

NORBECK HILLS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Spring 2004

We Need Your Help for Community Cleanup

A community cleanup date has been set for June 19, 2004. The need for a cleanup is in response to the continued problems with trash being thrown about as explained in a following article (**Trash**).

On the date of the community cleanup each resident of our streets and courts are asked to participate in helping to remove all trash from the common grounds within their area. Cleanup will be conducted between 9:30 AM and 12:30 PM. Plastic bags and gloves will be available and can be picked up at the pool. Please work with your neighbors to ensure that all can enjoy and participate in this activity.

A rain date of July 10, 2004, has been set should we have inclement weather.

Norbeck Hills Web Page

The Norbeck Hills community now has a Web page. The Web Page provides information regarding security, how to contact the Board of Directors and the swim team, among other topics. The Web Page address is www.NorbeckHills.org.

Emails to the Board

If you have a concern, comment or question for the Board you can send

your e-mail to the Board from the Web Page.

The Board will acknowledge receipt of your email within 3 days and provide a reply within 7 to 10 days. If you do not receive a reply, please call Ravi Parkhie at The Management Group on 301-948-6666. We encourage you to let the Board hear from you.

Trash

The Declaration containing the Covenants for the community states in Article VII, Section 7(e) that trash and garbage containers shall not be permitted to remain in public view except on days of trash collection.

This means that trash cans and recycle boxes should be stored in garages or backyards. They should not be placed in front yards. Additionally, this same section of the Covenants states that garbage, trash and other refuse shall be placed in covered containers.

Unfortunately, a number of the residents are placing trash in either plastic bags or uncovered containers. On trash days, crows, squirrels, and the wind release and spread this trash to the common grounds, and parking lots. ***Please help to turn this situation around by buying a covered trash/garbage can and using it, as called for in the Covenants.***

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The community has a number of covered trash cans on MacDuff. Please remind your family members to make use of these rather than just

throwing trash on the sidewalks, streets, and common areas.

The cost of trash removal by a private contractor (cleanup crew for the common grounds) was \$30,000 last year. This money could be used for other purposes, if all of our residents and guests in the community would abide by the Covenants and use the trash receptacles that have been placed on the common grounds for your convenience.

Recently, the community has been plagued with creatures from the woods that surround our community. This includes deer, rodents, and large birds. Please do not place your trash cans directly against the exterior walls of your home, as this invites pests into your home and the common areas. Particular care is necessary in the townhomes. If the Board has to hire exterminators because you are inviting pests into the area of your home, the responsibility for the cost of the exterminator will be yours. This will have an impact on your neighbors, as well.

Added Trash Services

The Board of Directors has negotiated with the Trash contractor for an increase in services at no additional cost to the community. Bulk pick-up will now be provided with the **Saturday** trash pickup.

Please note that bulk pick-up **will not** occur on Wednesdays. Bulk trash items include such non-garbage items as: furniture, mattresses, etc. This service does not include hazardous waste, oil based paint or car batteries which must still be taken by homeowners to the Montgomery County Solid Waste Transfer Station.

New Towing Company

The Board of Directors has entered a contract with a new towing company for the community. Townhome owners who need to have an illegally parked vehicle towed from their reserved parking spaces or a fire lane can call **301-570-3786**. The towing company will also be routinely checking parking lots for double-parked vehicles and those parked in fire lanes. These vehicles will be immediately towed.

Townhome owners should inform their guests of the reserve parking restriction and provide instructions on where guests can legally park, so they are not towed.

Safety Tips for All

The awareness for safety of the community has been heightened in recent years by recurring incidents of breaking and entry, thefts, and vandalism. Further, we have all been encouraged since September 11, 2001, to be more aware of what is going on around us. The Norbeck Hills community Board of Directors has had guest speakers at their

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meetings to speak to the community regarding personal and community safety. Out of seminars, a number of suggestions have been made to help make our community become more safety conscious and safe.

1. Single Family Homeowners are encouraged to close their garage doors. It has been noticed that many leave their doors up, even over-night. If you are one of these persons, your path from your home to your car places you in an area that is not visible from the street and unsafe. It also makes it easier for someone to steal from you.
2. All homeowners should turn on their front lights and, where possible, their backyard lights when it is dark. The police have informed us that those persons who may wish to do us harm do not like light.
3. All homeowners should review their landscaping to ensure that they can see their doorways from the street. They should ensure that there is no place for someone to hide from your view when you approach your home or when you take your trashcan and recycle bins to and from your backyards.
4. All residents, including children, should be watchful and aware. If you hear unusual sounds or see persons who appear to not belong to the neighborhood or who are hanging around a property where the owner is not home, call the police (emergency no. 911, or non-emergency no. 301-279-8000).

5. Report any malfunctioning streetlights. The lights on the county streets (Hines, MacDuff, Goose Creek, etc.) are maintained by the county. Malfunctioning lights on these streets should be reported by calling (240) 777-2190. The lights on the common grounds (pool parking lot, town house courts, etc.) are maintained by the Association. Please call The Management Group at 301-948-6666 to report any defective lights.

Dog Walking Basics

The Board has provided information in numerous newsletters regarding the Montgomery County Laws applicable to dog owners. However, we still have some owners who do not appear to understand that these laws apply within this community and the repercussions for breaking these laws.

Montgomery County requires that all dogs be restrained. Montgomery County Code, Sec 5-203 states "An animal is at large if it is outside of the premises of its owners and not leashed or otherwise restrained to prevent unwanted contact with a person or another animal." This means, that even if your dog is on a retractable leash, it should not be able to run up to a person's ankle or another dog's body. Unless the person or walker of the other dog invites this, be sure your dog is a safe distance from others. A reported offense results in a \$100 fine.

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Montgomery County requires that feces be removed from property outside of the owner's property and properly be disposed of by the owner. This is defined in Montgomery County Code Section 5-203(a)(2). Again, a reported offense will result in a \$100 fine.

Animal Trespass is defined as an animal entering private property without the property owner's permission and is, also, subject to a \$100 fine.

It has been reported to the Board by members who walk through the neighborhood that there continues to be evidence that some owners are disrespectful to the community. This disrespect takes the form of leaving feces throughout the common grounds and walking dogs in such a way as to require their neighbors and small children on tricycles to be forced onto these soiled common grounds. They report that they have also seen some dog owners who allow their dogs to enter another person's front yard and urinate (killing the homeowner's grass).

We, as a community, pay for lawn care of the common grounds and security services so that we can enjoy the out-of-doors. Homeowners pay for care of their lawns with time and dollars. We should all be able to enjoy our community. Our young families should be able to have their children ride their tricycles and parents should be able to push

strollers across the grass ways without having to hose down the wheels when they get home.

We encourage all dog owners to look at themselves and determine if their disrespect is worth \$100-300 per walk. We further encourage all persons witnessing violations of these laws to report the offenders (Animal Services Division 240-773-5960).

Do You Know Where Your Children Are?

The Board has had both homeowners and security report that there have been teens and pre-teens that are congregating at various points in the community. While we all recognize that kids will gather, some are leaving behind damage and trash. One group that frequents MacDuff and Cannes has used the automobiles parked on MacDuff as benches. Mirrors have been broken off, paint has been scratched, etc. Another group arrives after school lets out in the afternoon carrying brown sacks. They go to the culvert behind Gallagher Way where they congregate. The trash they leave behind shows evidence of heavy drinking and smoking (possibly illegal substances). Additionally, lawn furniture has been dragged to this location to make it more comfortable to sit. Cans and bottles of various beers and MD20/20 have been left on the wooded pathways, common grounds, front lawns of town-home owners, and the parking lots.

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Another location that is being used at night as a gathering place is at the end of Sandy Knoll, near the playground and woods. Drinking and drug use are indicated at this location. Our security service and the Montgomery County police have been informed of this problem.

Several arrests have been made.

Parents - If your child is with any of these groups, they may be at the wrong place at the wrong time and may pay a very big price. Know where your children are, whom they are with and what they are doing.

Greater Olney Civic Association

Did you know that Norbeck Hills HOA is a member of the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA)? The Greater Olney Civic Association deals with issues that effect our area. They have been involved in the Olney Master Plan, as well at the Inter-County Connector.

We currently have one open seat that is delegated to GOCA. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month (except August). Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Bill Hicks (301-793-4015) for further information.

Exterior Home Improvements

Now that spring has sprung, it's time to make some changes to our homes. Remember, before you

make any additions or color changes to your homes, you need to get approval from the Architectural Committee of the Board. Changes include the following: fences, sheds, painting, windows, doors, and decks.

Review your Homeowner Association Architectural Guidelines, especially if you are not sure whether approvals are needed before changes are made.

A copy of the Homeowner Association Architectural Guidelines is available from The Management Group. Copies of forms for Architectural Changes may be requested from Ravi Parkhie at The Management Group (301-948-6666) or downloaded from the community Web page.

Court and Street Captains Needed

The Board is looking for volunteers to serve as court and street captains. These persons will serve as liaisons between their court or street and the Board of Directors. If you would like to be a Captain for your court or street please call The Management Group at 301-948-6666 and leave your name and the street or court you wish to represent with Ravi . This is our community and we all should be proud of how it looks and that we develop cooperation and community spirit.

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Norbeck Hills HOA Meetings

Norbeck Hills HOA meetings are held every other month at the RE/MAX Building, in the Community Room.

The address for the RE/MAX Building is 3300 Olney-Sandy Spring Road. Meetings start at 8:00 PM. The schedule for the remaining meetings this year is:

July 15 (Annual Meeting)

September 16 (Regular Meeting)

November 18 (Regular Meeting)

Please contact The Management Group (301) 948-6666 on the day of the scheduled meeting to confirm the meeting time and location. Meeting dates and locations are subject to change without notification due to the lack of Board quorum or schedule conflicts.

Renters are welcome to attend all meetings. You are a part of this community, so please join us.

College Savings Plans

It's never too early to start saving for college. Section 529 plans in Maryland allow for up to \$2500 of contributions per year, per beneficiary, to be exempt from state tax. Earnings are exempt from state and federal taxes, as long as the money is used for college education expenses.

For more information on Section 529 accounts in Maryland, view their website which can be reached at www.collegesavingsmd.org.

The Shadow's Corner

Norbeck Hills Logo/Tagline

Norbeck Hills needs a personality. Can you think of a tagline or logo that fits the community? Keep it short (something that could fit on a bumper sticker) and keep it clean (nothing vulgar, no matter how fitting it may seem). Best tagline wins \$25.00 and best logo wins \$25.00 too.

Deadline for entries is September 30, 2004.

Send your entries to email address shadow9939@aol.com. Direct any questions about the contest to this email address as well. Be sure to include "HOA CONTEST" in the subject and include your name and address along with your submission.

Poll

Do you think the community has gotten better or worse over the last year? Send your vote to email address shadow9939@aol.com. Please, include POLL in the subject and be sure to give a reason or two for your response.

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What Do You Think and Do You Have Something to Share?

While the Norbeck Hills Homeowner Association Newsletter provides a way to disseminate information to the community from the Board of Directors, it is also a way for you to communicate with the community. We encourage you to use the NH Newsletter Team e-mail address available on the www.norbeckhills.org web page to send us your comments, requests for articles, birth and award announcements, and any other noteworthy items. If you have a favorite recipe you would like to share with others, please use this e-mail address as well. We look forward to hearing from you and receiving your feedback.