preparing our facility for operation. Many thanks to all for a job well done!

This year's primary lifeguard is Tsvetelina "Tsveti" Miteva. Tsveti is from Varna, Bulgaria's "Sea Capital." Tsveti holds a Bachelor's degree in Polygraphy and has previously worked in the

Fairlington Commons Newsletter

printing and media industry and as the manager of a chocolate shop. She is currently studying Library Management at the University of Library Studies and Information Technology in Sofia, Bulgaria's capital. This is Tsveti's first trip outside of Bulgaria.

Our second lifeguard is Martin "Marto" Pernikov, from Belene, a Northern Bulgarian city located on the Danube River adjacent the Romanian border. Marto is a student of languages at the St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, located in the town of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria. This is also Marto's first trip outside of Bulgaria.

Our pool's supervisor is Tomas Kolofik, from Bruno, second largest city in the Czech Republic. Tomas holds a Master's Degree in Diplomacy from the University of International Relations in Prague. This is Tomas's third summer with High Sierra Pools, and his first as a supervisor.

Professional Management Study Committee

After months of hard work, the Professional Management Study Committee is nearing the end of its mission of collecting information on professional management. The group expects to deliver a draft report of the research findings to the Board in July.

Since March, the four-member Committee has conducted interviews with three separate professional management companies. In addition, views on the subject have been obtained from current members of the Boards of three other South Fairlington communities. The Committee has met nearly every week to review its findings and plan for the work ahead.

Three volunteers from the Commons, assisted by Board member Noah Greenblatt, make up the group. Minutes of the Committee's activities are posted on the Commons website.

The Board will make comments on the draft report, and return it to the Committee to consider the changes. The Committee will then present the final report, probably by the Board's September meeting. The report will thereafter figure prominently as the Board considers whether or not to recommend professional management to the community and, if so, what services it will ask a management company to provide.

County Proposes Snow Removal Ordinance

Everyone remembers the winter of 2009-10 as a nightmare due to the heavy snowfall. Arlington County was deluged with complaints and, as a result, is weighing the adoption of a permanent snow removal ordinance that could have a significant impact on our community.

If adopted, the ordinance would require all property owners to remove accumulations of snow and ice of less than six inches on sidewalks adjacent to their property, a minimum of 36 inches wide (to accommodate wheelchairs, strollers, and adults with children in hand) within 24 hours after the snow stops falling. The removal time frame would stretch to 36 hours when six or more inches of snow accumulate. Failure to comply with the ordinance could result in a civil penalty.

An abatement condition in the ordinance would allow the County to remove the snow or ice when a property owner fails to comply and the violation presents an imminent threat to life or property.

Further, depositing snow or ice from a private property onto a County street, transit stop, sidewalk or any public property would be deemed a threat to public safety, and the ordinance imposes criminal penalties that could result in a class 4 misdemeanor.

The county called for comment on its proposal, and Commons President John Sinks responded with a letter in April. He noted that, because county plows

Fairlington Commons Newsletter

block access to our lots when they plow the streets, we are forced to remove that snow. While we make every attempt to place the snow in out-of-the way areas, such areas are not always available, especially after a heavy snowfall. As a result, our snow removal contractor may have no choice except to pile the snow in a vacant on-street parking space. Sinks pointed out that criminalizing this activity would have a chilling effect on the work of our snow removal contractor, potentially complicating access into and out of our parking lots.

The cost impact to the Commons could also be substantial if the county decides that more private sidewalks should be declared "public" for snow-removal purposes, especially those we deem to be of low priority. President Sinks noted that the community, not the county, is often in the best position to decide which sidewalks should be cleared, and suggested that if the county were to unilaterally declare some private sidewalks "public," then it should assume responsibility for their maintenance and replacement. The Commons now clears all walks that go from front entrances of residences to parking lots and/or bus stops.

President Sinks also expressed dissatisfaction with county snow removal efforts in the 3300 block of S. Wakefield Street and the 3200-3300 blocks of S. Utah Street. Although these areas are the responsibility of the county, the Commons was forced to provide coverage at its own expense because of the slow response of county plows.

The county held a public hearing on the proposed ordinance June 12 and was expected to vote on it afterwards. We have no word on what, if any, action the county has taken. When we know more, we will include the information in a forthcoming newsletter.

Don't Feed the Critters

It is tempting to place food out for our birds and squirrels, but the practice is strongly discouraged by wildlife biologists. Feeding makes

some animals more aggressive. It also leads to overpopulation, which in turn could promote disease among that species. In addition, birds and animals can be hosts for diseases in humans. An over-abundance of squirrels also can be a nuisance, especially if they find their way into attics, resulting in a cost to the community for their removal. Let wild animals fend for themselves: it is better for them and for us, too.

Parking Policy

Warm weather brings new residents, visitors, and guests to our community, many of whom may be unfamiliar with our parking rules. To avoid problems, Co-Owners and Residents should re-familiarize themselves with the rules, and be certain to inform their visitors of our parking requirements.

The most common parking rule violation is failure to display a parking pass, which is a hangtag suspended from the vehicle’s rear view mirror. The Commons owns and maintains ten off-street parking lots. Signs at the entrances to each note that the lots are private and that towing is enforced.

The Board has adopted a no-warning towing policy. This means any car not displaying a hangtag could be towed without notice to the vehicle owner. Board members and authorized parking monitors enforce this policy and A-1 Towing, our towing contractor, is authorized to make unannounced visits to our lots and to tow any vehicle not displaying a hangtag.

Commons parking rules and parking pass application forms are posted under the “Documents /Forms” section of our website. Every unit is entitled to two parking tags. Lost tags may be replaced for a \$25 fee by contacting Bernie Weaver (weaverbw@comcast.net). Broken tags are replaced without charge provided that you return your broken hangtag when requesting a new one.

Fairlington Commons Newsletter

Service Requests

Previous Newsletters have repeatedly requested Co-Owners and Residents to direct all requests for service to Commons Service Coordinator Eric Pamer at 703-379-0027 or at the Service Coordinator’s email address of:

CommonsService@hotmail.com.

It is important that this policy be followed as Eric is charged with the responsibility for logging and tracking each service request through completion.

In the event that you bring a service request to the attention of a Board member, please follow up by formally submitting the request to Commons Service so it can be logged and tracked through completion. Please do not assume that a Board member who you briefly talked with while they were out in the community will remember all the details of your request.

It is your responsibility as the reporting Co-Owner or Resident to ensure that your service request is formally and properly submitted. And if you submit a service request to a Board Member by email, also cc that request to Commons Service. Board members do not necessarily check their email while out of town, and even if they do, may not be able to act on it until they return. The CommonsService account is constantly monitored.

Fairlington Commons Board of Directors		
President	John Sinks <i>jsinks@comcast.net</i>	703-931-2660
Vice President	Robert Hedley	703-966-1234
Acting Secretary	Bernie Weaver <i>WeaverBW@comcast.net</i>	703-671-7024
Treasurer	James Sharpe <i>grosharp@msn.com</i>	
At Large	Noah Greenblatt <i>NoahG@excite.com</i>	703-200-7849