

# Norbeck Hills Homeowner Association Newsletter

## Spring 2005

### **President's Corner**

First, I want to wish you all a Happy Spring.

Second, I want to thank everyone for allowing me the opportunity to serve on the Board as the President. One of the things that I have learned is that I am only as good as the people that work along with me. This understanding has come from both my past positions and work experience, and this current experience. While the Board is made up of four other good people, who assist me in getting things done for this community, I recognize that there are other good people within the community who could add greatly to the success of this community. I encourage you to review the committees (newsletter, pool, swim team, architectural and environment control, court and street captain, security and parking, and finance) and find one that you have a knack for and join in making this community an even better place to live.

Please visit our website ([www.norbeckhills.org](http://www.norbeckhills.org)) and feel free to send any of your concerns/suggestions to the Board through its link. We, the Board, will review your concerns/suggestions and try to address them, as quickly as possible. I can guarantee that you will receive an answer from the Board. We will carefully review your concern/suggestions and will base our response on how the actions taken to address these will affect the community as a whole. We will explain to you the actions that will be taken and why, if

you have posed a suggestion that we cannot adopt, we are taking this course of action.

We have Board of Directors meetings every month at the REMAX Building, 3300 Olney Sandy Spring Road, on the third Thursday starting at 7:00 PM. We provide an opportunity at some point during each business meeting for a "Homeowners' Forum," where you can speak directly to the Board regarding your concerns. During the business meeting, the Board conducts its work in the sunshine for all to observe. Frequently, many interesting items are before the Board for review, so stop by, observe, and participate during Homeowner's Forum.

Again thanks and I hope that weather permits you the opportunity to get outside and enjoy this beautiful community.

*Jeffrey Chavis, President*

### **Check Your Home Insurance Coverage**

Unfortunately, it takes a horrible incident like the fire in the community on January 10 to remind us that we should check our Insurance Coverage. When checking your coverage be aware that there are four primary line items that may be used should you have a fire in your home. These are normally listed as follows on your policy: Dwelling, Dwelling Extension, Loss of Use, and Contents. Dwelling coverage is for repairs/rebuilding your house. Dwelling Extension coverage is for the

# Norbeck Hills Homeowner Association Newsletter

## Spring 2005

repair/rebuilding of your decks, patios, porches, fences, etc. Loss of Use coverage is used to provide for your housing, etc. when you have to move out of your home while repair/rebuild activities are conducted. Contents coverage is used to provide funds to for belongings (clothes, appliances, etc.) Be aware that current estimated rebuild costs are approximately \$100 per square foot. Also, be aware that unless you have "replacement value" coverage that the value of some of the items covered under your insurance may be based using a depreciated value. You should also check to see specifically what the rules of your insurance are regarding whether there is any money over ceiling allowed for Dwelling.

Be aware, that the Insurance Company will not know that you have made upgrades to your home (finished a basement, upgraded flooring, remodeled your kitchen), unless you tell them. These upgrades made have an effect on your Dwelling coverage.

Check your insurance regularly with your agent.

### **Trash - Your Responsibilities and What Happens if You Don't Follow the Rules**

Out of necessity the Board of Directors passed a Trash Policy in late 2004. The purpose was to ensure that the community was not exposed to undue health risks and to ensure that the community property values were upheld. Effective January 1, 2005, the residents of Norbeck Hills are required to comply

with the Trash Collection Procedure and Enforcement Policy, which was mailed to homeowners in early December 2004. This policy calls for residents to follow certain rules defined in the policy. The rules related to 1) types of items that may be placed out as trash or recycle, 2) the way in which they are set out for pick-up, 3) the timing of placement, 4) where trash is to be placed, 5) and the removal of containers from view, after pick-up. The policy also defines the Enforcement Procedures which will be used by the Association include charging the homeowner for any corrective action.

The majority of residents of the community conform to the policy. However, a number of residents still persist in 1) placing trash/recycle out earlier than the night before pickup, 2) failing to retrieve their containers and remove them from sight by the evening of the pick-up, 3) place recycle items and trash on common grounds rather than placing it with their recycle/trash for pickup on the scheduled day or carrying it themselves to the Solid Waste Transfer Station on Route 355, and 4) placing items that are restricted from recycle pick-up with their recycle and leaving them for all to view after County recycle trucks have gone.

A fine is imposed for each occurrence of violation of this policy (this is the charge incurred by the Association for having a special pickup of the trash, recyclable or other discard). This charge is recovered following the procedures for application of payments defined in the Administrative Resolution for Collection of

# Norbeck Hills Homeowner Association Newsletter

## Spring 2005

Delinquent Assessments, which was also mailed to homeowners and became effective January 1, 2005.

Homeowners are strongly encouraged to follow the policy and, thereby, avoid a charge and the disgust of their neighbors. Neighbors of offenders are encouraged to call the Management Group 301-948-6666 when they see violations to this policy. **Keep Norbeck Hills Clean and Beautiful by properly disposing of your trash and recyclables.**

### **Townhome Parking - Who to Call and When**

Townhome owners were informed in January, by letter, how to call the tow company and identify themselves to the tow company. This letter dealt only with the townhome owner's ability to call on respective reserved parking spaces.

If a townhome owner observes a car double-parked in the parking lot, a vehicle parked in a fire lane, or a vehicle parked on the grassy areas of the community; the procedures are different. The police and the tow truck company should be called. The report to the police department is necessary to ensure that proper recording of the violation takes place. Please be sure to call the police for parking violations that are not associated with your reserved parking spaces.

### **Montgomery County Reluctant Caller Program**

The "Reluctant Caller" Program allows concerned residents to report crime, neighbors failing to cleanup after their pets, abuses of local noise ordinances, and other community infractions without identifying the complainant. When you call into the Montgomery County policy, animal control, or other law enforcement agencies, simply identify that you are a "reluctant caller" and request that the law enforcement officer take all of your information via phone rather than coming to your home. The Police Non-Emergency Number is 301-279-8000 and the Montgomery County Animal Services is (240-773-5960 or (240) 773-5925.

### **Tree Trimming on County Roads**

Within our community, the single-family homes are all on county maintained roads. Three primary county roads are adjacent to the townhomes (MacDuff Ave., Hines Rd, and Cashell Rd.). County maintained trees are on all of our single-family streets and Hines Road. The way to identify a County maintained tree in the single family homes is to determine if it is within 5 feet of the curb or on the curb side of the sidewalk (if there is one). If the tree is not a County tree, it is the homeowner's responsibility to trim the tree.

The Association is not responsible for trimming, removing or replacing homeowner trees that the

# Norbeck Hills Homeowner Association Newsletter

## Spring 2005

builder/developer or homeowner planted.

The County Arborist office has an inventory of the County street trees. Should one of these need to be tripped or replaced calls should be directed to 240-777-7623. Please provide your name and address and the location of the tree so the County can look it up in their inventory and take action.

### **A Dog Owners' Responsibilities**

**All Dog Owners, please act responsibly and in accordance with the law.**

Montgomery County Code, Section 5-203(a)(2) states "An owner must not allow an animal to damage or defecate on property outside of the owner's property. An animal may defecate on public property or the common area of property in which the owner shares an interest if the owner immediately removed and disposed of the feces by a sanitary method approved by the Director. Feces may be picked up in a plastic bag. If this bag is placed inside another plastic bag, it may be put out for disposal in your normal household trash." **A FINE OF \$100 IS IMPOSED FOR VIOLATION OF THIS LAW.**

Dog Owners must clean up after their pets when they defecate on the common grounds, the county easement, or on another homeowner's property.

The Board receives complaints every time it meets regarding irresponsible dog owners. The By-Laws of the

Association allow the Board to take action to restrict the use of its common property when necessary. We encourage DOG OWNERS to self police to ensure that they do not lose the ability to walk their dogs on the common grounds because of the actions of a few. All are encouraged to seek information to identify the offenders and report the offense to the County (240) 777-5960 or (240) 773-5925. You can remain anonymous.

Please understand that you must take action to correct this problem, the Board cannot be everywhere at all times to do this for you. Also, be aware that the County had stated that they have received numerous complaints of dog feces and inappropriate actions by pet owners in our community, but need details to correct the problem.

### **Clean your Chimney**

Many of our homes have fireplaces. The homeowners of these homes have enjoyed the warmth of a good wood fire during this past winter on our colder days. This article is a reminder to those who have fireplaces, that they should make arrangements for a professional to clean and check their chimney area before next winter.

Homeowners with firewood are reminded that it should be stored in the rear of the home and not on the common grounds or at the side of their home. Please remember that firewood can attract insects and some rodents will nest in piles of wood. For these reasons, it is best that firewood be stored away from

# Norbeck Hills Homeowner Association Newsletter

## Spring 2005

your home, not directly against the house.

### **Dryer Safety Tips**

Dryer lint is one of the most combustible substances and usually builds up in the vent hose (duct) leading out the dryer. The ribbed plastic dryer ducts trap lint readily and are combustible. Dryer fires are responsible for over \$100 million dollars in property damage each year and occur 25,000 times annually.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommendations regarding operating dryers in a safe manner are:

1. Clean the lint screen/filter before and/or after each load of clothes
2. Clean the dryer duct and exhaust vent periodically for blockage or crushing. (Note: If clothes drying time is increasing or clothes are not drying properly, do not set the heat higher. Instead, you should immediately check the duct and exhaust vent for blockage - Check the exhaust vent from outside your home by checking airflow while the dryer is running.)
3. Clean behind the dryer, where lint can build up
4. Take special care when drying clothes that have been soiled with chemicals
5. REPLACE PLASTIC OR FOIL, ACCORDION-TYPE DUCT MATERIAL WITH RIGID OR CORRUGATED SIMI-RIGID METAL DUCTS.
6. Do not leave the dryer running when you are not at home.

### **Another Dryer Safety Tip**

When you use dryer sheets in your dryer, they may create a film that reduces airflow through the lint filter (the mesh screen that traps the lint).

The test for this is to run water on your lint filter to see if it pools the water. If it does, wash the lint filter in hot soapy water using a toothbrush to scrub the film away.

Obviously, this should be done if you notice that it takes longer for your clothes to dry; but, it is recommended that this be done routinely every six months.

The cleaning of the lint filter will prolong the life of your dryer, since the heating unit of the dryer does not need to work as hard when the air flow works properly and it helps to reduce the cost of electricity used by the dryer.

### **How to Cancel the Gazette**

All residents in the community receive a complimentary copy of the Montgomery County Gazette. If you wish to have this delivery stopped, please contact the Gazette directly at **301-670-7350**.

Homeowners please note that newspapers are not allowed to accumulate outside of your home where visible from the street. It is the homeowners/residents responsibility to collect and properly dispose of the newspapers, including the Gazette.

While homeowners should take action to stop delivery if they are not interested in

# Norbeck Hills Homeowner Association Newsletter

## Spring 2005

reading the newspaper, if you observe that a neighbor is not picking up their Gazette and letting them start to pile up on their sidewalk, call the Gazette and stop the delivery of the paper to this address. You will be doing yourself, the neighbor, and the community a favor by reducing the clutter and trash that creates a curb appeal problem for the neighborhood.

### **Parents' Cautions**

While the majority of parents in the community are aware of what their children are doing, whom they are with, and where they are, the Board has received a number of reports of actions by children that parents must control. We have had reports of children throwing hard pack snowballs and rocks at each other, at cars, and at homes. We have had reports of children, who are playing in the streets and courts, failing to move to allow vehicles to pass. We have had reports of children digging, chopping trees, setting fires, and erecting structures on the common grounds (these actions have resulted in costs to the community to remove debris and restore the property to a level of safety that permits the Lawn Contractor and residents to use the property). We have reports from our Contractors of children interfering or undoing their efforts (this too costs every homeowner, since many of the contracts are by the hour and safety of the community is affected by their satisfactory performance.) We have, also, had reports of children disrespecting other homeowners and their personal property.

We all need to live in harmony. No one dislikes children, but they do not dislike these behaviors. Parents of children, who are committing these offenses, please work to ensure that your children understand that they are to respect the community in which they live. If you do not, homeowners and the Association will have no choice but to call the police or handle the matter through civil action.

### **Update on Fire Victims**

Our three neighbors on Longview Lane, who were displaced due to the fire that occurred on January 10<sup>th</sup>, are still not back in their homes. Progress is being made but it is slow. The house that was destroyed by the fire is being torn down to make way for the rebuilding process, but the two neighboring homes can not begin repairs until the burned home is completely down and some framing has begun.

These neighboring homeowners are still incurring expenses at their homes. Utilities have been turned back on and there are still holes in the walls which lets heat escape. In order to maintain phone numbers, phone bills must still be paid. Other expenses are being incurred such as deductibles, etc. As you can see all three homeowners still need your help. Please make a donation to the **Norbeck Hills Fire Victims Fund** at the Bank of America in Olney.

This fund has provided money to the three homeowners for various expenses, including securing a storage facility for donated items, helping with expenses, etc. Please check the Norbeck Hills

# Norbeck Hills Homeowner Association Newsletter

## Spring 2005

website ([www.norbeckhills.org](http://www.norbeckhills.org)) for current status of these homeowners and items that they have identified as needs.

We thank all who have contributed and ask that you encourage others to help these three households.

participation will be rewarding to you and provide all of your neighbors with a place to turn when they have questions or concerns about the community and allow the Board to communicate information quickly to the community through these channels.

### **Call for Court and Street Captains**

Court and street captains are still needed for a number of streets and courts within our community. Participation on this Committee is fun and affords you a opportunity to meet your new neighbors and assist them with getting settled in the community by providing them with information on trash collection days; recycling days and county rules for packaging of recycle; and general information about the area and the community. The Court or Street Captain program is provides a central point to turn to for information on the community (both the new resident and those who have lived here for a while benefit from this).

If you live on:

Boastfield Lane  
17500 Longview Lane  
17600 Longview Lane  
Goose Creek Road  
or Sir Walter Road

and would like to volunteer for this program, please contact Ruchita of The Management Group 301-948-6666 or the Board through the link on the Norbeck Hills Homeowner Association website ([www.norbeckhills.org](http://www.norbeckhills.org)). Your