



From the President

The Board of Directors has been very busy working on many association issues. Reviewing and updating the Architectural Control Guidelines update is an ongoing project that will continue. The guidelines for Article V have been completed and mailed to all owners. These revisions include windows, decks and doors. We hope to provide more options for homeowners to make repairs and upgrades to their homes using current materials and technology, while at the same time maintaining the integrity of our architecture and the character of our community. The Board has also reviewed the Association comprehensive insurance policy for both the common areas and the Board of Directors. Each year the Board evaluates the job descriptions of the Grounds and Maintenance Committee Chair and the Architectural Control Committee Chair. The Board discovered that the Grounds and Maintenance Committee Chair duties had expanded. The Board voted to increase the compensation for both of these positions based on an analysis of the hours being worked and the duties performed. Both of these positions are essential to the running and upkeep of our community. I will describe each position so that you have a clear idea of what their responsibilities are.

The Architectural Control Committee Chair (ACCC) performs two inspections of the exterior of the units (352), including front yards, trees, fences, decks, and front stairs. The ACCC then must send out notices to owners of delinquencies. Then he must follow up to see that these delinquencies have been rectified, and if not, send a second letter. Then if the delinquency is not addressed after a second notice, he must refer the said delinquency to the Board for further action. He must answer the hotline, often supplying the owners with proper paint colors for trim and doors, siding options, roof options, etc. He is also responsible for helping owners solicit the Board for approval for changes that may be requested. He is currently working with the Board to develop a form for architectural requests that will streamline the process and make it easier and quicker. There are a lot of requests throughout the year that the Board never hears because they are handled by the ACCC.

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Country Creek's Architectural Guideline Updates

During 2008 the Country Creek Board of Directors developed and approved a number of revisions to Country Creek Association's Architectural Guidelines, Article V. The revisions were presented to the membership at the Annual General Meeting in October 2008 and were then sent out to all homeowners in January 2009 with an executive summary.

The aim of the revisions was to update Country Creek's architectural regulations regarding exterior renovations of a townhome in the community. The Board worked to conform to the overall purposes of the guidelines, i.e., maintaining and improving property values, preserving a safe and healthy environment, and maintaining architectural harmony and beauty, while allowing the use in exterior renovations of attractive, durable, easier-to-maintain materials developed in the time since our neighborhood was constructed.

The architectural changes apply to materials used for windows, decks, siding and trim, as well as to the colors chosen for these elements of the home. Regarding color options, the use of updated colors still requires that the colors chosen, if not original to the house, meet the following two criteria: (1) the updated colors are specifically recommended for approval by the Architectural Control Chair and then approved by the Board for the specific home being renovated, and (2) the colors chosen are taken from the color palate original to the street where the home being renovated is located (e.g., a choice from Sutton Oaks' color palette on a Sutton Oaks' home),

Country Creek homeowners planning exterior renovations which will change materials or a home's color palette should consult with the Architectural Chairperson, Shawn Dorr. He can be contacted by e-mail at architectural_control@countrycreekhoa.com or through Country Creek's Hotline (703) 255-1470.

CCA Board Meetings Through June 2009

CCA's Board of Directors meets at 7:30 pm on the third Monday of the month, except when that day is a federal holiday, in which case the meeting is moved to the third Tuesday. Upcoming 2009 meetings will be held on April 20th, May 18th and June 15th in Room 172, Oakton High School.

In July and August 2009 Board meetings will be held in a member's home in Country Creek. Please send an email to president@countrycreekhoa.com or check the CCA Website at www.countrycreekhoa.com for the exact location of those meetings.

CCA homeowners are welcome at all monthly meetings and are encouraged to present architectural requests as well as ideas for community improvements or concerns about the community at these meetings. If you plan to come to the next scheduled Board meeting, please call the CCA President, Pamela Frazier, via email to advise her of the issue you plan to bring up.

Letters to the Editor

IF YOU HAVE A COMMENT OR QUESTION about living in Country Creek, send it to **Letters to the Editor**, CCA, Inc., 2897 Sutton Oaks Lane, Vienna VA 22181, or contact us by e-mail using addresses that can be found on our Web site.

www.countrycreekhoa.com

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CCA Hotline: (703) 255-1470

Hotline box #1-Disclosure Packets; #2-Architectural; #4-Grounds & Maintenance; and #9-General

Billing Inquires: Thompson & Assoc. (703) 938-9115
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The Grounds and Maintenance Committee Chair (G&MCC) is responsible for the maintenance and care of all our common areas. These include our many acres of trees, grass, roads, sidewalks, curbs, mailboxes, and tot lot. The G&MCC must manage his own budget for all projects. Grounds and Maintenance projects are presented to the Board by the G&MCC for review and approval. There are approximately 35 to 40 per year. Some are generated by inspection and some are generated by owners and residents. Each time a separate contract is generated, he must meet with a representative from the landscape company and discuss the particulars of the contract. Then these contracts must be presented to Board for approval and the President for signing. As you know, drainage is a big problem that we have been fighting for a few years now. We have contracted many drainage projects over the last few years. Last year we completed the repair and restoration of the path that runs from Sutton Road, behind Masterworks Drive and Scotch Haven Drive, and ends at Kelly Square. This year we plan to continue the path behind Kelly Square and connect it to Nottoway Park. These repairs serve both an aesthetic value and a functional value. As the paths are excavated and leveled, they are fitted with proper drainage which helps keep excessive water out of our backyards and the common area. The aesthetic value is obvious; they look great and are a pleasure to walk on. Tree maintenance is also the G&MCC responsibility. It is fortunate that our G&MCC lives in the community. When we lose a tree (or two) in a storm, our G&MCC is available seven days a week to get it removed and get repairs on the way. The G&MCC must bid out all non landscape contracts and present these to the Board. For instance, when our trash contract is up next year, he will solicit three companies for bids. This means he must meet with a representative from each company to tour the grounds for the estimate and present them to the Board. The same goes for sidewalk repair, which is a yearly event. He must walk the community with the representatives, decide on the repairs needed, and present the contracts to the Board for approval. We seal the streets in one part of Country Creek each year, which is part of a ten year plan that was presented to the Board several years ago, and continues. This work must be supervised. Notices must be delivered to residents to move their cars, and if cars remain, he must have them towed out and back. The Grounds and Maintenance hotline must be answered as well, all year round. The G&MCC removes debris left by careless residents, responds to all complaints regarding recycling bins, trash containers, trash bags, and just about anything else you can think of that should not be in the common area. The current G&MCC is also responsible for preparing disclosure documents for homeowners who are selling their property. Country Creek is faring pretty well in this down real estate market, due in part to our attention to our common areas. The G&MCC also helps the Board with just about any task we need, including helping out with mailings, posting signs on the mailboxes, and removing signs from the mailboxes. Our next big project is to obtain an independent estimate from a road engineer for the resurfacing of our roads. We hope to have that by the Annual Meeting this year.

Spring is here and this is the time to reassess your home and grounds and make repairs that may be needed, and of course, spruce up the yard. Because of the mild winter and mostly above freezing temperatures, the ground is saturated.

In many places, including many common areas, we have very muddy ground where much of the grass has deteriorated. Shenandoah Landscape will be repairing and restoring these areas in the next few weeks. This is also a great time to trim trees. If you have a tree either in the front yard or back yard that may be touching your home, or your neighbor's home, this is a good time to trim it back. The landscape company will be trimming common area trees in the next month, as well as trimming private trees. If you are interested in an estimate from Shenandoah Landscape, please contact them at 866-718-7188.

After an extensive review of our Comprehensive Insurance Policy with Hartford Insurance, and our Board of Directors coverage with Chubb, we voted to change our insurance company to QBE. The insurance broker for QBE is Community Association Underwriters. This company specializes in insuring association property. This new policy provides the Association and community with a more comprehensive coverage and higher insurance limits at a very reasonable price. I will discuss the policy in more detail in our next newsletter.

The Board also reviewed our financial institution, PNC Bank. We have been unhappy with the service fees and the general customer service. The Board investigated several other financial institutions and has decided to move our business to TD Bank (Toronto Dominion). The bank is very well capitalized, does not have any "toxic debt", and offers several interesting programs for our Association members. The Board has also done extensive research on the electronic funds transfer program that we have been hoping to implement for payment dues. TD Bank offered us a fairly reasonable rate for the program but, the Board voted not implement it this year. It will be presented to the Association at the Annual Meeting and revisited then.

The Budget Corner

Now let's talk about CCA's financial condition. Unfortunately in 2008 we were not able to put fifteen thousand dollars into our cash reserves. Our goal has been and continues to be to increase our reserves to a level the Board and its volunteer financial advisor feels is warranted for an association our size and age. These reserves provide the Board more flexibility when a large project, planned or unplanned, needs to be funded so that a special assessment is not the Board's only option. As you know the Board did vote to increase the annual dues as well as the parking fees which is never a popular thing to do. Even in these difficult economic times we are seeing increases in several of our largest general & maintenance categories most notably grounds and landscaping and trash removal services. In addition, we also feel the effect of homeowners falling behind on their dues commitments which impact us all as the Board is required to fund its commitment either with current cash or worst case by dipping into our reserves. The increase in the dues and fees is allowing us to continue funding most major repairs and replacement projects planned for our community. The Board feels it is imperative based on the age of our community to make these investments to maintain CCA as a desirable to live. The Board welcomes any questions from the community either in person during the monthly meetings or by sending a written question to our Web site.

We have seven members on the Board. We would love to have a full sitting Board of nine. Please consider volunteering. The Board is in the process of reviewing and updating our

Architectural Control Guidelines. This is an enormous task. We are pleased to have Spencer Sear, our resident architect, on the Board. With his help we are able to maintain our architectural distinction, yet use updated materials for improvements. It is this detail that sets us apart from most other communities, and because of the condition of our community and homes, our real estate values have held solidly, and our homes are selling at asking price or above. With this in mind, this year the Board will be addressing front yards. For the most part, the front yards of most Country Creek homes are well maintained. The Board will be addressing yards that are unkempt, overgrown, and abandoned. One overgrown mess can bring down the value of the entire block. In these trying times, we must strive to maintain optimum value and beauty while maintaining the integrity of our community.



Pamela Frazier
President, Country Creek Association

Parking Decals, Tags and Parking Regulations

New parking CCA Parking Decals and Visitor's Parking Tags will be mailed to all current CCA members in good standing in the near future. Your two (2) decals should be placed ON THE BACK SIDE OF THE REAR VIEW MIRROR of your cars by **June 1**. Your two (2) visitors' parking tags should be HUNG FROM THE REAR VIEW MIRROR of visitors' cars.

All of us as residents of Country Creek, whether owners or tenants, pay a premium to live (and park) here and enjoy the benefits of our great location next to the Vienna Metro and backing to Nottoway Park. New owners - contact Thompson & Associates at 703-938-9115 as soon as you move in to obtain current decals and tags. If you are renting and don't receive your allotted parking decals and tags from your property's owner or property manager agent, please have the owner or management company call Thompson & Associates at 703-938-9115.

To protect our resident's valuable parking rights the CCA Board has contracted with Accurate Towing. Any cars parked within Country Creek without current decals or tags may be towed at any time. If your car or your visitor's car is towed, please call Accurate Towing (703-536-0370). Their storage lot is located at 8601 Strawberry Lane in Merrifield. In 2009 the towing fee is \$150, and must be paid before the towed vehicle is released.

If you reside on Kelly Square or Scotch Haven Drive, you are also eligible for a Fairfax County District 4 resident parking sticker for your car. This sticker will authorize you to park your vehicle on Vaden Street at any time -- provided you are in a designated parking zone on Vaden. Please contact Fairfax County at www.fairfaxcounty.gov for more information.



Nottoway's 10th Annual Easter Egg Hunt (with a Country Creek Bunny)

ON SATURDAY APRIL 11th at 11am sharp, Country Creek friends and neighbors assembled for a morning of fun and children's egg hunting at the 10th Annual Easter Egg Hunt at Nottoway Park.

This year's event, sponsored by Fairfax County Parks Authority and Friends of Nottoway (a service group founded by Country Creek homeowners, Fernando Mendez and Vivian Morgan Mendez), featured over 10,000 eggs, lots of candies and special prizes for children ages 1 to 9. The Easter Egg Hunt even had a special appearance from the Easter Bunny (Steve Smith of Kelly Square)! Children "high fived" the Easter Bunny and had photos taken with Mr. Bunny by their parents and grandparents - or had a family picture taken by Mr. Bunny's wife. Then, divided by age group, the children hunted for eggs full of treats and special prizes were awarded.

Save the Nottoway Trees

WANT TO GET A GOOD WORKOUT and help the environment at the same time? Help save the woods by volunteering to remove invasive plants that threaten trees and wildlife habitat, and help restore woodlands with native plantings at Vienna's Nottoway Park. Get your hands in the soil, learn something new and spend time outdoors.

Middle school and high school students and scouts may earn community service hours by volunteering for this activity. Bring family and friends, make a difference, show Country Creek residents' appreciation of the park and meet others who share your interests.

Join Friends of Nottoway (Invasive Management Area) volunteers in 2009! The IMA volunteer work will take place on Saturdays from 9 am-noon on the following dates: April 4, May 30, June 27, September 12, October 24, November 7 (rain date). For more information on workday details and directions: call 703-324-8681 or e-mail friendsofnottoway@gmail.com.

"Seldom Scene" at NOTTOWAY NIGHTS

TUNE-IN SOON FOR FREE, summer concert season. It takes place on Thursday nights, beginning on June 18th and continuing through August 27th at Nottoway Park behind Hunter House. Among other foot-tapping musicians, the 10th annual *Nottoway Nights* will feature the well-known group, Seldom Scene, on June 25. Starting the first week of May you can get all the details by going to: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performances> for this season's schedule. If you'd like to be a Country Creek volunteer and assist with seating, etc. at a performance or two please contact: friendsofnottoway@gmail.com.