



George Mason Forest Reporter

NUMBER 1

www.gmfhoa.org

2014

WHAT'S GOING ON IN GMFHOA?

The first six months of 2014 have been busy ones in GMFHOA—the annual member meeting in March and election of new board of director members; the annual community clean up day in March; the community yard sale in June; installation of new lightening at the community entrance signs; letting of a contract with a new common area maintenance company, and we all survived the two weeks of increased traffic on Braddock Road during the high school graduation ceremonies at the Patriot Center.

The Board of Directors has been writing policies and procedures which will give continuity for present and future boards and provide structure on how the board is to function in its duties as defined in our governing documents.

(See article page 3).

The annual GMFHOA picnic and potluck will be held on Saturday, September 6, 2014 from 4-6 PM.

The picnic will be held in the neighborhood—exact site yet to be determined. All details will be posted on our website, in an email alert and at the community entrances.

GMFHOA will be hosting a Halloween celebration this year on October 26, 2014 with a dog costume parade. Humans in costume are welcome too. Details will be posted on our website, in an email alert and at the community entrances.

The Board elected officers for the 2014-2015 year. President, Tena Bluhm; Vice President-Heather Villavicencio; Secretary, Fred Knowles and Treasurer, Claire Orth.

GMF BOARD MEMBERS

Tena Bluhm - President	703-978-9468
Heather Villavicencio-Vice President	703-764-9717
Fred Knowles - Secretary	703-426-8204
Claire Orth—Treasurer	703-978-5477
Charles Cason	703-978-7784
Celeste Delehunty	703-323-8264
Paul Kite	703-425-6314
Kathleen Lieb	703-865-5775
Mike Miller	703-978-5515
Tom Ruzic	703-426-8432
Bob Winstead	703-321-7018



SUMMARY OF GMFHOA BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Complete Board minutes are on the web site

www.gmfhoa.org

The GMFHOA Board meets monthly except in Aug. and Dec. Summary of January through May 2014 minutes below.

Treasurer Report: As of May, the Reserve Account contains \$9,772.33 and the Operating Account \$28,753.34. All 200 homeowner assessments were paid this year. Audit of the 2013 GMFHOA financial records and 2013 taxes were completed and filed by the association auditors. Cost for audit was \$2100. Association insurance premium for 2014-2015 of \$1884 was paid. Common area maintenance payments of \$2,612.55 are paid quarterly. Attorney retainer fee \$125 is paid monthly. Dominion Electric charges for entrance lights are paid monthly via automatic withdrawal from the operating account. Semi annual payment of \$180 to maintain the web site is paid in January and July. On-line banking with Bank of America has been set up and the treasurer can now access the accounts to track financial activities at any time.

Committee Reports:

Grounds/Landscape Committee – No trees have had to be removed so far this year. A lawn care maintenance contract was signed with M&M Lawn Care. The contract is a 36 month agreement at \$10,450.20 per year. New light fixtures were installed at both entrances.

Social Committee—Annual Picnic and Potluck will be held Sept 6 from 4-6 PM in the neighborhood. Exact site yet to be determined. Picnic committee will make some new and exciting changes. As always, drawings for great door prizes will be held. **Halloween** will be celebrated with a costumed dog parade on October 26. Costumed humans welcome too. Details will follow.



THE MARCH GMFHOA ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

The GMFHOA annual member meeting held in March was well attended. The membership elected two new members, Kathleen Lieb and Claire Orth and re-elected Heather Villavicencio and Fred Knowles to the board. Frank McHugh and Lori Taylor resigned from the board. Frank served as one of the chairs of the grounds maintenance group. He was responsible for the many repairs to the entrance lights, tree removal and bridge and trail maintenance. Lori welcomed new residents, worked to collect votes for our new documents as well as other duties associated with board membership. Both will be missed. The board expresses their appreciation to Frank and Lori for their dedicated service.

The board also thanked many volunteers for their help throughout 2013—

SNOW REMOVAL—thank you to Steve Delehunty, Nick Atiyah, Sylvanus Bent, Ernie Kan and David Opatz. They used snow blowers to clear sidewalks and driveways. They focused on our older residents and those whose families who had a service member deployed.

REMOVAL OF DOWN TREES IN THE COMMON AREAS—thank you to Tom Ruzic, Dave Taylor, Frank McHugh, Fred Knowles and Mark Lieb. They cleared smaller dead and down trees and saved the association money.

RESEARCH AND REWRITING OF OUR GOVERNING DOCUMENTS—thank you to John Mohn, Sue Reinhard, Claire Orth, Cary Adams, Steve Spratt and Charles Cason. They researched and prepared draft documents of our 2013 governing documents for review by our attorney. This reduced the amount of billing time our attorney had to spend in making sure our documents were legally correct. They saved the association money.

SETTING UP THE ENTRANCE ANNOUNCEMENTS SIGNS—thank you to Ethan and Seth Villavicencio. They prepare and set up/take down the metal announcement signs displayed at our entrances.

SETTING UP USE OF GMU FITNESS CENTER FACILITIES—thank you to Sylvanus Bent for being the contact person and obtaining the reduce rates for our residents to use the GMU fitness facilities It includes a parking pass when using the facility.

Thank these volunteers when you see them
2013 was a land mark year when the association amended our documents and completed the annexation of Amanda Place. It was also a year of tree removal. Eleven common land dead or dying trees, which threatened homeowners property, were removed. This was the largest number ever removed in a one year period.

The goals for 2014 are to establish procedures and policies for the management of GMFHOA; replace the entrance lights; establish pass word protected for the website; provide removal of snow on common land sidewalks ;negotiate a contract with a lawn care service company and increase the amount of the reserve account.

Additional announcements of activities in the surrounding areas of GMFHOA.

UNIVERSITY MALL—The Mall renovation is slated to be completed by end of 2014.

RSU CONSTRUCTION—The Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County voted to eliminate building of RSU (Residential Studio Units) in low density residential neighborhoods—such as GMFHOA. They also ruled that RSUs can only be constructed in a R-20 zone area. GMFHOA is zoned R-2-3.

WIDENING OF BRADDOCK ROAD—Studies are underway to widen Braddock Rd from I-495 to Guinea Road and to set up a transit center at Kings Park. Community Update Meetings with Supervisor Cook will occur about every 3 months. Present expected timeline is 18 months for the study followed by 6 years of design and construction. Project has been on County list of transportation improvements for 5 years.

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRAINING CENTER—The Fairfax County Deputy County Executive is working with the new Governor. They still have not been able to get a firm date for closure. The county would very much like to purchase it if at all possible but funds are tight and the state may need the funds to finance the care of the current residents. 2016 looks like the first date that this might all take place but that is pretty much just a guesstimate until the new administration looks at the Department of Justice Settlement and evaluates their options.

CHECK GMFHOA WEBSITE—Residents were reminded to check the GMFHOA website (gmfhoa.org) for updates and to use the website to obtain forms such as the Architectural Control Committee forms to make exterior changes to your home, and to request the legally required Disclosure Packet for sale of your home.

GMFHOA BOARD MEETINGS—GMFHOA Board meeting are open and held 8:00 PM third Wednesday of the month with exception of Aug and Dec. Contact a board member for meeting site.

2014 GMFHOA CALENDAR

Community Picnic & Potluck	September 6
Halloween Parade	October 26

2014 YARD SALE AND CLEAN UP DAY

The 2014 yard sale and clean up days were both a success. A record was set with the most volunteers ever for clean up day. Parents brought their children along and the job was done in a very short time. Thank you to all who participated. The yard sale this year had the most participants that have been seen for a very long time. Judging from the number of buyers in the neighborhood it was a success.

GMFHOA Policies and Procedures

It became apparent that there is a need for consistency in how the GMFHOA Board is to carry out its duties as described in the HOA governing documents. The Board decided to establish written guidelines to provide consistency and help present and future board members. With that in mind, the Board reviewed all of its duties to determine which areas needed a policy and/or procedure.

The new procedures will address: Procurement of Vendor Services; Disbursing Funds from GMFHOA accounts; Requesting GMFHOA Disclosure Packet for Resale of Property; Preparation of the Disclosure Packet; Preparing for Membership Meetings; Preparation for Community Picnic, Community Clean up Day and Community Yard Sale; Preparation of GMFHOA annual Budget.

New policies will include: Procurement of Vendor Services; Usage of GMFHOA Phone Directory, Newsletter and Email Alerts; Reuse of GMFHOA Governing Documents; and Maintenance of Landscaped and Natural Wooded Community Property.

Policies and Procedures for Resolution of Association Complaints were established by the 2012 Virginia General Assembly and is already in place and on the GMFHOA web site. All the new Board policies and procedures will also be posted on the web site when they are completed.

SUMMER MOVES MEAN NEW NEIGHBORS

It's time for the moving vans again. Welcome our new residents, inform them about the GMFHOA, and tell them about the "gems" in our surrounding areas—where to shop, restaurants you have found and like and don't forget best of all "Woody's" ice cream shop in Fairfax City.

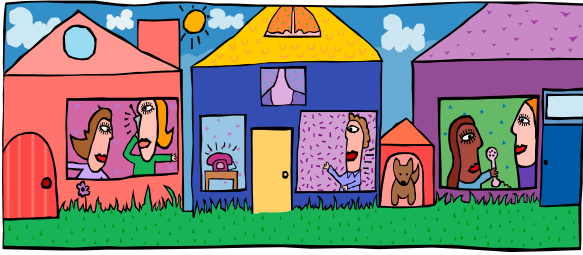
WORLD POLICE AND FIRE GAMES AT GMU

In July of 2015, Fairfax County will host over 12,000 participants and their families from 70 countries for the second largest international multi-sport athletic event. The opening ceremony will be held on June 26, 2015 at DC's National's Park and closing ceremonies July 5th at Wolf Trap. The events will be held on the GMU campus as well as other facilities within the Washington metropolitan area. Check out Fairfax County website fairfax2015.com to learn more about the games and sign up to receive updates. GMFHOA Email alerts with traffic news will be posted in June 2015.



NEIGHBORHOOD SOUND BITES

- A new three year lawn care contract with M&M Lawn Care was signed this year. Tell the Board what you think of the job M&M is doing.
- Complaints continue to come in about pet owners not cleaning up after their animals. Be a good neighbor and pick up after your dog. The newspaper plastic bag makes a great pick up bag. If you don't get the paper anymore, check with a neighbor who does and ask them for their bags.
- Homeowners continue to dump yard debris and trash into the common area. **IT IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN** both by Federal and County law under the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and by our governing documents. Violators will be notified to remove the debris.
- Six new light fixtures were installed in early June at the three entrance signs. The new fixtures on a light sensitive timer are a better quality and use LED light technology. In addition, the Tapestry entrance sign had a new transformer installed. The new fixtures cast a brighter light making it easier to see the entrance signs at night. The total cost was \$1088.
- A homeowner reported the drywall board from the ceiling in his garage fell suddenly. Luckily, the car was not damaged. The drywall board was not secured with screws and the nails came loose. Reminder, check the status of any nail pops you see in your ceilings to make sure your ceiling is secure.
- Trash containers and yard bags are NOT to be placed in the street until the day before pick up. Place the containers and bags 10-12 inches away from the curb to prevent blocking the flow of storm water. Every year, bags of lawn debris and garbage are pick up out of our stream after being washed down the drains during storms.
- Do not use open baskets or containers for trash or garbage. Winds and animals scatter the trash.
- At this time, there has been no resolution of the mail theft problem. Know your neighbors and their cars. Continue to be watchful of unfamiliar vehicles cruising through the neighborhood, drivers looking into mail boxes or asking if the mail has been delivered. Get a description of the drivers, the vehicle, license number and description and contact **Colin Spence, US Postal Inspector, Northern VA Mail Theft Team, Phone 703-280-7201 or email CSpence@USPIS.gov**
- Prevent water in your basement by keeping your gutters clear, check to make sure your outside basement stairwell drain is not blocked with leaves and debris and if applicable, check your sump pump to make sure it is operating and clear.



WE FOUND THE GMF CHAMP!

In the last newsletter, we asked to hear from original GMF homeowners and their memories of what the neighborhood was like during the early development.

Mary and Lewis Wright arrived in April of 1980 and were the very first residents of GMF. The second family was Phil and Judy Walsh in May of 1980. Home mortgage interest rates were 18% at the time. Mary worked for Keith Brown who sold the homes for the developer Van Metre. She said there were three model homes on Maclura Court and the sales team worked in one of the model houses. The model homes were sold and the sales office moved to another location shortly after. Because of the high interest rates, home sales were down at that time.

Mary remembers the homeowners had a pig roast in 1980 and it took several days to roast it. People took turns staying up all night to tend the fire to roast the pig. She said the homeowners were very socially active and most events took place in the Maclura cul-de-sac.

There were few paved streets in GMF at that time. They were dirt. The unbuilt area was all wooded and residents would bring in dead wood from the area to have their fires at the social gatherings. Other early homeowners remembered that homes were still being built on Gilbertson, at the end of Red Spruce and Tapestry in 1983–84. Because of the slow sales of homes, the developer rented many of the homes on Gilbertson. Dust was in the air all of the time because of the construction and heavy equipment churning up the soil as the homes were constructed. Nuttall Road dead ended at Red Spruce Road and was not extended until the end of the 80's-early 90's. The grade school students went to the now closed Green Acres Elementary School, middle school students to Sidney Lanier Middle school and the high school students to Fairfax High School — all schools in Fairfax City. B

Braddock Road was only two narrow, curvy lanes with steeper hills and very narrow shoulders—hazard driving in ice and snow. Traffic was light and exiting from the neighborhood onto Braddock Road was not a problem at all. There were no traffic lights at either Burke Station road or Robert's Road. The student population at GMU was very small and the presence of the university made little impact on the neighborhood. What a change 36 years can make.

Contact me if you have any additional memories of the "old days" of GMFHOA. TenaRB@aol.com

NEIGHBORHOOD SPEEDING **A COMMON PROBLEM**

A survey taken among the 162 communities in the Braddock District listed neighborhood speeding as the number one problem. In GMFHOA we experience the same problem. We have had the radar trailer set up to monitor speed; had the police monitor the speed; tried to have speed humps installed (but did not meet VDOT criteria); have posted signs and sent emails—all with no success of stopping the speeding problem. There are not enough police personnel on duty at any one time to take them away from their regular duties and place one in a neighborhood to monitor speeders.

Unfortunately, most offenders live in the community. We must work toward "voluntary compliance". We, as drivers, must resolve to monitor ourselves and drive the speed limit (25 mph) or slower on our streets. Again it is summer and children are out playing. Think of how you would feel if you took a life or caused injury to any child or adult.

GMF NEWSLETTER REDUCED **TO ONLY 2X A YEAR**

For the past 14 years the GMFHOA newsletter has been published four times a year. Because of the editor's other time commitments, the newsletter can now only be written and sent out two times a year. It takes approximately 8 to 12 hours to gather the news pertinent to the neighborhood, research the information for accuracy, write the newsletter and deliver a paper copy it to those homeowners who do not have internet access. If someone is interested to help write the newsletter so it can return to the previous schedule of four times a year, please contact TenaRB@aol.com.



VA GENERAL ASSEMBLY PASSES **LAWS AFFECTING HOAs**

On July 1, 2014, new laws affecting how homeowners associations are managed became part of the Code of VA, Property Owners Association (POA) law. Eighteen sections of the POA and Condominium Act were revised or added or amended and the new laws deal with such topics as late fees, covenant enforcement, access to books and records and resale disclosure requirements. By the Boards timely actions to update and amend HOA governing documents, no changes will have to be made to them. GMFHOA is in compliance with the new laws.