



Flints Grove HOA Newsletter

P.O. Box 83505 - Gaithersburg, MD 20883



President's Report by Brian Taylor

Now that we've reached the home stretch on 2007, it's a great time to reflect on the year so far and what we still need to do. Overall, the HOA is in good shape. Our finances are recovering from the strain of paving the walking paths and if hurricanes and other natural mischief leave us alone, we'll end the year with a solid contribution to the capital reserve. That's the money we hold to pay for major maintenance costs in the future. Rob Kemp, our FGHOA Treasurer, has all the details on page 5.

Over the past few years, we've made significant progress in repairing and renovating various HOA amenities. We were fortunate to have our bridge replaced by State Farm after it was destroyed by a falling tree. To keep the new bridge looking good, we recently had it stained and a non-skid coating applied to the deck. Thanks to the work of Rob Kemp and Steve Kelley, we were able to provide new basketball equipment and look forward to resurfacing the court next year. If you haven't been there, it's just off the short path that extends from the bottom of DeHaven Court.

An ongoing problem spot for both the HOA and many residents is fence maintenance. Most of the fences in the area are original and well past the time when they need to be replaced. Thanks to board member Leslie Press (see article on page 4) we arranged a discount program with Calco Fence to help residents with the cost of

new fencing. As part of this program, the FGHOA will replace the fences on each side of the entrance to the path off Pebble Hill Lane.

While some maintenance issues are obvious, the board is struggling to reach a consensus on how to help residents maintain the appearance of our community without overstepping our boundaries. The FGHOA by-laws and covenants provide clear guidance in some areas and little or no guidance in others. To help the board understand what you as a community would like us to do, over the next few months we will draft a document that outlines some basic community expectations. Our goal is to revise it based on community feedback and have a vote at the annual meeting in April. The guidelines will not have the same force of law as the by-laws and covenants, but will provide clear guidance to the board in cases where we are asked by residents to help a neighbor recognize and correct a maintenance deficiency.

We recently said goodbye to our long-time business manager, Hugh MacNeil and hired Association Bookkeeping Services to handle our billing. I want to thank Rob Kemp for his efforts and ask you to see page 5 for an article on the new arrangements.

On behalf of the FGHOA board, I want to thank everyone for their help and cooperation, and wish all our residents a safe and happy holiday season!

November 2007



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Association Bookkeeping
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(301-670-9270)

**HAPPY
THANSGIVING!**



Keeping Flints Grove Safe! by Matt Rogers

It is easy to overlook the subject of crime prevention in the Flints Gove neighborhood, since we live in one of the safest areas of Montgomery County. Though this is true, we should always be vigilant of questionable activity, no matter how trivial. Not only is it important to be mindful of our surroundings, watching out for our neighbors is just as important.

The following are simple yet effective tips to consider for ensuring safety:

Tips to Avoid Auto Break-ins

Secure doors and windows: Lock the doors, windows, trunk and sunroof every time you leave your car - no matter how briefly.

Valuables: Items in your car may be of little value to you, but a thief won't know that. If you can, take your belongings with you. If you can't, lock everything out of sight in the trunk.

Home Security

Keep your garage doors closed unless you are staying in the garage! Approximately 50% of thefts from homes occur due to garage doors being left open—while homeowners are in the main part of the house or backyard. Keep all windows locked when you are not home. Remember—the vast majority of burglaries occur in broad daylight.

Good lighting deters crime! Eliminate

dark areas around your home that make it easy for people to hide and keep your blinds drawn at night. If a street light burns out on your street, please call PEPCO with the light pole number and request for it to be repaired. Keep outside lights on all night; motion sensor lights work great, too.

If you are victimized, call police dispatch and file a police report. If the crime is in progress, call 911 immediately. Tell your neighbors that you were victimized so they can take precautions for their property as well as watch over your house and vehicle for you.

Look out for your neighbors—know the cars, children, and people who should be frequenting your street. If you see someone acting suspiciously or unusually, never confront them. Call police and ask for a unit to be sent out.

Cool Safety Tip:

Put your car keys beside your bed at night. If you hear a noise outside your home or someone trying to get in your house, just press the panic button for your car. The alarm will be set off, and the horn will continue to sound until either you turn it off or the car battery dies.

Montgomery County Police non-emergency number: 301-279-8000.

www.flintsgrovehoa.org

Community Notes

- The leaves are coming down with a vengeance! When you rake or blow your lawn, make sure that your leaves do not go into the county's drainage system and remember that the County does not collect leaves that are raked into the street in our neighborhood. Also, please take a little extra time to clear the gutter in front of your house, especially around the drains. This will allow proper water drainage of our streets.



REMEMBER:

NO LEAVES DOWN THE DRAIN!

- If you are new to the neighborhood and need a Flints Grove Directory or if you need to update your directory information, please email Jeanne Kahn at Jeanne.Kahn@flintsgrovehoa.org.



- Proceed at your own risk. As we move into inclement and icy weather, the FGHOA Board of Directors reminds residents that we do not plow, salt or otherwise maintain the walking paths in winter. Should you choose to use them anyway, please use extreme caution on icy or slippery areas.



Have your own Community Notes to share? Please email your copy to the Editor,

Jeanne Kahn at Jeanne.Kahn@flintsgrovehoa.org.

Selling Your House?



If you have a settlement coming up, please advise our new bookkeeping service:

Association Bookkeeping Services
301-670-9270

Welcome New Neighbors

On Antigone Drive

Jill & Steve Goldfine

On Flints Grove Drive

Nancy & Paul Goslin

On Flints Grove Lane

Natalia & Vaheh Oganesyian

Fatemeh Kashani Movahed & Hajiloo Manoucher

On Pebble Hill Lane

Natalia & Sergey Zhdanov

On Rich Branch Drive

Li Mu & Yong Zhao



Beat the Heat with an Attic Fan by Brian Taylor

It's late autumn and memories of the summer heat are fading, but now is a great time to cut your cooling bill and be more comfortable next year. Heat builds up in our attic spaces during the day and takes several hours to dissipate at night. This creates a temperature imbalance between the upper and lower floors, with too much cooling on the bottom and not enough cooling on the top.

An attic fan attached to one of the attic side vents pulls in cooler outside air and pushes out heated air. Attic fans have a built-in thermostat so they run when your attic is hot enough to cook chicken and shut off when the heat is gone. An attic fan is easy for an electrician or experienced do-it-yourselfer to install, and it's cooler to do it now than on a hot afternoon in August.

A variation on the attic fan theme is a whole-house attic fan, a much larger fan that pulls hot air from the entire house and replaces it with cooler air from outside. Whole-house fans are often vented through the roof and may require professional installation. Either way, an attic fan is a low-cost investment that will save you money and make your house more comfortable for years to come.



Fence Discount Program by Leslie Press & Richard Wallace

Many of the fences in our neighborhood are decaying and in need of repair or replacement. With this in mind, HOA Board member Leslie Press negotiated a discount for homeowners who wished to repair or replace their fences through this special offer. Calco Fence was chosen as the vendor based on recommendations and their willingness to work with the neighborhood as a group. They have agreed to extend a discount of 10% off of their regular rates for Flints Grove residents. If you are interested in taking advantage of this offer, please call Calco at 301-881-0552 to arrange for an estimate.



Please be aware that in general, fences require approval from the HOA and the County.

HOA Approval. If you are simply replacing an old fence with an identical fence in the same location, you will not need approval from the FGHOA Architectural and Environmental Control Committee. If you are installing a new type or style of fence or a fence in a new location, you will need to complete the appropriate form and obtain approval from the Committee.

County Approval. In general, all fences, even replacements, require a permit from the County and possibly the Maryland National Park and Planning Commission if the fence will be in a conservation easement. If you are having a company install or replace your fence, they should be able to obtain the necessary permits. For more information on County approval see:

(<http://permittingservices.montgomerycountymd.gov>)

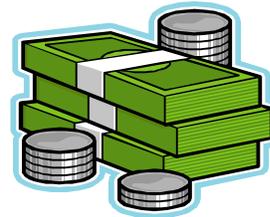
Treasurer's Report by Rob Kemp

The Flints Grove Homeowners' Association dues for 2008 are \$289 for single family homes and \$359 for town homes, an increase of 10% over 2007 dues. Flints Grove residents still enjoy significantly lower dues than residents of nearby associations. Due to major capital expenditures in recent years, and those presently in the planning stages, we need to build up our reserve balance. Thus, the Board deemed it necessary to increase the yearly dues.

As of November 5, 2007, the Association's bank balances totaled \$43,195.89. This balance includes budgeted expenses and projects for the remainder of the fiscal year and our capital reserve. In 2007, we installed new basketball hoops, took down dead trees,

repaired fences and coated the walking path bridge. The Board plans on other improvements in 2008 such as repaving the basketball court and upgrading the landscaping throughout the community.

We are happy to report that all of the FGHOA residents paid their dues in 2007. Please note the new collection process and avoid late fees by paying on time. The Board thanks each and every one of you!



IMPORTANT NOTICE !!

NEW BOOKKEEPING SERVICE FOR FGHOA

Due to his move to Southern Maryland, our long time business manager, Hugh McNeil, will no longer be able to provide the Flints Grove Homeowners Association with his services. Hugh was relied upon to provide the board with monthly financial reports such as Income/Expense reports, Balance Sheets and Bank Reconciliations. We thank Hugh for his years of service and wish him luck in his future endeavors.

With Hugh's departure, the Board has contracted Association Bookkeeping Services, Inc. (ABS) to provide the accounting and bookkeeping services for Flints Grove HOA. Located in Gaithersburg, ABS has been in business assisting both Condominium and Homeowner Associations since 1985 and comes highly recommended from other area communities.

In early December, ABS will mail a notice to you for your 2008 dues. Please send your payment directly to ABS no later than December 31, 2007. Late payments will be assessed a \$10 per month penalty. Please let us know if you do not receive a bill or if there are any problems. Thank you very much for your cooperation.



WATCH THE MAIL IN EARLY DECEMBER FOR YOUR 2008 FGHOA DUES BILL, WHICH IS COMING FROM ASSOCIATION BOOKKEEPING SERVICES IN GAITHERSBURG.