

THE MANOR MONITOR

July 2009

A Monthly Publication of The Vint Hill Manor Homeowners Association

www.VintHillManor.org



Board of Directors' Monthly Meeting

The June meeting of the Board of Directors (BOD) of the Homeowners Association (HOA) was held on Tuesday, June 2, 2009, in the alternate location of the Conservancy Conference Room on Bludau Drive. The regular, monthly BOD meetings are open and all members are invited to attend.

Notice: As of the next BOD meeting, Tuesday, July 7, 2009, the location will revert to where we used to meet, i.e., the Conference Room at the Vint Hill Conservancy/ EDA offices at 4263 Aiken Drive.

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 Newsletter.

Common Grounds Initiative

The BOD is interested in seeing that our new grounds maintenance contractor crew provides the level of quality expected, in order for them to be in compliance with the terms of their contract with the Conservancy. To help with reporting, we are asking a few owners to monitor the common grounds behind a section of homes. The table on the next page shows the various sections and the homeowners

who have volunteered thus far. We still need volunteers for three of the areas and alternates for all nine areas. The alternates will do the reporting when the reporting homeowner is on vacation. The reporting homeowner will monitor the areas after mowing, spraying, and fertilizing to ensure that no areas are missed, and assess the quality of the work that was done. If you are willing to be a reporting owner or an alternate, please call Frank Fuerst (temporary Chair of the Common Grounds Committee [CGC]) at 341-1473.

As mentioned last month, the Chair position of the CGC is still open; so, even if you think you might have an interest in this position; but are not sure, please give Frank a call and talk it over with him.



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.

Recording Secretary Position

This position is still open, as well. Brian Desmond, who had been acting in this capacity, is unable to help at this time. It is important for ALL BOD members to be able to focus their attention on matters being discussed. A volunteer, to record the proceedings, is really vital. The only requirement is a commitment to attend the monthly BOD and Annual Membership Meetings, record what takes place, and provide a 'draft' copy to Stan Manvell, the HOA Secretary. Stan will be responsible for developing and providing the 'official' minutes. Anyone willing to help out in this capacity, please **contact Stan at 341-2886**, or send him an e-mail at – stanvell@comcast.net.

Monthly Assessment Terms Changes

In last month's Newsletter, an article appeared advising the changes concerning the timeframe when a payment will be considered late (if received after the last day of the month), and the amount of the late fee to be charged (\$5.00). In the article, a reference was made to the "The ARMI monthly statement..." ARMI's statement is provided on a quarterly basis; thus, we apologize for any confusion we may have caused.

Driveway Sealing

In response to the effort to determine the level of interest, a total of 41 homeowners contacted Mark Melancon, Program Chair, to sign up to get their driveways sealed.

Vint Hill Manor Common Grounds Quality Control

Behind Lots	Reporting Owner (Lot#)	Alternate (Lot#)
1-6	_____	_____
7-18	Bob McConahy (18)	_____
19-35	Mark Melancon (28)	_____
36-44		
51-53	_____	_____
Culvert		
54-61	Individual Owners Maintain	
62-71	Irene Gomez (63)	_____
72-82	Frank Fuerst (74)	_____
83-90	Smitty Allnutt (88)	_____
91-100	John Knight (93)	_____

Vint Hill Manor Homeowners' Association Board of Directors Meeting Agenda July 7, 2009

1. Call to Order
2. Membership Comment Period
3. Minutes of June BOD Meeting
4. Financial Report
5. Committee Reports
 - a. Architectural Review and Covenants
 - b. Chartering documents Review
 - c. Common Grounds
 - d. Communications
 - e. Programs
6. Executive Session
7. Adjournment

As a result of that volume, Mark was able to get a quote of \$39 per driveway, from Academy Sealers. Work is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, July 1, 2009.

Architectural Review Committee

Steve Chronister, ARC Chair, reported on the May ARC meeting. In the comment period, there were discussions on proactively following-up on completed projects and more closely examining each design request to verify that adequate and relevant information is provided for review.

Steve then advised that the committee reviewed and approved applications from five homeowners. There are still 5 lots (6 unapproved modifications) that are in a non-compliant status.

The ARC meetings are usually held on the last Tuesday of the month

and, like the BOD meetings, are open to the members of the community. The location of the next meeting is determined at each current monthly meeting. The June ARC meeting was scheduled for the 30th, at 7:00PM at the home of Steve Chronister, 6828 Averbach Court.

The ARC is always 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 properties. In a spirit of cooperation, please help the ARC reach its goal of Complete Compliance! Manor Pride!

**Planning some changes?
– Give Steve a call at 428-1828**



Walking the Dog

Anyone familiar with yo-yo's will remember this as the name of one of the many tricks that can be performed. It requires a certain amount of dexterity and practice. There are a couple of 'moves' that can be performed with real dogs – keeping them on a leash and picking up after them – that don't require a great deal of dexterity, just a sense of common decency and responsibility. While there are no laws connected with yo-yo's, there are with dogs. This is probably the most often requested reminder article for the Newsletter, and should have been prefaced with an apology to the vast majority of our pet owners who do the right thing and are vigilant about keeping their dogs on their leashes and cleaning up after them. The other HOA also has been requested to put the word out, again, to their members, as well.

Online Banking

At the June BOD meeting, it was suggested that a repeat article be done about this topic. 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, especially, those that tend to be the same amount.

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 \$5 is applied for any payments received after the last 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 if you were to 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, three to four homeowners, each month, get assessed a delinquent fee. 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?! **Remember – While you're away, the bank will pay!** (for you).

The important thing to remember is that YOU are in control, at all times, and the arrangement is between **YOUR** bank and **YOU**. No outside business is accessing your account, as with some other arrangements that are offered. **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 five of our homeowners (who have access to Internet services) is already utilizing this system! When talking to some of our residents who are already using this system, the comments tend to be the same. It is easy to set up and easy to change. It saves time. You don't have to even think about it because it happens automatically, and so on. Isn't it about time **YOU** start taking advantage of this opportunity, as well?!

Betcha Can't Eat Just One...

Remember that potato chip commercial? Well, there's a real reason why we can't seem to be able to stop eating some foods – and that we actually crave them. *“Regular exposure to palatable foods rich in salt, sugar and fat can change the way our brains work”*, says David A. Kessler, M.D., author of *“The End of Overeating: Taking Control of the Insatiable American Appetite.”* Dr. Kessler, renowned for taking on Big Tobacco and mandating nutrition labels on grocery-store food, spent the last seven years interviewing physicians, scientists and food industry executives – and uncovered a vicious cycle. Humans are naturally wired to focus on the greatest stimulation in their environment. And when it comes to food, dishes high in fat, salt and sugar – the ones so popular in the American diet – fit the description.

The thought of such foods travels straight to the reward center of the brain, releasing dopamine, the chemical associated with pleasure. Eating foods we crave releases other chemicals, opioids, which provide emotional satisfaction. Over time, these neural pathways are strengthened, and soon, the whiff, even the mention, of a favorite food sets the cycle in motion. Suddenly, it's a habit – we don't know when to stop – something Kessler calls “conditioned hypereating.” It becomes an addiction, and, as with all addictions, we want – even need – more of our favorite food to gain the same satisfaction. Give some people a bag of chips, and soon, voila! The bag is empty, proving the above title of this article, “Betcha can't eat just one.”

Major food corporations and chain restaurants are aware of this cycle and use chemicals and fake food products to create alluring fatty, salty, sweet dishes. They know people will come back for more of these kinds of foods. Kessler goes on to say, “Now we know

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the neuroscience behind it.” We need to change the way we look at food – to get to the point where we are aware that often what we are eating is layered and loaded. Take Buffalo Wings as an example. The fatty part of the chicken is deep-fried at the plant and fried again at the restaurant. The red sauce is sugar and fat and the cream sauce is fat and salt. So Buffalo Wings are fat, on fat, on sugar and fat, on fat and salt, and have as many calories as a plate of nachos. A real killer combination is when these kinds of foods are consumed in conjunction with alcoholic beverages. Often, they compliment each other in that the more we eat, the thirstier we get, and so on. And it is no secret that alcoholic drinks can be addictive in many of the same ways as food. So, in that scenario, one type of addiction tends to feed on and reinforce the other.

In addition to the various food products themselves, we also exacerbate the situation in our culture by making eating acceptable everywhere, and at all times. But just because our brains are being activated and stimulated almost constantly doesn't mean we can't do something about it. First, we have to recognize if food is controlling us. We need to ask ourselves about such things as: are we frequently thinking about food, are we having a hard time resisting eating these highly palatable foods, and, once we start eating, do we have a hard time stopping and/or rarely feel full? Answers may vary in degree. There's only a small percentage of the American population (15%) for whom food is not a very salient stimuli; the vast majority of us have at least some of the characteristics of conditioned hypereating.

In some ways, conditioned hypereating functions like a drug addiction – there are commonalities in the pathways that drive both behaviors that are driven by conditioning. An overeater may have just as hard a time correcting his/her behavior as would a drug addict. When behavior is driven,

it's also highly motivated. And when it's highly motivated, it's very hard to stop. This is true for any stimulating substances.

Even though we know instinctively that too much of sugary, salty, and fatty foods aren't good for us, and even though, to some degree, there is mass media coverage of the problems concerning these kinds of foods, it doesn't help if we're caught in the cycle. It may even make it worse. We're conditioned to the cues of foods like this – they grab our attention and focus us. If an item of this nature is in front of us, and we know we shouldn't have it, it makes us only want it more.

And good old fashioned will power and diets either don't work at all or not for long. Food intake can be decreased and some weight can be lost; but, if nothing is done to change the neural circuitry, and we go back to the same environment, so to speak, we get bombarded with the same old cues and eventually gain the weight back, if not even more. The best way to stop hypereating is to eat in a planned and organized way. If we know what we're going to eat and we want it, we're not going to view it as deprivation.

Another important aspect of dealing with this addiction is to change how we perceive given food items. This is similar to how tobacco has been treated. Tobacco used to have a positive ambiance – a combination of elements involving many of the senses. Nicotine itself is reinforcing. To that, add things such as the swirling smoke, the crinkling of the cellophane wrapper on the pack, the colors of the packaging, the image of the cowboy (or other attractive figure) smoking. The idea was to convey that smoking was going to make us feel better, make us look cool, and relieve our stress. That combination created a highly addictive product. So, it was important to change how tobacco and tobacco products were viewed/perceived from positive to negative.

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Regardless of our age, there's not much that can be done if we continue to think of foods that are high in sugar, fat, and salt as desirable. It is important to change the perception – change how we view these kinds of foods. We need to substitute other desirable images, such as a trimmer physique and a robust and healthy picture of ourselves. And, we need to want those things more. If we want something more, it is possible to change our behavior. Especially, as we get older, we need to be aware of the consequences of excess weight on mobility. We need to be aware of the negative impact this kind of obsessive behavior, and its resultant weight gain, has on cardio and other medical conditions as we age. The stakes are very great in our older years; but so are the rewards if/when we succeed!

Source: AARP Bulletin Today / 5/25/09.

Taken from an article by Carol Kaufmann, "Why We Eat Too Much"