

# NORBECK HILLS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## SUMMER 2006

### ***Message from the President:***

*Dear Neighbors: The September 21, 2006 meeting will mark the end of this existing Board's tenure. I believe that we have accomplished a lot this past year that has improved attractiveness of our community, our financial standing and the overall well being of our community. Our community is safer because of our security system.*

*We have taken steps to begin implementation of our replacement study/plan. Such steps include the initial process of upgrading our parking lots, cutting back overgrowth of trees and underbrush, repairing the tennis court net and basketball hoop. This year we also replaced the swimming pool's heat pump and electrical system as well as the diving board. This allowed us to operate the pool safely and in accordance with the Montgomery County's health regulations.*

*We have paid our bills on time and every month we consistently put the budgeted funds into our reserves, as we are required to do. We have operated in the black for the second year and we have not had to have a special assessment to make any necessary repairs. The homeowner fee that you pay is the lowest in the area because we have been good stewards of your money and we have been able to negotiate good contracts with our service providers.*

*Our swim team, as you will read below, has had a successful year and the Board has enjoyed an improvement in our relationship with the swim team committee. We have had a great improvement in our working relationship and response to our neighbors concerns from our Management Group. All of this has happened because of the dedicated neighbors who freely give up their time and energy to serve as directors on your Norbeck Hills HOA Board and other committees.*

*I ask that you look around you at the things that with you help and cooperation we have accomplished. There is still much more to be done, but I think a thank you is in order for all of your*

*Board's hard work this year. Therefore, on behalf of all of our neighbors, I thank each Board and committee member for all that you have done this past 2005-2006 fiscal year.*

*Barbara Beccles, Esq.  
President, Norbeck Hills HOA Board of Directors*

### ***Paving of the Townhomes Section of the Community***

Dominion Paving seal coated and repainted the parking lots and drive lanes throughout the community. Some neighbors expressed concerns about how the pavement looked after the sealing and repainting. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Ruchita Patel with the Management Group 301-948-6666 ext. 115.

### ***Trash - Your Responsibilities and What Happens if You Don't Follow the Rules (this feature will run in every newsletter so that new homeowners are aware of the rules and penalties).***

Out of necessity, the Board of Directors developed and passed a Trash Policy in late 2004. The purpose was to ensure that our community property values were maintained, that the HOA bylaws were adhered to and that our community was not exposed to undue hazards and/or health risks. Beginning January 1, 2005 and continuing to the present, all residents of Norbeck Hills are required to comply with the Trash Collection Procedure and Enforcement Policy. This policy was mailed to all homeowners in early December 2004.

The Norbeck Hills Trash Collection Procedure and Enforcement policy rules defines: 1) the types of items that may be placed out as trash or recyclables; 2) In what type of containers and the way in which trash and other items are set out for pick-up; 3) when and where trash is to be placed, and 4) the removal of containers from the front of our homes after pick-up has been completed. The policy also defines the Enforcement Procedures, which will be used by the Association for non-compliance, which includes

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charging the homeowner for the cost of any necessary corrective action.

The majority of our homeowners are very conscientious about conforming to this policy. However, a number of residents still persist in: 1) placing trash/recyclables out earlier than the night before pickup; 2) failing to timely retrieve their containers and removing them from sight by the evening of the pick-up; 3) placing recyclable items and trash on common grounds rather than placing them in front of their own walkway for pickup on the scheduled day or taking it directly to the Solid Waste Transfer Station on Route 355, and 4) placing items that are restricted from recycling for pick-up with their recycle bins and leaving them out for all to view after the County's recycling trucks have refused to take the items.

A fine is imposed on any offending homeowner for each violation of this policy. This is the charge that the Association has to pay for having a special pickup/clean up of the trash, recyclables or other discards. This charge is recovered following the procedures for application of payments as defined in the Administrative Resolution for Collection of Delinquent Assessments. Copies of this procedure were also mailed to all homeowners and became effective January 1, 2005. Homeowners are strongly encouraged to follow the policies and, thereby, avoid having to pay a charge and/or earn the disfavor of your neighbors. Neighbors of offenders are encouraged to call the Management Group 301-948-6666 ext. 115, when they see violations to this policy. Your help is necessary in order to keep Norbeck Hills Clean and Beautiful – do this by properly disposing of your trash and recyclables.

### *AECC Process*

Chances are you have received a maintenance letter from Norbeck Hills for architectural violations or maintenance issues at your home. For many years, Norbeck Hills has had an annual inspection and enforcement process in place to help identify maintenance issues that should be corrected. This process is continually being updated, as the community grows older.

The inspection and enforcement process is not intended to offend any residents of Norbeck Hills. Instead, it is done in recognition of the fact that our Norbeck Hills community is 20 years old and now our homes need more maintenance than before. While the vast majority of residents in Norbeck Hills is conscientious and takes care of their homes, unfortunately, this is not the case for every homeowner.

Therefore, every year, Norbeck Hills conducts an inspection of the front, back and sides of each home in the community and issue letters for maintenance items or architectural violations that should be addressed. Because there are 446 homes in Norbeck Hills, it is not possible for the Association to inspect every home on a monthly basis to determine whether the issues cited have been corrected. Therefore, we rely on all Norbeck Hills homeowners to help us in this process. Your assistance is greatly appreciated in doing the following:

1. Take an objective look at your home and make any repairs that are necessary. Some of the most common things that are cited include wood trim repair, address plaque repair, reseeding of yards, repainting of copper bay window awnings, removal of weeds and dead landscaping, repairing of fences and cleaning out backyards of accumulated trash and debris.
2. If you do receive a letter and think that you were cited incorrectly, please call TMGA. The inspection process is not perfect, and we can certainly make mistakes. We would be happy to re-inspect your home and provide you with additional clarification or confirmation that you were cited incorrectly.
3. If you need an extension of time to do the work, please call Ruchita Patel or Victoria López at TMGA, or send in a note to this effect (301-948-6666 ext. 151). We will certainly work with homeowners who need more time to complete the needed repairs.
4. **When the issues cited have been corrected, please let us know! As stated above, we**

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cannot regularly inspect all 446 homes in Norbeck Hills. Therefore, unless we are informed, in writing, that the needed repairs have been addressed, we must assume that they have not been done. This is the reason why you may have received a follow-up letter for something that you have already corrected.

Effective communication is one of the keys to enable the HOA and our management group serves you better. Please help us keep your community beautiful and your home values high as our community ages. Thank you!

### *Complaints to The Management Group*

The Management Group has received a number of anonymous complaints from residents of Norbeck Hills regarding such things as their neighbor's dogs, trash violations, etc. The Management Group's policy is that they do not act on anonymous complaints, unless the issue is something that Ruchita can visually verify. If Ruchita cannot verify that the problem exists, she cannot rely on an anonymous caller's complaint. Also, if Ruchita needs additional information in order to proceed, she will need the person's name and number so that she can effectively follow-up.

### *Norbeck Hills Homeowners Association Quarterly Financial Report Ending June 30, 2006*

1. The Association had cash totaling \$59,043.20 in its operating checking account.
2. The Association had outstanding assessments due of \$10,734.31. Of this amount, the auditors project \$1,423.00 may not be collectible.
3. Year-to-date, the Association has an operating excess of \$42,800.56. This is primarily due to lower expenditures than budgeted for snow removal. A majority of the Association's expenses for upkeep of the

common areas, etc. are incurred during the summer and fall.

4. The Association had reserve fund cash and investments totaling \$150,220.80. The Association is contributing \$6,750.01 to the reserves each month. The Association has contributed a total of \$35,500.02 to the reserves this year.
5. As you can see, your current HOA Board of Directors and especially the Treasurer, Ellsworth Romer, are working hard to keep our HOA on a fiscally sound basis.

The financial statements are posted on the community website at [www.norbeckhills.org](http://www.norbeckhills.org). Please feel free to download a copy. If you would like to receive a hard copy of the statements in the mail, feel free to contact Ruchita Patel at (301) 948-6666 or [g:\nh\financialinformation\financereport](mailto:g:\nh\financialinformation\financereport)

At the June 2006 HOA meeting, the auditor for the Norbeck Hills Homeowners' Association was present and gave a report to the Board at that time. As a Norbeck Hills homeowner, you can request a copy of the approved audit. You need to send a letter with your request directly to Ruchita Patel and include a self-addressed stamped envelope for the copy to be mailed to you. Verbal requests for a copy will not be honored, nor those that do not include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

### *Community Clean Up*

The Community had its third clean-up day on July 15<sup>th</sup>. The weather at first did not look as though it was going to cooperate, but the sun came out. Many thanks go to Av Wofsey and the children from our Anaconda Swim Team and their Coach Chuck Webb for assisting with the clean up. Thanks also to: Lisa and Alex Valverde; Andrew & Michael Venezia; Elizabeth, Michael & Andrew DeMarco; Gai Kaufman; Sean James; Alex & Evan VandenValentyn; Brent Pizzamiglio; Thomas & Carolyn Kidd; and Darby & Aidan Sullivan.

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### *Parking on MacDuff*

Parking on MacDuff Avenue – Just a reminder that if you park on MacDuff Avenue, you can go up to the No Parking sign, but not beyond it. As you are aware, parking is very tight on MacDuff Avenue, therefore, every foot of available parking should be utilized. However, please try not to block the handicap curb access slopes. Those who bring your work vehicles home, be mindful that others also have to park on the street, so please pull your vehicles up as close as possible and not park on the common area next to the curbs, so that someone else can park. Thank you.

### *Montgomery County Reluctant Caller Program*

Again, several residents have asked for a number to report certain crimes and other suspicious activities within the neighborhood. The "Reluctant Caller" Program operated by the Montgomery County Police Department allows concerned residents to report crime, neighbors failing to cleanup after their pets, abuses of local noise ordinances, and other community infractions without identifying who you are. When you call into the Montgomery County police, 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. You are to use the Police Non-Emergency Number: 301-279-8000 and the Montgomery County Animal Services number is: 240-773-5960 or 240-773-5925.

### *A Dog Owners' Responsibilities*

**The cooperation of all Dog Owners is requested, please act responsibly and in accordance with following County laws:**

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. If an animal defecates on public property or the common area of property in which the owner shares an interest, the owner must immediately remove and dispose of the feces by a sanitary

method approved by the Director. Feces may be picked up in a plastic bag. Then this bag is to be placed inside another plastic bag and it may be put out for disposal within your normal household trash." A FINE OF \$100 IS IMPOSED FOR EACH 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 numerous complaints at every HOA meeting 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 any offenders and report them to the County 240-777-5960 or 240-773-5925. You can remain anonymous.

Please understand that this is a continual, growing problem and we need your cooperation and action to correct this problem. The Board cannot be responsible for cleaning up behind irresponsible dog owners nor should it be expected that the Board should do this for you. However if the need arises, the Board can restrict dog owners' access to the common areas of our community. Children are now playing in the common areas as well as other dogs being walked. There are viruses in dog feces that spread among animals and are deadly to other animals and some of these viruses can be transmitted to children.

Also, be aware that the County had stated that they have received numerous complaints about dog feces and inappropriate actions by pet owners in our community, but they need details in order to take action to correct the problem.

Please respect everyone — this is a family oriented community and we must respect each other in this regard.

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### *How to Cancel the Gazette*

This article is being run again because the Board has noticed that some homeowners are still not picking up the Gazette newspaper and disposing of it properly. All residents in the community receive a complimentary copy of the Montgomery County Gazette for the Olney community. If you wish to have this delivery stopped, please contact the Gazette directly at 301-670-7350.

Also, homeowners please note that newspapers are not allowed to accumulate outside the front of your home. This is an eyesore as well as a safety/security hazard. It is the homeowners/residents responsibility to collect and properly dispose of your newspapers, including the Gazette.

While homeowners should take individual action to stop delivery if they are not interested in reading the newspaper, we seek your help if you observe that a neighbor is not picking up their Gazette and letting them start to pile up on their sidewalk. Please, 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 negative curb appeal problem for the neighborhood. Also, if you know that the home next to you is vacant at this time, please call the Management Group and leave the address so that someone within the Management Group can call and cancel the Gazette.

### *Parents' Cautions*

Please ask your children to ride their bicycles and especially any motorized vehicle on the bike paths and not on the common areas. The entire community pays for the landscaper to come out to put down grass seeds, perform mulching, and trimming of trees, etc. so that the curb appeal is attractive from the streets and the high quality of life of this community is continued and enjoyed by everyone. The Board would also like to encourage parents to not leave toys in their front yards, but store them in the backyard after your child is finished playing with them. Also, basketball hoops are not allowed in the town homes under any circumstances. This is a violation of the

Norbeck Hills Association Covenants and Bylaws. The Board will strictly enforce its Bylaws and this particular by-law. Such action may include legal action against the non-complying town house owner. We ask for everyone's cooperation in helping to keep the community lovely and appealing for everyone to enjoy.

### *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 / Street Captain program is provides a central point to turn to for information about the community (both the new and established residents benefit from this).

If you would like to volunteer for this program, please contact Ruchita Patel of The Management Group 301-948-6666 or contact the Board through the online link on the Norbeck Hills Homeowner Association website ([www.norbeckhills.org](http://www.norbeckhills.org)). Your participation will be rewarding to you and provide all of your neighbors with someone to turn to when they have questions or concerns about the community. This also allows the Board a vehicle to quickly communicate information to the community.

Volunteers are also needed to assist with the newsletter committee. If you would like to volunteer to write, type or edit please send an email to the website or contact the Management Group.

### *Problems with Verizon or Comcast Who to Contact*

If you are still having problems with your cable not getting a good reception or you have orange wires that are sticking up out of the ground here is a number that your can call regarding these problems. It is the County's Consumer Affairs Department and

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you should ask to speak to Keith Watkins. His phone number is 240-773-2288.

December – NO MEETING

### *Trailers Parked on MacDuff and their Dangers*

It has been observed that there are still too many trailers, company trucks, and vans parked on MacDuff. In fact, the county is looking at MacDuff and assessing whether or not it will become one-way street. There have been too many "almost" accidents because the trailers are blocking the view of individuals coming out of the courtyards and making it difficult for two-way traffic to flow.

Please do not park large trucks, trailers, vans or other company vehicles near the corners within the community. These vehicles are to be parked at the Safeway shopping center at Spartan Road. If you need additional information on where to park your work vehicles please contact Ruchita Patel at The Management Group, 301-948-6666.

### *September is the Annual Meeting of the Board*

The Annual Meeting of the HOA Board Meeting will be held on September 21 at the ReMax Building off of Georgia Avenue (near the Safeway and Fletcher's Car Wash) at 7:00 PM. There are three people running for a seat on the Board. They are Ellsworth Romer, Louie dePlacido and Sheila Wright. You should have received a ballot to cast by now.. Please read the candidates statements, vote, and sign the ballot. You can either send it in or bring it with you to the meeting. It would be great to see a large turnout of homeowners for this meeting because you will get an opportunity to ask the candidates questions and get answers first hand. If you cannot attend the meeting and have access to a fax machine you may fax your ballot to The Management Group assigning them as your proxy. If you do not have a fax machine you may mail in the ballot to The Management Group.

Listed below are the dates of future meetings of the Board Meetings for 2006:

**October 19 at 7:00 PM**  
**November 16 at 7:00 PM**

### *Signs in the Community*

Montgomery County is cutting down on the number of signs that can be placed on county roads by realtors, vendors, salespersons, etc. There can only be four signs that state a home is for sale, yard sale, Verizon, Comcast, other types of services and businesses. For sale signs can be placed in the yard of the house for sale, but if there is a sign on a county road, the sign must be taken up by Saturday/Sunday at dusk and must not be put up again until the following Friday at dusk. Otherwise, the County will fine the company, organization, realtor/salesperson that is listed on the signage as well as confiscate the signs. We enlist the cooperation of our neighbors who are engaged in these professions and/or businesses and who place signs in our neighborhoods to abide by the County rules and regulations.

### *Community Referrals*

Home Solutions Cleaning Service  
Emily Ochoa  
1215 Twig Terrace  
Silver Spring, MD 20905  
301-648-9060 (Business)  
301-384-4268 (Fax)  
HomeSolutions01@mail.com