



# The Shadowword

October 2007

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[www.shadowoodcondos.com](http://www.shadowoodcondos.com)

## OCTOBER PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Greetings everyone!

It's been a long, hot dry summer but change is in the air with cooler evenings and lots of changing leaves. School is now in session, the so-called "Shadowood" pool is closed for the season, and it's always a good time to remind everyone to drive carefully. **The speed limit in Shadowood is 10 miles per hour!**

Your leadership team has been busier than ever over the summer, and I will report on some of the projects we've been working on. But first, a few quick reminders:

**No parties or other uses of the community center** can be accommodated until the Association receives an occupancy permit. That process is taking much longer than anticipated, because of many substandard repairs made to the center over the years, but we are nearly complete with the retrofits and hope to secure the permit this month.

Updates on these projects are posted on the SCA website and on the SCA TV Channel – Channel 10 on the property and available to view on the SCA website for everyone.

**New Site Manager.** The leadership team is pleased to announce that Mr. Steve O'Bannon has been hired by Armstrong Management as the SCA Site Manager. Mr. O'Bannon brings more than 20 years of management experience to our community and he has strong leadership skills and rules and regulations / covenants administration. Mr. O'Bannon is familiar with our governing documents and the law and will treat all unit owners equitably and fairly – with no special favors being granted to anyone. Please join the leadership team in welcoming Mr. O'Bannon to Shadowood.

**Budget time is nearing.** The finance committee meets on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and will discuss and set the recommended 2008 budget for the leadership team's consideration and vote at the November board meeting. If you have any special funding requests, maintenance or improvement ideas, please send them to me for consideration at [president@shadowoodcondos.com](mailto:president@shadowoodcondos.com)

**Cable TV / Internet.** As the bulk agreement with Comcast is set to expire in July 2007, the leadership team is considering other ways forward to supply the required cable TV and internet utility services. One of the options under consideration is Verizon's FiOS service. This is a much more advanced service than currently offered by Comcast at about the same price. All services are 100% digital and internet bandwidth is dedicated rather than shared as it is with Comcast.

As always, I strongly encourage unit owners to **attend the board meetings**. There are five elected board members, we work as a team to maintain and improve Shadowood, but it's very hard for us to know what's on everyone's minds when only a few people show up. Details on each meeting, including the agenda, are on the SCA website under "Staff and Board."

If you cannot attend your condominium's board meetings, please share your thoughts and directions on where you would like to see Shadowood invest, grow and change. Our email address is [president@shadowoodcondos.com](mailto:president@shadowoodcondos.com).

**Parking island landscape work.** All parking islands have now been redone. Unfortunately, the plant material provided by the previous contractor has

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# President's Letter Continued

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failed to thrive this year and most of the plants are dead. We are negotiating with the contractor and hope to have renewed landscape plants in the islands.

As a reminder, the landscape committee recommends, and the leadership team approves or rejects, landscape improvements. **Many of the existing trees will be removed or trimmed – and this work has been planned and approved for years and is necessary to protect the buildings.** If you wish to participate in the landscape rejuvenation program, please see the landscape page on the SCA website for details on meeting times and how to participate.

**Heating and Cooling System.** After a short break over the summer, the HVAC committee is again reviewing various options. **The reports from the consulting engineering companies all recommended heat-pump systems as being the best long-term solution for the community.** Unfortunately, there are inadequate reserves in the Association's accounts to fully fund any of the recommendations, and we limped through another hot summer with an aging HVAC system. Since fully funding the replacements will require a huge special assessment, the leadership team has recommended a phased implementation approach as follows:

1. The current HVAC system will remain in place
2. Each year, a section of the property will be converted from the current HVAC system to a new electric heat-pump system
3. Parts from the converted system will be saved to repair and maintain the older system
4. To ensure that no one group of buildings are penalized, sub-metering will not resume until the entire property is converted.

5. The \$7 submetering charge will be suspended until all 450 units are converted to the new HVAC system saving nearly \$40,000 per year
6. We will continue to purchase natural gas in bulk
7. We will continue to use the energy-management system (and eventually replace it with a modern, digital system) to keep electricity prices as low as possible (currently about 50% lower than without use of the system)

The benefits of this approach are:

1. It is highly unlikely that the Association will require a special assessment
2. No commercial loans or other debt will be required to fund this system
3. The association will maintain its reserve accounts to fund other common –element replacements
4. Less property disruption
5. The ability to test and fine-tune system components will be created rather than assuming that one system will work for all
6. Condo fees, rather than special assessments, will fund the program

The disadvantages of this approach are:

1. Some unit owners will get a new system sooner than others
2. Submetering will not be possible until all 450 units are converted
3. We continue to depend on an ancient and poorly maintained system for an indefinite time period
4. a catastrophic failure could force the Association to expedite repairs and have to deal with the resulting financial issues
5. A future leadership team may cancel or change the program
6. More protracted property disruption
7. Escalating costs as time evolves
8. Higher monthly condo fees to fund the program

Other news and updates.

**Rules and Regulations.** Based on continuing direction from unit owners, the leadership team is being as aggressive as the law allows in cracking down on rules and regulations violations. Although we would all like to see less of this activity, there is only so much the Association can do, and what it can do takes many weeks to complete the legally required due-process procedures.

More behavior hearings have been scheduled in the last quarter than in the previous year, and the board has directed the management agent to call all violators to hearings immediately. As you know, one of my prime goals as your President is to treat all unit owners equally and fairly, to hold those responsible for causing the Association to incur costs and to charge those costs back so that all of us do not pay for the actions of the few. The vast majority of SCA unit owners abide by the rules and regulations and live in harmony with their neighbors, but there are a few who don't.

What can you do to help:

1. **Do not send anonymous complaint letters to the on-site management office!** Complaint forms are available at the SCA office and can be completed and emailed to [president@shadowwoodcondos.com](mailto:president@shadowwoodcondos.com) or dropped off at the office.
2. If you see something, report it to the police on 703-691-2131 – the police department can take action immediately, whereas the Association's actions are limited and take many weeks to enforce.
3. Report all graffiti and other property damage to the police AND to the SCA office so that it can be timely removed.
4. Join the Neighborhood Watch Committee (sadly, no one has volunteered to lead this committee).

# President's Letter Continued

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**Collections and property values.** Unfortunately, Shadowood, like all condominiums in the nation, is suffering through increased delinquencies and collections issues. We have more delinquent and non-performing accounts than in the past decade. **If you know of one of your neighbors in need, please refer them to the appropriate social-service agencies.** Fairfax County has a vast array of resources available and has established a clearinghouse service for assistance. The number is 703-FAIRFAX (703-324-7329)

It's in the best interest of all of us to help those in need as our condo fees will be increased to pay for those who cannot pay their share.

**Fires and Floods.** Please check your fire and smoke alarms, replace them if they are 10 years or older and keep new batteries in them and on hand. We recently had a flood in one building that affected 6 units; the owner's insurance had lapsed, and now the owner is facing a huge repair bill and lawsuits from other unit owners and their insurance companies. **Take the time now to ensure that your liability insurance is current and that the on-site management office has a copy of the coverage.**

Please note that the SCA will always charge back the cost of any neglectful acts or omissions to the unit owner responsible. In the case where a master insurance claim is filed, that cost will be up to \$10,000, and perhaps more.

**SCA Email List.** Please remember to keep your email addresses on file at the SCA List Service. We don't send too many emails, but they are always free of cost to the Association and can be sent instantly. Newsletters cost at least \$1000 per issue (which, of course comes from YOUR condo fee assessment) and take a lot of time and energy to create and distribute.

**Resident Manual.** Please remember that copies of all of the SCA governing documents are on the website. Of special interest, particularly to new residents, is the SCA Resident Manual. You will find lots of details here about the community, including its history and details about who owns and repairs what.

I hope you enjoy the autumn season and weather and come to the next board meeting on Saturday October, 20<sup>th</sup> and at the budget meeting on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Brian Olivia  
President  
Shadowood Condominium Association

## SCA Joins ARCH

Shadowood has joined the Alliance of Reston Clusters and Homeowners and I was elected as its Vice President. ARCH is a pseudo-governing body for the Reston community and develops issue and position papers on various matters. An area of immediate concern is the Soapstone Drive improvements underway and additional reconstruction planned for that area. Engineering studies are already underway for the sidewalks and streetlights the SCA Leadership team previously advocated and sought funding for, and through ARCH, we hope to further improve and beautify this dangerous eyesore.

Directors, NOT ONE community member has stepped forth to chair the neighborhood watch committee.

The Board of Directors is vigorously enforcing all of the Shadowood rules and regulations – subject to the cooperation of ALL residents and unit owners. The Board is summoning all **properly identified** individuals and unit owner(s) to monthly hearings subject to terms of the Association's governing documents. The Board CANNOT resolve complaints instantly, and the complaint-resolution process takes many weeks – this process works ONLY if, YOU, SHADOWOOD RESIDENTS, properly document and report activities.

The police will enforce all matters of law, including noise violations, if, and only if, you call. If you don't call the police, it's unlikely that your matter will be resolved as the Association will have neither names nor a documented event on which to act.

Please make sure you report violations of the law and of Shadowood rules and regulations. Do not suffer in silence. In order to ensure Shadowood is an enjoyable place to live and call home, everyone needs to do their part to help make Shadowood an enjoyable place to live and call home.

## ATTENTION ALL SHADOWOOD UNIT OWNERS AND RESIDENTS:

As you may be aware, there has been a recent increase in suspicious activities in the entire Reston community. At the request of the Reston District Police Station, we are taking this time to remind everyone that **if you see something, Report it to the Fairfax County Police.**

**No matter is too insignificant to report, but you MUST report it FIRST to the police department.** After you report the matter to the police, THEN

AND ONLY THEN, report the matter to the Shadowood Condominium Association. Complaint forms are available in the SCA management office.

Calling the SCA office or emailing the president will NOT be the fastest way to resolve your concerns. Unfortunately, and out of 450 unit owners and more than 2000 residents in the SCA community, and after MANY requests for help from the Board of

# Activities Committee Update

Hello! I hope that enjoyed the warm summer and are looking forward to the cooler weather of fall. It was wonderful to meet some of you during the National Night Out activity on August 7, 2007. Even though it was a scorching hot evening, a few of the Fairfax County Police Officers attended and let some of the children crawl through their car, turn on the lights and sirens and pretend to be arrested! Supervisor Catherine Hudgins and most of your SCA Board of Directors were in attendance and chatted with the residents that were enjoying the evening. The highlight of the night as when McGruff, the Crime Dog, made a special appearance and posed for a few pictures! Below are a few pictures from the evening. The

Activities Committee is hoping to make this an annual event for our community!

As for other activities in the works for our community, until we are able to obtain the occupancy permit, no parties or other uses of the community center can be accommodated unless outdoors or off-site. While we are waiting for the permit, the enclosed survey will help the Activities Committee organize and plan activities for the future. Please take a moment to fill out and return this survey. Please let your voice be heard and become involved in your community!

Christina Squatrito  
Director & Activities Committee Chair

## SCA Calendar

**October 20, 2007**

Hearings Panel – 9:00 AM

Board Meeting – 10:00 AM

*SCA Community Center*

**November 3, 2007**

Budget Meeting – 9:00 AM

*SCA Community Center*

**November 17, 2007**

Hearings Panel – 9:00 AM

Board Meeting – 10:00 AM

*SCA Community Center*

\*\* Don't forget to fill out and return the enclosed survey by October 26. \*\*





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