

# ***BEDFORD PARK CONDOMINIUM NEWSLETTER***

***APRIL 2007***

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## **SPRINGTIME IN THE COMPLEX**

We're hoping spring has finally sprung. We've all noticed the daffodils, flowering trees, and robins pecking at the new grass.

With spring comes a need for a fresh look at our environment, including the trash situation, condo rules, landscaping, plumbing, and repairs needed in Bedford Park.

The Bedford Park Owners Association, through its elected Board of Directors (Rob Snow, Courtney McMahan, and Amber Jones) and appointed officers (Linda Spillers and Tara Hicks), produces this newsletter to keep owners and residents up to date on association and owner responsibilities and events that may be of interest.

If you are interested in participating in condo activities and decisions, please attend Board meetings (dates posted on mailboxes) or send an email to **bedford\_board@yahoo.com**.

Our apologies for the last-minute cancellation of the April meeting. The meeting will be rescheduled soon.

## **OWNERS E-MAIL LIST**

If you use email, please sign up for the Bedford Park owners list by providing your name, unit, and email address to **bedford\_board@yahoo.com**.

This list is primarily used by the Unit Owners Association Board of Directors, or Capitol Property Management (the company that manages day-to-day maintenance and repair of common areas) for notification of Board meetings and emergencies (e.g., notification of water shut-offs or parking lot repairs). It may also be used for seeking volunteers or sharing advice about repairs and maintenance.

Renters/tenants are also welcome to provide e-mail addresses.

## **CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS: COVENANTS COMMITTEE**

The owners association needs three individuals to volunteer a few hours every few months to inspect Bedford Park's common elements (building condition, parking lots, enforcement of rules and regulations) and report to the Board of Directors. If you are interested in the upkeep of the property, observant about things going right or wrong, or just willing to contribute a few hours, please notify a Board member or contact the Board at

**bedford\_board@yahoo.com**.



## **LANDSCAPING COMMITTEE**

Volunteers are also needed to review the appearance of our lawn, trees, shrubs, and flowers, and make recommendations for improvements. Please contact

**bedford\_board@yahoo.com** if you want to help, or to submit landscaping suggestions.

The committee will consider where to locate two gum trees requested from Arlington County, to be planted May 12. A flowering tree has also been requested for the front (unit 128B facing Bedford Street) where a former tree was destroyed by Hurricane Isabel.

The Landscaping Committee will examine the condition and placements of shrubbery and consider a new walkway from Bedford Street to the north parking lot to prevent people from breaking through the rustic wood fence there.



## **MOVING TRASH DUMPSTERS**

While we understand that the seemingly slow progress on changing our trash collection system has been frustrating, we are starting to make headway. The Board of Directors voted at its January meeting to replace the two large dumpsters with three smaller ones at the location selected by owners at the December annual meeting--at the front of the property, next to Bedford Street. Capitol Property Management has been tasked with obtaining estimates for a concrete pad and wooden enclosure for the three smaller dumpsters and six recycling bins.

At its April meeting, the Board plans to review bids for a pad and enclosure, and make a decision while the new dumpster location is being tested. Capitol will be instructed to apply for an Arlington County permit for the wooden enclosure.

To help minimize trash and recycling problems, see pages 5-6.

## **RECENT BOARD ACTIONS**

The Board of Directors, on behalf of owners, coordinates with Capitol Property Management to conduct repairs and maintenance of common areas. To submit a request, contact Samantha Metta at Capitol,

703-707-6404, or the Board at **bedford\_board@yahoo.com**.

Here are some of the actions and decisions since the January Board meeting:

1) The Board is taking action to require owners to replace rubber washer hoses with flexible steel, to prevent burst hoses and water damage. The Board is also consulting with the owners association's lawyer to consider clarifying ambiguous language in the by-laws about the responsibilities of owners and the owners association for damage from water leaks and other failures. Changes to the by-laws requires approval by 3/4 of the owners.

2) The Board advises owners to replace the plastic pressure reducer valves on their unit's main water supply line with brass or other metal valves. (See later article.)

3) Water damage from a leaking window frame has been handled through a combination of insurance, owner responsibility, and owners association reimbursement for damage to common property and compensation due to negligence.

4) Snow and ice removal: This winter, walkways as well as driveways were cleared after some major storms. Due to the extremely high cost of having walkways cleared, the Board asks that unit owners/residents clear their own walkways and help clear the public walkways. Bladerunners (landscaping company) will be responsible only for clearing driveways and parking lot.

5) Parking lot lights and a security light at north end of the complex have been fixed.

6) Condition of new retaining wall at north end of complex is being evaluated. Results will be reported soon.

7) Repair and painting of dormers, window boxes, and window frames has been completed on many units, but others are still in disrepair. The Covenants Committee, when appointed, will take inventory of issues such as rotting door frames and siding damage.

8) Repairs were completed on a substantial ceiling crack in a lower unit. (See later article.)

## WASHING MACHINE HOSES

All Bedford Park owners are required to replace rubber washing machine hoses with flexible steel. There have been at least six instances of water damage from burst rubber hoses that affected the primary unit and neighboring units.

The hoses are available at Home Depot, Lowes or any local appliance or hardware store. Installation is fairly easy but please be sure to ask for instructions as needed, and ensure that the water in your unit is turned off during the installation process.

It's a good idea anyway for owners and renters to be aware of the location of the main water intake and shut-off valve in case of an emergency plumbing leak.

## PRESSURE REDUCER VALVES

Please consider changing the original plastic pressure reducer valves to metal ones at the same time. This valve is located above or below the tap or lever for the main water intake to the unit. The cost of \$200-300 is well worth preventing enormous water damage from a burst valve. (Among other risks, there would be no way to shut off the incoming water if this valve breaks!)

In many cases, a plumber working on another job has noticed these plastic valves and recommended replacement, so some owners have already taken this precautionary step. Triple State Plumbing, 703-204-1170, has replaced several.

If you are unsure how to locate this valve, contact **bedford\_board@yahoo.com**.

## MASTER INTAKE VALVES

We have an urgent need to locate the master water valves from the county water supply to Bedford Park buildings. In the past year, two of the valves have failed. Each master valve serves as the emergency cut-off for water

flowing from underground county lines to a block of one or more buildings in Bedford Park. These are separate from the main water intake for each unit. The master valves for the buildings are faucets located behind the wall in ground-level apartments, possibly in the back of a furnace closet. There may be an opening or removable panel in the wall that provides access.

If we can locate all the master valves, we can have them all inspected and fixed before serious damage results. For example, if a plastic pressure reducer bursts in a unit (see previous article), there is no way to shut off the county water supply if the master valve for the whole building is not working.

Please let the Board know at **bedford\_board@yahoo.com** if you think a master valve might be located in the wall of your lower unit.



## TURN ON OUTSIDE FAUCETS -- FROM INSIDE

With spring comes a high demand for washing cars and watering trees and plants. It's time to turn on the outside faucets. Residents of lower-level end units have a valve in their unit, usually located under the kitchen sink, to control the external water taps located on the end of each building. Turn the valve on, then go outside and test the spigot.

Please notify the Board of Directors at **bedford\_board@yahoo.com** if one of these faucets is located in your unit. The Board is compiling a master list of the locations of these faucets, in addition to the locations of building master valves.

Also, let us know if the hose is missing from an outside spigot.

## CEILINGS IN LOWER UNITS: CRACKS AND POPCORN FINISH

The ceilings of the lower units in Bedford Park are made of pre-fabricated concrete slabs. We have had reports that the bonding material holding the slabs together can deteriorate, at the same time that the houses are settling (as all buildings do). This combination can cause thin cracks across the ceilings or along the edges of the slabs, and in some cases there is sagging at the corners of the slabs. In most cases there is no risk involved, because the slabs are reinforced and supported by the outside walls. In one unit, however, a jagged crack several inches deep opened up, requiring structural repairs handled by the owners association.

Some people have asked about painting, sanding off, or replacing the popcorn ceilings. The Washington Post (March 10, 2007, page F14) reported that these ceilings are difficult to paint. Using a paint roller will create a mess, and the moisture may cause some of the material to loosen and fall from the ceiling. The best way is spray painting by a professional.

The Post also reported that removing these ceilings is tedious and messy; requiring spraying warm water over small sections, then scraping with a wide drywall knife. Anyone doing this should wear goggles, gloves, and protective clothing. Another option is to cover the ceiling with drywall, or install a dropped ceiling. If anyone is interested in seeing a ceiling that has had the popcorn removed, contact Board member Courtney McMahan ([bedford\\_board@yahoo.com](mailto:bedford_board@yahoo.com)) or stop by 70C; she feels it was well worth the short-term mess to improve her main living area.



## ARLINGTON COUNTY COMING EVENTS

### ENVIRONMENTAL COLLECTION AND RECYCLING EVENT

Twice a year residents can dispose of household hazardous materials (see list on page 6) and recycle bikes, small metal items, electronic equipment, shoes, or eyeglasses in the neighborhood. Bring unwanted items (and your neighbor's, too) **Saturday, April 21**, 8:30 am-3 pm, to Thomas Jefferson Middle School, 125 S. Old Glebe Rd (one block east of Glebe and one block south of Rt. 50. Call 703-228-5900. For disposing of unwanted items the rest of the year, see pages 5-6 of this newsletter and see "E-Care" on the Arlington County website.



### CONSERVATION STATE OF MIND

If you are interested in a deeper level of commitment to the environment, consider this event: "I'm in a Conservation State of Mind." Martin Ogle, Chief Naturalist for the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, discusses how we can improve our lives and our communities while slashing our consumption of resources. Special guests include County Board Chair Paul Ferguson, who is focused on improving Arlington's environment. **Wednesday, April 25**, 7:30-9 pm, Arlington County Central Library Auditorium, 1015 North Quincy St.; call 703-228-5946.

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY EVENT

Interested in saving natural resources and reducing utility bills? Attend "Renewables and Energy Efficiency in Your Home," **Monday, April 30**, 7:00 - 9:00 pm, Arlington Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St. (near Ballston). Local energy experts John Morrill and Scott Sklar will discuss simple, inexpensive home improvements that will save you money, such as efficient lighting and heating, weatherization, Energy Star products, solar products, and financing. FREE. No reservations required; contact 703-228-4792 or [starnay@arlingtonva.us](mailto:starnay@arlingtonva.us).

# ***REDUCING WASTE AND RECYCLING***

## **STOPPING JUNK MAIL**

### **STOP UNSOLICITED CATALOGS**

THIS WORKS! Write to Mail Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association, PO Box 643, Carmel, NY 15012-0643, with your name, address, zip code; ask to "activate the preference service." A \$1 credit card payment is required. You can do it online for \$1 at: <http://www.dmaconsumers.org/cgi/offmailinglist>

### **ELIMINATE ADVERTISING FLYERS**

1. **ShopWise** flyer accompanied by "Missing Children" postcard that contains your address. Call Advo, Inc. at 1-888-241-6760 to be removed from mailing list. NOTE: Your address is printed only on the postcard, not on the flyers. If the flyers continue to be delivered without the postcard (which is illegal), complain to the mail delivery supervisor for zip code 22201, at 703-841-2118.
2. Washington Post **Shopping Guide** (blue/red/yellow headline) - call 202-334-7730 to be removed from mailing list.
3. **Val-Pak Coupons** in blue business-size envelope - stop them online at: <http://www.coxtarget.com/mailexpression/s/DisplayMailSuppressionForm> - "Contact Us."

### **STOP CREDIT CARD AND LOAN OFFERS**

One call stops credit offers from all four credit agencies: Equifax, Trans Union, Experian and Innovis. Call 1-888-5 OPT OUT (or 1-888-567-8688) 24 hours a day and provide your name, address, and social security number. This works!

### **MORE INFORMATION**

<http://www.obviously.com/junkmail/>



## **RECYCLING**

Bedford Park's trash company, AAA, delivers recycles to Arlington County recycling centers. Having the wrong stuff in the wrong bin could cause the whole load to be thrown away.

### **COMINGLED RECYCLABLES**

Bedford Park recycling bins labeled "Comingled" are for plastic bottles and jugs with necks (only), aluminum and metal food and beverage cans, and glass bottles and jars. Do not include wide-mouth plastic containers such as deli or yogurt containers. Remove and discard caps and lids, and rinse out food residue. DO NOT place these recycles in plastic bags.

### **NEWSPAPERS AND MIXED PAPER**

Put newspapers, magazines, glossy inserts, and mixed paper such as junk mail flyers into Bedford Park's "Newspaper" recycling bins. OK to place in paper bags but DO NOT place newspapers and paper in plastic bags. Do not include paper or cardboard containers contaminated with food waste.

***(CONTINUED ON BACK)***

## **PLASTIC BAGS**

Bedford Park does not recycle plastic bags. ALL types of plastic bags are accepted at Safeway and Giant, including dry cleaning bags, grocery bags, newspaper bags. Consider using reusable cloth bags for groceries, to reduce non-biodegradable plastic in landfills. They are sold at Safeway, Giant, Whole Foods, and Trader Joes. Some stores give you a discount for bringing your own bags.

## **CARDBOARD AND BATTERIES**

Bedford Park does NOT recycle cardboard. Arlington County accepts corrugated cardboard and small metal objects at recycling centers at Ballston (Quincy Street between Glebe and Wilson), and Columbia Pike (between George Mason and Four Mile Run). Cardboard boxes must be flattened, with tape and packing materials removed. Items not acceptable in the metal recycling bin are pots and pans, foil, pie tins, and scrap metal. All batteries except alkaline batteries can be recycled in the orange bin in the parking lot next to the fire station on 10th St. between Highland and Irving.

## **DONATING FOR REUSE**

Consider donating usable items to keep them out of landfills, including computer equipment, repairable appliances, building materials, bicycles, and more. See the County website, "Department of Environmental Services, Recycling Programs." Suggestions:

\* **Clothing, bicycles, and household goods** to Goodwill, 6136-A Arlington Boulevard at Glebe Rd. exit, south side. Receipt provided for charitable tax deduction.

\* **Books** to any Arlington County public library; tax receipt available. The closest library is on S. Walter Reed one block north of Columbia Pike.

\* **Used building materials** to Habitat for Humanity's **ReStore**, which sells new/used building and home improvement materials to the public. ReStore accepts building materials, tools, lumber, kitchen cabinets, electrical and plumbing supplies, flooring and roofing materials. Call or visit the Northern Virginia Habitat ReStore, 7770-A Richmond Highway in Alexandria, 703-360-6700.

\* **Computers/Electronics** to Arlington County's **Household Hazardous Materials** drop-off site, open every Saturday, 9 am – 3 pm, at the Water Pollution Control Plant, 703-228-6832. Paint cans, mercury, batteries, and other hazardous waste can also go here.

\* **Cell phones** to **Arlington Commonwealth Attorney's Victims/Witness Program** - at Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney, 1425 North Courthouse Road, Suite 5200, or Lobby of the Courthouse Plaza Building, 2100 Clarendon Blvd., Information Desk; also donate cell phones to **Doorways for Women and Families (TACTS)**, a non-profit organization that offers a safe place for abused, homeless, and at-risk women and families, 5643 Lee Highway, 703-237-0867; or to **March of Dimes**, 2700 South Quincy Street, Suite 220, Arlington, VA 22206. Phone: 703-824-0111.



## **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (the spiral energy-efficient bulbs), fluorescent tubes, paint cans, chemical solvents and cleaners, and computer monitors are hazardous materials that should not go in our dumpsters or in the landfill! Take them to Arlington County hazardous materials center at 3155 S. Fern St (at the intersection of S. Fern and S. Glebe); call 703-228-6832.