

THE MANOR MONITOR

January 2009

A Monthly Publication of The Vint Hill Manor Homeowners Association

www.VintHillManor.org

Happy New Year Happy New Year Happy New Year Happy New Year

Board of Directors' Monthly Meetings

The November meeting of the Board of Directors (BOD) of the Homeowners Association (HOA) was held on Tuesday, the 2nd, at 7PM, in the Conservancy Conference Room at 4263 Aiken Drive. The regular monthly BOD meetings are open and all members are invited to attend.

At the beginning of each monthly meeting, there is an opportunity for members to make comments and/or present questions for the BOD's consideration, as well as advise concerns, or offer ideas. Minutes of the previous meeting, as well as current financial statements, are made available to all attendees. Significant items addressed at the meeting are covered in *The Manor Monitor* newsletter..

Recognition

A special THANK YOU to Dorothy Johnson and Genny Simmons for the raking, bagging and disposition of the leaves at the entrance to our community. They were unsightly and a hazard to the growth of the new grass.

An EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION is extended to ALL the members of our community who serve and contribute their time and efforts in a variety of official and unofficial ways.



The Manor Monitor
Editor: Tom Daily
Production: Bob McConahy

Architectural Review Committee (ARC)

Stan Manvell, ARC Chair, reported that the November ARC meeting was cancelled since there were no new applications to be reviewed. Stan went on to advise that there are now only 8 lots with a total of 16 un-submitted modifications. The majority of these modifications have to do with Landscaping (5) and Satellite Dishes (7). The ARC meetings are usually held on the last Tuesday of the month and, like BOD meetings, are open to the members of the community. The next ARC meeting is scheduled for December 30, 2008, at 7PM, at Stan's residence, 3587 Osborne Drive.

The ARC is always more than ready and willing to meet with any homeowner to provide guidance and/or assistance with the necessary application(s) which are required for exterior modifications to our homes. In a spirit of cooperation, please help the ARC reach its goal of Complete Compliance!

PLANNING SOME CHANGES?

GIVE STAN A CALL AT 341-2886

ARMI

The Austin Realty Management and Investment Company (ARMI), as part of its service under contract to the Vint Hill Manor HOA, is positioned to serve as a liaison between the community and the BOD and/or the ARC members. Fred Austin, owner of ARMI, advises that direct contact with his company results in all BOD and ARC

members, as the case may dictate, being advised.

ARMI's address, where our monthly HOA assessments are sent, is: PO Box 3413, Warrenton, VA 20188.
Phone: 540-347-1901
Fax: 540-347-1900

Website: www.ARMIVA.com.

AARP Driver Safety Program

At the December BOD meeting, Mark Melancon agreed to take on the position of Chair of the Program Committee. The solicitation period for expressions of interest in the AARP Driver Safety Program has been extended. If you think you'd be interested in attending this training, please advise Mark. *This would NOT be a commitment, just an expression of interest.*

Mark can be contacted at 540-341-4177, or melanconmjjf@comcast.net.

Follow-up Trash Survey

In the May, 2008, issue of the Manor Monitor, a survey was enclosed that explained the four options relating to the issue of the collection of trash and of recyclable materials in our community. Explanatory details and the cost for each option were provided and the members were given the opportunity to vote for their preference. The June issue contained the results of the survey, i.e., 52 replies were received and over half of them supported the addition of the collection of the recyclables and one trash collection (Option 2).

The new program was implemented on June 3, 2008. The recyclables collection portion has enjoyed a successful participation rate of close to 70%. This was based on an actual observance of the presence of the recycling bin and/or other recyclable materials, distinctly set apart from the trash container, placed in front of our homes by around 8 AM every Tuesday morning, starting in June and ending the last week in October.

For the record, however, our contractor, Culpeper Trash, requests both trash and recyclables be placed at the curb by 7AM to ensure collection.

In compliance with the statement made in the August issue of the *Manor Monitor*, a follow-up survey is being offered to assess satisfaction with the current system or the need to make an adjustment. The contractor pledged to be flexible and adjust very quickly to any change approved by the BOD.

Listed below are the four options as presented in the original survey, along with the respective cost of each. Given the rate of success regarding the recyclables collection, it is unlikely a majority of homeowners would vote to discontinue it. One of the other options would involve the addition of a second trash collection. Be aware this would represent an additional cost of \$3 per household or \$300 per month, which amounts to an additional \$3600 per year. This would represent a significant impact on the HOA budget and could have a negative effect on further assessment reduction efforts.

PLEASE take time to review the various options and make your preference for any change known – **BY JANUARY 5TH** – either by calling Tom Daily @ 341-7606, or by sending him an e-mail @ tomrdee@comcast.net .

Non-responses will be viewed as approval of the current system, i.e., collection of trash and recyclables on Tuesday of each week (Option 2).

SURVEY OPTIONS:

- #1 Three Pickups** – Two Trash (Tue & Fri) and One Recyclables (Tue) @ \$24 per lot per month.
- #2 Two Pickups** – One Trash (Tue or Fri) and One Recyclables (Tue) @ \$21 per lot per month.
- #3 Two Pickups** – Two Trash (Tue & Fri) and No Recyclables, @ \$19 per lot per month.
- #4 One Pickup** – One Trash (Tue or Fri) and No Recyclables @ \$16 per lot per month.

Vint Hill Manor Homeowners' Association Board of Directors' Meeting Agenda January 6, 2009

1. Call to Order
2. Introduce Recording Secretary
3. Membership Comment Period
4. Minutes of Previous BOD Meeting
5. Financial/Treasurer's Report
6. Committee Reports
 - a. Architectural Review and Covenants
 - b. Chartering Documents Review
 - c. Communications
 - d. Grounds
 - 1) Contract Bids
 - e. Program
7. Unfinished Business
 - a. Jurisdictional Control
 - b. Trash Pick-up Survey
 - c. Annual Membership Meeting
 - d. Candidates for BOD
8. New Business
 - a. Commercial Vehicles Parked Overnight
 - b. Horseback Riders on Walking Path
9. Adjournment

BOD Vacancies

In accordance with our HOA regulations, the original BOD term lengths were staggered to allow for some degree of continuity, as opposed to having the terms of all positions be completed at the same time. One of the original BOD members served a one year term, another served a two year term, and the remaining three original BOD members were to serve the normal three year term. As of the night of the upcoming Annual Membership Meeting in March, 2009, those original three year terms will be completed and there will be three vacant BOD positions that will need to be filled. It is possible that some of the current holders of those positions may decide to enter their names for consideration by the membership to serve again on the BOD. However, it is important also to determine if there are other interested members that would be willing to contribute their time and efforts to help run our HOA.

To review quickly, there are five BOD positions, all of which are equal. Two of those positions still have time left on their terms, while the terms of three of the positions will expire in March, 2009.

The HOA Officer positions, on the other hand, all have a one year term limit. Therefore, at the end of each Annual Membership Meeting, the new BOD members decide among themselves who the Officers of the HOA will be. Whichever BOD member is elected, by the other BOD members, to be the President of the HOA, automatically serves as the Chair of the BOD. The President of the HOA is required to be a BOD member. The other HOA Officers do not have to be BOD members; however, especially, in relatively small communities, it is not uncommon for the other BOD members to assume the other HOA Officer positions, as well. The only other stipulation is that the HOA

President can not also be the HOA Secretary.

Even though the Annual Membership Meeting is a couple of months away, it is not too early to start thinking about 'throwing your hat into the ring' or 'putting your name on the slate', as the sayings go, for one of the three BOD positions that will be filled by membership election at the aforementioned meeting.

If you are so inclined, you can submit your name and a brief bio sketch, including any previous HOA experience and/or other related qualifications, to any current BOD member or to ARMI.

Online Banking

Online Banking is a relatively simple and easy way to pay bills for anyone who has a computer and Internet access. To get started, look at your latest checking account statement. Call the customer service number listed and ask for the person in charge of online banking. They will tell you what to do. Suggest starting with the monthly HOA assessment and then, as you feel comfortable, add other monthly bills.

The process offers peace of mind in knowing that each month your HOA assessment will be paid, and on time. Simply set the amount (which you can change, if/as necessary) and the date (to ensure timely arrival at ARMI) and the rest will take care of itself. ARMI advises that HOA monthly assessments are due and payable on the first day of each month. A late fee of \$10 is applied for any payments received after the 24th day of the month. By utilizing online banking you don't have to worry about it any more – except to ensure you have sufficient funds in your account which you would do when you write a check, anyway.

We are all human and subject to error and forgetfulness, especially

if we are planning some travel, or if something else disrupts our normal routine, and some bills end up getting paid late or, perhaps, not at all. ARMI reports that, on average, 4 to 5 homeowners, each month, get assessed a delinquent fee of \$10. And, in almost every case, the homeowner just forgot to make the payment. Wouldn't it be worth the 'peace of mind' to know that your homeowners assessment, and any other monthly bills you set up in the system, are being paid, and on time, each month?!

While you're away, the bank will pay! (for you).

The important thing to remember is that YOU are in control, at all times. YOU set the amount and the date. The best and easiest applications are those in which the monthly amounts and pay dates are constant, such as HOA assessments, and mortgage and car payments, to name a few. These are the easiest because you only have to set up the payment schedule once.

Flexible billing amounts also can be accommodated. For example, YOU can set up this system to pay bills like those for utilities and for Macy's, Penny's and Sears. In those cases, YOU go into the system and determine what amount to pay for a particular month and on what date. Again, YOU are in control. You would have to sit down and write a check anyway; so why not just go into the computer and have the bank WRITE THE CHECK – AND PAY THE POSTAGE AND MAIL IT FOR YOU, as well?! It is estimated that about one in seven of our homeowners (who have access to Internet services) is already utilizing this system! Isn't it about time YOU start taking advantage of this opportunity, as well?!

As one example, if you have your account with Fauquier Bank, go to their web site at www.fauquier-bank.com. (Add it to your favorites.) Scroll down the left side and

click on the icon for 'online banking'. Then follow the instructions on every page. Within two business days, the bank will notify you that you are approved for online banking. Then you can authorize a deduction. That's all there is to it.

Other banks have similarly easy approaches. Check yours out today!

Monthly Assessment Coupon Books

As advised in the ARMI November 30, 2008 notice, consideration is being given by the BOD to "discontinuing the use of coupon books in relation to the paying of (monthly HOA) assessments." The notice went on to explain that the coupons are not really needed, and are an added expense to the HOA. As long as the important information, i.e., a member's name and address in the community, are on the check, the payment will be credited properly. The HOA can realize a cost avoidance of about \$350 per year by discontinuing the coupon books. This issue will be addressed at the upcoming January 2009 BOD meeting. If the decision is made by the BOD to discontinue the automatic distribution of the coupon books to the entire community, it

is anticipated that they would be made available on an exception/request basis.

The self-addressed envelopes, at a cost to the HOA of about \$130 per year, will continue to be distributed to the membership, to accommodate those who still write monthly checks. [Hint – See the article entitled Online Banking.]

Traffic Warnings

✿ Vint Hill Road in Greenwich (vicinity of Mayhugh's and the Church area). There is some new signage and reduced speed limits posted. Be mindful of the need for caution in this area.

✿ Aiken Drive and other roads in and around Vint Hill. Be aware of the speed limits – mostly 25 MPH, and the Stop Signs. There has been stepped-up surveillance and enforcement.

✿ And remember the Virginia law that requires us to turn on our headlights anytime our windshield wipers are operating. It's a law that works for our own protection, allowing others to see us better in inclement weather. And it might save you a citation.

VINT HILL MANOR
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**BEST WISHES TO ALL
THE RESIDENTS OF
OUR WONDERFUL
COMMUNITY FOR
A SAFE AND HAPPY
HOLIDAY SEASON, AND
A HAPPY, HEALTHY
AND PROSPEROUS NEW
YEAR.**

General Housekeeping

Residents are asked to be mindful of the eyesore created by the appearance of cigarette butts on our lawns, our sidewalks, and in the curbside gutters. While the development was under construction, this condition was attributed largely to the work force; but, they are now long gone. If pet owners can be expected to clean up after their pets, certainly residents, who smoke as they make their way through the community, can properly dispose of cigarette butts. Please help keep Vint Hill Manor clean and nice looking.

Residents also are asked to be aware of the proper disposition of certain hazardous fluids. Whatever gets washed down our driveways and into the streets ends up in the wetlands and eventually, the pond. In the storm sewer drainage system which empties out behind the homes on Averbach Court, in addition to the aforementioned cigarette butts, fluids, appearing to have antifreeze-like qualities, have been seen coming through.

It's ours to protect, folks.

The subject of dog waste continues to be raised by those folks who properly monitor their pets while walking in the neighborhood and promptly remove their waste. There has been an increase in the incidence of non-scoopers who are giving the scoopers a bad image. We all tend to get lumped together in the "abuse of neighborhood" category. Those of you who walk and don't scoop, please begin to comply so we aren't all condemned with you as uncaring citizens. Petsmart sells bags designed for the purpose.