



Flints Grove HOA Newsletter

P.O. Box 83505 - Gaithersburg, MD 20883



President's Report by Brian Taylor

The Annual Meeting in April marked the end of one year for our HOA and the beginning of another. It was great to see many of our neighbors at the meeting and to get feedback on our work managing the HOA. We are fortunate that almost all of last year's board members chose to stand for re-election. We said good-bye with many thanks to Bob Koenig, a long-standing board member and past president who is moving to warmer weather at Hilton Head, SC, and we welcomed Leslie Press who, along with the current board members, was elected unanimously. Leslie will take over as Board Secretary, allowing Steve Kelley to continue his excellent work as chair of the Maintenance Committee. The complete list of assignments is on Page 4 and at www.flintsgrovehoa.org/bod.htm.

Maintenance will be a key priority for the Board over the next few years. Our development is now 20 years old. There are elements of our common property that are showing their age, and our goal is to renew those elements as soon as we can. We made a huge step forward in the past year by completing the walking path restoration, and we've heard from many residents how much they enjoy the new surface. We just completed a follow-on project with Allentuck Landscaping to address erosion problems along the newly-paved part of the path between Pebble Hill Lane and Flints Grove Drive, and are working to replace the damaged basketball posts and hoops at the end of the path from DeHaven Court. Many of our fences, both in common and residen-

tial areas, are in disrepair and we are in the early stages of a plan to work with local vendors to obtain discount fence restoration services for our residents. Unfortunately, our desire to push forward on many maintenance projects is tempered by our urgent need to rebuild our capital reserves, which were sorely depleted by the path restoration project.

Spring is a great time in Flints Grove. Our area has so many blooming trees and neighbors who do a great job landscaping with flowers, attractive shrubbery, and well-kept lawns. It's a real pleasure to walk through our neighborhood and see their work. As a landscape-challenged homeowner, I can sympathize with those who lack the time, skill or resources to create a showcase property. Not everyone is up to creating a *Better Homes and Gardens* feature home. Nonetheless, there are some limits. From time to time, the Board of Directors and I will notice or hear of a situation that needs attention. In these cases, typically something has happened that changed an element of a property's appearance from "not great" to "eyesore". If you receive a letter from our Architectural and Environmental Control Committee regarding such a situation, I hope you will take it as a neighborly gesture and do what you can to correct the problem. Our goal is to keep property values high by maintaining the overall appearance of the neighborhood, but it's your property value that will benefit the most if you fix the problem.

June
2007



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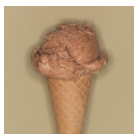
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COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Matt Rogers—
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Richard Wallace—
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Dates to Remember



September 16th- 4th
Annual Flints Grove
Ice Cream Social!

Tree Care and Maintenance By The Forest Conservancy District

Board for Baltimore County (excerpt used here by permission - for the complete text, go to: http://www.bcfb.sailorsite.net/HelpfullHints/tree_care_&_maintenance.htm)

You have just finished planting that new tree, but don't think that you can just sit back and watch it grow. Trees need care and maintenance not only right after planting, but throughout their lives. Mulching, watering, pruning, fertilizing, and ongoing monitoring for problems will ensure that your tree grows up to be a valuable addition to your landscape. Proper tree care can prevent many costly problems from developing.

Mulching can benefit both young trees and older, well-established trees. Mulch keeps moisture in the ground to help newly planted trees become established, and prevents grass and weed growth around the base of a tree. Organic mulches, such as bark mulch, wood chips, and composted leaves also add nutrients to the soil as the mulch breaks down. Spread mulch in a circle with a 2 to 3 foot radius around the tree and not more than 2 to 4 inches deep. The mulch should not touch the trunk of the tree, but rather be kept several inches away. Loosen the mulch with a rake or hoe once a year and add fresh mulch to maintain a 2 to 4 inch layer.

Watering a tree after planting is a simple but important step to ensure that the roots will be able to provide sufficient moisture for the tree to grow. Many nursery grown trees lose most of their roots during the nursery digging and transplanting process. These trees require extra water to make up for the lack of feeder roots that can take up water. Newly planted trees should be watered with about 10 gallons of water per week unless at least one inch of rain has fallen recently. Established trees also require extra watering during periods of drought. If possible, water the entire area covered by the root system, which could easily extend beyond the dripline on established trees. The roots will be better able to take up the moisture if watering is done slowly and gradually rather than all at once.

Pruning should be done to control a tree's shape or to remove damaged branches. Pruning can also be done to 'elevate' a tree, where the lower branches are removed to allow persons and vehicles to pass underneath. Improper pruning can often lead to more problems than the pruning had intended to solve. Never remove more than 25 percent of a tree's crown in one year. Winter or early spring is usually the best time to prune most trees, except oaks and honeylocusts, which are more susceptible to disease in the spring. Some trees (maple) may bleed if pruned during the spring.

Fertilizing a tree provides supplemental nutrients which are necessary for the tree's growth. The best time to apply fertilizer is during the fall or winter. The nutrients will then become available to the tree during the following growing season. Do not fertilize a newly planted tree the first year. Over application of fertilizer can be harmful to the tree and to nearby streams. Other nutrients, and organic matter, might have to be added in harsh soils.

Even if your tree has been adequately mulched, watered, pruned, and fertilized, periodic inspections of the tree should be made to determine its overall condition. Check for the tree's shape, normal growth and leaf size, and any signs of insects or disease. If stakes and wire were used to support the tree after planting, they should be removed one year after planting. The wire could otherwise become ingrown into the tree and interfere with the normal flow of water and nutrients just inside the bark. For technical assistance with tree questions, contact the Maryland Forest Service (410-665-5820), the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service (1-800-342-2507), a certified arborist, or a licensed tree expert company. With proper care and maintenance, your trees will provide you with a multitude of benefits for many years to come.

Vacation Security by Brian Taylor

Soon school will be out, summer will be here, and families will be traveling. While break-ins in the Flints Grove area are rare, they can happen. Here are a few tips to help keep your home safe while you're gone:

- Stop the mail and paper or have a neighbor collect them. Nothing says "nobody home" like a pile of yellowing newspapers in the driveway.
- Arrange for someone to care for your lawn while you're gone. An overgrown or drought-stricken lawn is a welcome sight to a burglar but not to your neighbors (or to you when you get home).
- Set up some lights on a timer. Lights that go on and off suggest someone is home. A house that's always dark suggests otherwise.

- If you're leaving a car at home, park it where you normally do. A house that usually has a car in the driveway may stand out when that car is gone for an extended period of time.
- Make sure your doors and windows are locked and bushes around windows and doors are trimmed. This minimizes places where burglars can hide while they do their dirty work.

If you trust your neighbors, let them know you'll be gone. They can keep an eye out for your property and report any suspicious activity.

This is not a comprehensive list and there is much more you could do to harden your fortress familia, but if you've done enough to send a burglar wannabe to a house where they don't read this newsletter, you can relax and enjoy your trip knowing your stuff is (probably) safe.

Fences, Driveways, & Automobiles by Richard Wallace

You have heard it before: the development is not brand-new anymore. Yes, time marches on and sturdy features of your house need replacement or renewal. One area where many of our homes are looking a little long-in-the-tooth is fencing. Twenty years of sun, rain, snow and wind have taken a toll on the fences that divide us. It is said that good fences make good neighbors. If your fence is sagging, has holes or is just plain falling down, you should look into getting a new fence. Your neighbor next door may even be willing to share the cost of replacing the fence. No harm in asking. You can enjoy the improved look of your house now, and it will eliminate an eyesore should you need to sell your home.

Before erecting your new fence (even if it's just a new version of the old fence) you will need to obtain approval from the Environmental and Architectural Control Committee and your

neighbors. The required form and contact information are available on the Flints Grove Homeowners' Association website.

Another area where some of the homes have lost some curb appeal is in worn, cracked and crumbling driveways. Although not quite as alluring as a 52-inch HD plasma TV, imagine coming home to a new, smooth, black driveway at the end of the day. Your home will look years younger, and the neighborhood will look that much better. Why wait?

Finally, make sure that the vehicle you park on that new driveway, next to that new fence is in compliance with the covenants that apply to each of the homes in the development: no commercial vehicles or trailers.

Welcome New Neighbors!

On Antigone Drive

Seyed Hessam and Sanaz Mirzaei (14500)
Yunxiang and Yingwen Chen (14509)



On Rich Branch Drive

Samson and Teresa Chang (14412)
Faisal Lateef and Humara Gowher (14310)
Jian Song and Bing Xia (14500)
Tom and Nancy Palker (14428)

If you're new and we missed you, please let us know. We're glad you're here.

Selling Your House?



If you have a settlement coming up, please advise your attorney to contact Hugh MacNeil for the required financial information at least two weeks prior to settlement. Hugh can be reached by phone at 240-535-2203 or by email at SAILMACUSA@aol.com.



Please email any compliments, comments and complaints to the Editor, Jeanne Kahn at Jeanne.kahn@flintsgrovehoa.org.

Need a Break on Fencing Costs?

The FGHOA Board of Directors is looking into arranging an FGHOA bulk discount with a local fencing company. If you're interested in fixing your fence or want to make a recommendation, contact Leslie Press at 301-294-8812. More participants will mean a bigger discount so call Leslie now.

Financial Report

The Board of Directors is pleased to report that all residents have now paid their 2007 assessments. Since 2005, when we reinstated late fees and began pursuing delinquents more aggressively, our compliance rate has been 100%. We do this to be fair to those who pay on time and encourage everyone to "just do it" when the notice arrives in the fall.

A key goal for 2007 is to rebuild our capital reserve after financing the path restoration in 2006. Just like in a household budget, we need to save for big ticket projects like the path restoration and pay for severe weather and other catastrophes. A major storm can easily blow out our tree

service budget and we need to be ready.

While building our reserve is a key goal, we are also moving forward on some smaller maintenance projects. We engaged Allentuck Landscaping, our regular landscaping firm, to install rock barriers to halt erosion along the walking path between Pebble Hill Lane and Flints Grove Dr. We are also replacing the basketball equipment at the court at the end of the path from DeHaven Court. The court has been a problem area for some time and we're looking forward to providing our residents a safe place to shoot some hoops.

We're doing our best to spend your money wisely. Please

Annual Meeting Results by Steve Kelley

The 2007 FGHOA annual meeting was held on April 11, 2007 at Dufief Elementary School. The official meeting convened at 8:00 PM with a quorum of 43 attendees and 28 proxies.

Nominations and Board Elections: Bob Koenig stepped down from the board. Leslie Press was elected to the Board by unanimous acclamation, as were current board members Jeanne Kahn, Steve Kelley, Rob Kemp, Matt Rogers, Brian Taylor, and Richard Wallace. The board officers for 2007/2008 are:

President	Brian Taylor
Vice-President	Jeanne Kahn
Treasurer	Rob Kemp
Secretary	Leslie Press
Architectural Control Committee Chair	Matt Rogers
Maintenance Committee Chair	Steve Kelley
Community Relations Committee Chair	Jeanne Kahn
Legal Advisor	Richard Wallace

Winners of the \$50 gift certificate door prizes were Nancy Sasavage, Sue Lin and Pragna Purohit. The proxy ballot door prize winner was Vickie Lutwak.

Home Valuation Update: Julie Montalvo, a real estate agent specializing in our area, offered her perspective on recent real estate trends and the relative attractiveness of our community. She said that buyers are still in the market for appropriately priced homes, and they consider our area to be highly desirable. She noted that residents (and the HOA) should focus on long-term maintenance issues like landscaping to maximize the value of their homes.

For more information on the annual meeting, see the meeting minutes under the 'Board of Directors' tab at the FGHOA website: <http://www.flintsgrovehoa.org/>.