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News from the Board

The snows are now (almost) a distant memory, but the damage they left behind has necessarily taken center stage. The Board is currently working with Jason Eglin, our Property Manager at CMC, and with our insurance agent at USI to file what will undoubtedly be our largest single insurance claim ever.

After we worked out some issues following the very first storm, the Board felt that the snow removal contractor did a satisfactory job overall and that the Meadows looked just as good as most of the other villages. In fact, the contractor dedicated one of its plows to us and, per our request, returned later with a bobcat to skim closer to the vehicles after too much snow was left behind them by the plow. The bobcat operator worked well into the night, and the vehicle remained parked on the street overnight so it would be at the ready the next morning.

We realize everything wasn't perfect, but considering the unprecedented amount of snowfall and the fact that they ran out of places to put it, we feel they did as good a job as possible under the circumstances, and we appreciate their efforts.

From fallen gutters, collapsed building fascia, and broken decorative trim, to damaged landscaping, felled trees, and hundreds of broken branches, the village is looking a bit worse for wear these days, but the Board and the B&G Committee are working as quickly as possible to get things back to normal.

To give you some idea of the magnitude of the damage, the first phase of the gutter and downspout repair and replacement work alone, including carpentry, exceeded \$48,000.

Despite horror stories of home repair predators, this price was determined by the insurance adjuster to be a fair and competitive estimate, particularly for prompt work under less-than-ideal conditions. The adjuster found no discrepancies with the proposal, either in scope of work or price, and he is aware that additional proposals will be forthcoming.

The woodwork is the biggest variable. There are several different styles of trim on the buildings — some of it very intricate and custom-made. The cost of duplicating these custom woodworking styles varies considerably because,

unlike gutters and downspouts, which are measured in linear feet, each one is different.

For example, there is one piece of exterior corner molding that is comprised of 13 (!) different pieces of wood (that just shows you how unique and beautiful our buildings are). Katchmark Construction, one of our roofing contractors, believes they can replicate it using "only" 7-10 pieces.

Some of the damage extended to the roof support beams, but fortunately, that was limited to only a few places and will be repaired as part of the contract. The roofs of the units that experienced ice dams will be examined; however, an ice dam does not necessarily mean that the roof needs repair. Ice dams are caused when water freezes in the gutters, resulting in the formation of a "dam," which in turn causes water draining off the roof beneath the snow to back up under the slates and enter the unit through any means available.

In order to prevent further damage to the property while the insurance claim is being negotiated, it was necessary



Record-breaking snowfalls blanketed the Meadows in white this season!

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Note to Unit Owners:

Meadows By-laws require you to submit a written request for any changes in excess of \$1,000 that you are considering making inside your unit.

The Board of Directors must approve these changes before any work is begun.



The snow was lovely to look at, but its effects are still being felt as damages to trees, shrubs, and buildings are being addressed.

Building & Grounds Update

By Chuck Edwards and Drew Thompson, Co-chairs

Winter Storms: As everyone knows, this year's storms did tremendous damage to our trees and shrubbery, especially to the cedars along Quaker Lane.

These trees have provided both a sound and sight barrier for years for those residents whose homes back up to the street. After the cedars are repaired, and some of them removed, the Building & Grounds Committee will determine areas for new plantings.

The new photinias outside our fence will continue to grow and help with screening homes in the area.

Thanks to Ed Hilz who had Arlington County remove limbs that were over the sidewalk along Quaker Lane, which is county property. Unfortunately, there is still a lot of damage to the cedars that the Meadows will need to take care of. On the other hand, most of our shrubbery has survived the assault of snow ice. There are some that will need pruning or even removal, but in most cases the shrubbery will revive.

Spring Planting: With the storm damage, the Committee will not be scheduling a spring planting. We need to assess the damaged shrubbery, make

repairs, and evaluate what needs to be replaced. If necessary, we will plant in the fall.

Grounds Work: In early spring, ValleyCrest, our grounds contractor, will remove leaves and debris from the grounds, clean, edge, and mulch the planting beds. They will also clean our parking lots if needed and begin general grounds work.

Attention Meadows Gardeners: With all the snow damage to plants and shrubs this winter, the Building & Grounds Committee is planning a plant swap in late April or May. As you are working in your patio this spring dividing perennials, please consider donating what you don't want to B&G or swapping with fellow gardeners.

The Committee would also happily take your extra nandinas or other small patio shrubs to replace destroyed plants in the common areas. Please check the Meadows Web site for more details about the upcoming plant swap.

Common Area Plantings: Residents who are interested in planting a small flower garden outside a patio, whether in the rear or side of the patio, must first receive permission

from the Building & Grounds Committee.

Please send a request to one of the two co-chairs, and the Committee will review it. Such gardens are subject to removal if the resident does not maintain the space.

Please remember that permission is needed for any planting in common areas, and that these additional plantings become the property of the condominium association.

There are many things to consider when planting. Some of these include the existence of sewer lines and underground utility lines, as well as the type of material planted and its impact on the community.

In addition to planting, please be aware that our grounds contract calls for lawn care, including fertilizing, weed control, and re-seeding. Do not put any weed control product on the lawn, as it will result in killing the turf. There have been two incidents where residents added weed control to areas around their homes. This resulted in the lawn being destroyed.

Trees: The Committee would like to remind resi-

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Building & Grounds Update

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dents that our trees are living things that need to be nurtured and protected. They should never be used for signposts because nailing or stapling into a tree opens it up for disease. The community spends many hours and dollars protecting our trees, and we can all agree that they are essential to the overall ambiance of the Meadows and all of Fairlington.

Community Pride: The Meadows covers about 22 acres and all of us need to help with keeping our

homes as attractive as possible. Therefore, if you see a bit of debris on the grounds, please consider picking it up and disposing of it. All of us working together will help keep the community looking great.

If you are interested in joining the Fairlington Meadows Building & Grounds Committee, please feel free to attend the upcoming meetings. All begin at 7:30 p.m. and last approximately one hour. Please check the *Messenger* or the Meadows Web site for meeting places.



Winter 2009-2010 will be remembered for a long time to come.

April 14: Hosted by Linnea Barry
3460A-2 South Stafford Street

May 5: Hosted by Drew Thompson
4307 South 35th Street

June 2: Hosted by Janet Filer
3444 South Stafford Street

Meadows Volunteer Opportunities

Court 14 Chairperson: This position has been vacant since Sarah Jones returned to Texas last fall. It is very important that each court have a Court Chair, whose three main duties are to:

- Greet new residents and provide the Welcome Packet;
- Assist the Board in gathering proxies in advance of the annual meeting; and
- Distribute recreation passes.

Acting as Court Chair is a great way to meet the people in your court while providing a valuable service to the community.

Court 12 Chairperson: This position soon will be vacated by Louise Gabel, who will be very much missed in the community. Mrs. Gabel and her husband Richard were one of Fairlington’s “original owners,” and raised their four children here. The Gabels moved into Fairlington in April 1946, then into their Meadows home on South Utah Street in 1973. Mr. Gabel, who served on the first Board of Directors, unfortunately

passed away in 2004. For the past 19 years, Mrs. Gabel volunteered daily as a tutor and recently capped off a 50-year career with Arlington Public Schools. We wish Mrs. Gabel the best of luck in her new home at Goodwin House and thank her for her many years of service as Court Chair.

Pool Committee Chair: Last summer’s chair, Jennifer Lightbody, will remain on the committee this year, but other obligations preclude her from serving as Chair. Jennifer did a terrific job last year and has offered to work with the incoming Chair to ensure a smooth transition. If you are currently a member of the Pool Committee and would like to assume the Chairmanship, or if you are not on the committee and would just like to step up, we would love to hear from you. Please call Jennifer at (703) 671-4261 for more information or to volunteer.

Board Liaison: The FCA has established a “Council of Presidents,”

and has invited the Boards of all of the condominiums, or a designated representative, to participate. If you are interested in serving as Liaison to this committee, please contact Jason at CMC or a member of the Board.

The number of new volunteers in the community appears to be dwindling, while the workload certainly is not. A virtual handful of residents currently serve on the Board and committees, with some serving on as many as three or four.

Please consider volunteering some of your time and talents to *your community*; any of the above opportunities would be a good place to start. Renters may not serve on the Board, but are welcome on all committees.

Please contact Diane Thurber via telephone at (703) 998-8723 or e-mail at j.thurber@verizon.net if you’d like to volunteer or get more information.

News from the Board

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The Meadows is fortunate to have such a dedicated onsite crew, as was clearly evidenced during this winter's record-breaking series of snowstorms.

The next time you see Jack and José — pictured above with Board President John Thurber — be sure to tell them how much you appreciate their hard work!



ECO-TIP

Washing only one pan? Instead of running the water until it's hot — which can waste close to a gallon — heat some in the microwave and use a bit to wash and the rest to rinse!

for the Board to move pro-actively and expeditiously with the gutter work, which will be completed by Katchmark using the new standard of 6" gutters and 3" x 4" downspouts.

There will be an out-of-pocket expense associated with this upgrade because insurance covers only what was in place at the time of the loss; however, our insurance company agrees that this is the proper approach.

It was necessary to leave the damaged materials at each scene for the insurance adjuster to examine, and now that that has been done, those materials are being cleared away.

Photos were taken prior to executing the emergency tree work contract, again, in order to provide evidence of damage; non-emergency tree work was postponed until the adjuster conducted his on-site inspection. It was a testament to the excellent relationship the B&G Committee enjoys with both the County and with our tree contractor that we received such expeditious service when everyone was vying for their attention. Resident Ed Hilz also liaised with the County regarding the damaged trees on Quaker Lane.

Many thanks are in order: First, to Jack and José (with additional manpower from

DMA, our B-building cleaning contractor) for the many regular and overtime hours they labored, clearing and treating sidewalks and porches to ensure our safe passage.

While most residents were hunkered down in their warm homes, the crew was hard at work — often in blizzard conditions. On one particularly tiring afternoon, the crew was sent home at 3:00, each one soaking wet and exhausted, with no electricity or heat at the shop. Only on the worst day of it all were they not on the job, and it wasn't for lack of trying — Jack managed to get halfway here from Woodbridge, only to have to return home due to treacherous whiteout conditions on the highway, and José was on his way, but was turned back by police. On more than one occasion, Jack slept in the shop, just to be sure he'd be here in the morning to get things rolling. If that isn't dedication to the job, I don't know what is, especially when you consider that they both have families who also needed them, and their own driveways that needed clearing.

If you haven't already thanked Jack and José for their incredible display of dedication to their jobs and to the residents of the Meadows, please do so the next time you see them. They put forth an outstanding effort and exhibited a solid work ethic. Not only did they

perform the manual labor needed, but they maintained contact with our snow removal contractor, with Jason, and with the Board, and they also handled resident issues.

Exchanges of calls and e-mails extended well into the night, then resumed first thing the next morning. Dangling gutters were removed while they stood on ladders propped in the snow. Whenever the truck pulled up, Jack and José were immediately "greeted" by residents. Many thanks to those who were patient and understood that not everyone could be the first to have their walkways and lots cleared. And, after the December storm, at least one resident even provided hot chocolate to her neighbors who were laboring to clear out their parking spaces (thanks, Michelle!).

Our Property Manager, Jason Eglin, is always impressive, but never more so than during the recent events. He was in constant contact with the Board and all the other "players" throughout, and gave us so much attention that we felt like we were his only client. Jason is incredibly knowledgeable, easy to work with, and a true champion of the Association. He is now in the throes of the time-consuming task of preparing our insurance claim, and all that entails, including interacting with our insurance agent

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News from the Board

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and its designated adjuster, participating in on-site inspections, obtaining, reviewing and coordinating repair contracts, and responding to dozens upon dozens of e-mails, all while (seemingly) maintaining his sanity and juggling the other non-snow-related duties of his job. We aren't the only ones who noticed — our insurance agent, who was at one time our Property Manager, and whom we greatly respect — let the Board know that Jason has been doing an outstanding job of coordinating with her office and with the claims adjusters. Many thanks to Jason. He makes the Board's job much easier and it is a pleasure working with him.

We would also like to recognize our trash and recycling hauler, Capitol Services, who tried fiercely to maintain their regular schedule, despite the adverse conditions. Pickup did not occur on only two days, and only because the truck was unable to maneuver the unpaved roads safely. Recycling was still collected even though there was no room for the barrels at the court entrances. Big-Pickup was out of the question on Feb. 6, but was rescheduled to the next Saturday. Capitol is one of our most reliable and efficient contractors, and they clearly care about us as a customer and about performing on their contract to the fullest extent possible, despite some powerful obstructions.

As you have probably guessed, the winter storms were a "budget buster." In order to keep our condominium fees as low as possible, there is very little discretionary spending built into the budget. The Board will be watching every penny even more carefully than usual and only must-do or already-funded projects will even be considered. With any luck, we have seen the last of the winter storms. Jason said it best when he characterized the past few months as "Mother Nature flexing her

muscles." Hopefully, it's time for her to rest.

In closing, here are some reminders not related to the snow:

~~ Please remember that, per our Bylaws, projects over \$1,000.00 require prior Board approval. This requirement assists the Board in keeping track of what work is being done in the village — which is one of the Board's responsibilities related to maintaining the integrity of the buildings. The requirement also provides homeowners with the benefit of the Board's experience and knowledge, and in some cases, that of the maintenance crew, as well.

The Board has streamlined the approval process for home improvement projects. All that is involved is contacting the Board (via Board members or through CMC) and forwarding a copy of the contract for review and approval. Assuming there are no major issues, the entire process takes only a few days. Don't incur unnecessary expenses trying to circumvent the system; the Board really is here to assist you.

~~ Please refrain from leaning items on the signs at court entrances. Many residents use the signs to prop things up for Big-Pickup, such as mattresses. The signs are quite expensive to replace (\$600.00 each), and are easily damaged. The same holds true for the interior light poles, particularly when movers or contractors are involved.

~~ When heavy rains are predicted, please avoid running appliances that use a lot of water, such as your dishwasher and clothes washer, or even long showers and unnecessary flushing. The sewer lines quickly reach capacity during such times and may lead to a back-up into the low unit of the building (the center unit in each of our 57 buildings). Your cooperation is appreciated and

your neighbors will thank you.

~~ Snow and rain do not absolve pet owners from cleaning up after their pets. This is a requirement under our Bylaws, as well as a County ordinance.

~~ Please drive into and out of the parking lots SLOWLY. If you use one of the crescent-shaped lots to turn around, proceed very slowly and cautiously so residents do not have to jump out of the way to avoid being struck.

~~ It seems everyone noticed the stove that was left out for Big-Pickup day on Feb. 6 in Court 3. Due to the amount of snow already on the ground, with more predicted to come, Big Pickup was delayed a week, so the appliance just sat there, interfering with snow removal efforts.

Again, please check our Web site if you ever have a question regarding the rules, or in this case, how things will operate when we are faced with extraordinary circumstances, such as 50-plus inches of snow. We make every effort to keep the site up to date, but if the information you are seeking is not posted, then contact our management company or a member of the Board.

While we're on the subject of the Web site, we would again like to say thank-you to Mews resident and Board member Ron Patterson, who designed and manages the Meadows site.

— John Thurber, Board President



Fairlington Meadows Community Directory

Board of Directors

John Thurber, president
David Andrews, 1st vice president
Lisa Farbstein, 2nd vice president
Paul Cinquegrane, treasurer
Jacqueline Maguire, secretary

Send correspondence to the Fairlington Meadows Board of Directors in care of Community Management Corp. at the address listed below.

For copies of Board meeting minutes, see the Fairlington Meadows Web site, www.FairlingtonMeadows.com, view them on the community bulletin at the pool house, or contact Jason Eglin at CMC.

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