



December 2018

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Board of Directors

President ~ Willis McCloud
Treasurer ~ Patrina Kandul
Secretary ~ Mike Irvin
At Large ~ Susan Nettinga
At Large ~ Rebecca Marshall

Somerset News

President's Corner

By Willis McCloud



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

This newsletter marks the end of another successful year for our community as we complete our 30th year as a homeowner's association. Somerset began modestly in 1988 with one building – building 1. Building 1 consists of the homes at 4101- 4123 Churchman Way and is the building to your immediate left as you enter our neighborhood through the Churchman Way entrance. From there the community grew over the next 3 years to its current size of 21 buildings and 220 homes. As a point of reference, when Somerset began President Reagan was in office, the minimum wage was \$3.35, Die Hard was playing in theaters, and the average price of a new home in Virginia was approximately \$50,000. Obviously, a lot has changed since then – especially the average price of a home in Virginia, which is now \$125,400. However, there are several things that are constant. One of the most important is that our community is not just made up of 21 buildings but is truly formed by the 220 families who are the real heart and soul of Somerset. We value all our residents, particularly those

lucky few who've been here since the beginning. Every community believes their residents are special and we are no exception. We love hearing from you, and that's why we constantly encourage you to attend board meetings, submit your concerns to the community manager, and to answer surveys. We hope the surveys will be a great way for us to gauge your interests and concerns. We plan to send out a new survey about every 90 days. Thanks to those who replied to our initial survey and we encourage even more of you to respond to our next one. The first survey results are included later in this newsletter.

This edition will also launch a new feature, the Somerset Spotlight, in efforts to recognize acts of volunteerism and/or the special personal achievements of our residents. Residents highlighted in the Spotlight will be nominated by you, so this section will only be as good as you make it. Anyone can nominate a resident. Just contact our community manager and provide the name of the nominee and why you think they deserve recognition. I know we have a lot of great stories to tell out there, so we look forward to reading them. Thanks in advance!

Recently, we held our Annual meeting and we would like to thank those who turned in their proxy

forms. A big thank you goes out to those who attended in person. Statistics show that almost 50% of eligible voters cast ballots in the recent 2018 mid-term elections. At that rate of participation, we should have easily met our quorum requirement of 25% (or 55) of our 220 owners. The fact that less than 10% were concerned enough to send in proxies or attend the meeting is challenging – particularly because this community, like all homeowner associations, only survives on volunteer support. This is a challenge that the management team can't solve alone. You, our great residents, are highly encouraged to take an active role in the community. Please contact our community manager or any member of the board to find out how you can assist.

Speaking of stepping up, I'd like to welcome our newest board member, Ms. Rebecca Marshall, to the team. Rebecca graciously volunteered to support Somerset beginning in November 2018. She, along with Susan and Drew Nettinga, Patrina Kandul, Mike Irvin, and Greg Hodgson, form the core of our volunteer force. A special thanks to Mr. Earl Burton for his years of service as Somerset's Vice President. Please consider joining our team in 2019.

As we near the holidays I'd like to encourage everyone to participate by decorating your homes in the spirit of the season. You don't have to put on a light show that can be seen from space, but even a Charlie Brown tree can help spread a little cheer. Be the best in your building or shoot for the best in the community. No matter what your goal, the object is to enjoy the season and all that goes with it. Join the fun and deck the halls!

Lastly, I'd like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season. Enjoy the time with family and friends and remember those in our community who are less fortunate. You may find that giving can be just as much fun as receiving.

All the best! ☀

Holiday Safety

By Mike Irvin



Once again, the holiday season is upon us! The weather has turned cold. While our children pray for snow, and most of us adults dread it, it is also a time for us to gather with friends, family, and loved ones to share old memories and create new ones. However, it can also be a very stressful time as well. Everything from trying to find a parking spot at the store (that's closer than a mile away) before shopping for those special gifts in a sea of other shoppers, to traveling to and from distant locations, is just part of the experience.

During this time, it is important to remember to be SAFE in all things. Many people are involved in falls, automobile accidents, and fires during this time of the year.

Falls: These can occur from trying to hang that last string of lights juuust out of reach while leaning on a ladder, to slipping on icy pavement during inclement weather. Automobile accidents: Hey, we live in Northern Virginia. Need I say more? Please be safe on the roads. Fires: Every year we are cautioned on the hazards of having a live tree and letting it dry out. If you do decide to get a live tree, please choose a healthy green tree and be certain to water it regularly. No one wants to face the holidays without a home.

Have a very happy, safe, and wonderful Holiday Season! ☀

New Year's Resolutions

By Susan Nettinga



The New Year will arrive soon and it's not too early to plan your approach. Sure, you may have developed resolutions many times before, only to have them disappear within months. But don't give up! If you've already drawn up your resolutions, here are some suggestions to help you stick to your plan.

- Put it all on paper. Write your resolutions down and keep them in an accessible place as reminders – tape them to your mirror, write them in a journal or put them on your refrigerator door.
- Mark your calendar. Set deadlines for yourself to tackle each step toward reaching your goal, one at a time.
- Start as soon as possible. Purchase the necessary equipment or literature; call now and set up an appointment with your dentist, your doctor, your trainer, your accountant, etc.
- Find a role model. Is there anyone who has succeeded in fulfilling an ambition like yours? Look to this person as a reminder that it is possible to achieve your goal.
- Check your progress regularly and give yourself an occasional reward for your efforts. Make sure the reward isn't contrary to your resolution; celebrate a cigarette-free month with a weekend trip or a new outfit, not with a cigarette!
- Inform friends and family of your goals and recruit them to regularly remind and support you in your endeavors.

Lastly, don't sweat the setbacks and remember that persistence is the key! ☀

Family Budget

By Patrina Kandul



Believe it or not, many Americans are still paying off debt from last year's holiday bills. We spent an average of almost \$1,500 per person on gifts, travel, and food. Many of us think about sticking to a budget during the holidays but the "spirit of the season" can send many of those thoughts right out the window!

However, a budget allows you to control your family's spending so that you have enough money to pay your bills while also saving for vacations, retirement and your children's education. The following are some tips which may help you achieve your holiday budget goals.

- Get out three months of pay records and determine your average monthly income.
- Gather three months of bills, add them up and divide by three to calculate your monthly fixed expenses such as rent or mortgage, utilities, phone, car payment, insurance and student loan payments.
- Add together three months of other monthly expenses, including groceries, clothing, credit card expenses, medical bills, and cash outlays. Divide by three and add the result to your monthly expense total.
- Evaluate your expenses to look for opportunities to economize and develop a plan to cut back spending in specific areas.
- Develop a monthly budget and stick to it.
- Set up a savings plan such as a passbook account, certificate of deposit (CD) or individual retirement account (IRA) and begin making regular deposits.

Track your income and expenses monthly to evaluate how the plan is working, then fine-tune to produce the desired results. Using personal finance software can assist you in gaining an accurate overview of your spending and identify problematic habits. ☀

Manager's Corner

By Stacy Martin



What Does The Management Company Do?

You receive non-compliance notices from the management company. You send your assessments to the management company. You report common area maintenance problems to the management company. So, the management company makes all the important decisions regarding your community, right? Wrong!

The management function of your association is administrative in nature. The board is the principle policy and decision-making body which sets policies, standards, procedures, programs and budgets. Management's function is to carry out these board decisions. The board has the authority and the power to set policies and standards to carry these policies out.

It may delegate its authority to implement its decisions, but it cannot delegate its responsibility to see that they are implemented properly.

Management implements decisions of the board and administers the programs, services and activities of the association within the policies and guidelines set by the board. When communicating with your management company, please keep in mind that although the board has given management the authority to make many of the day-to-day operational decisions, some requests are going to need the approval of the Board of Directors.

Here are some tips to help facilitate your communication with the board:

- If in doubt about management’s response to your request, put it in writing and email it to management with instructions to send it to the board.
- Attend the open forum period of the board of directors meeting.
- If your request is "non-emergency" in nature, please be patient. In most cases, we will research the issue for the board so that they can make the best educated, business decision possible.

If you have any questions whatsoever, do not hesitate to contact me at smartin@capitolcorp.com or at 703-707-6404. ☀

Community Survey Results



Question 1: How many years have you lived at Somerset?

1-3 years	11 resp.
4-6 years	2 resp.
7-9 years	11 resp.

Question 2: How do you rate the performance of the management company?

Excellent	10 resp.
Good	12 resp.
Fair	2 resp.
Poor	2 resp.

Question 3: How do you rate the performance of the Board of Directors?

Excellent	8 resp.
Good	8 resp.
Fair	7 resp.
Poor	1 resp.

Question 4: How often do you visit the Somerset homepage?

Weekly	0 resp.
Monthly	7 resp.
Quarterly	13 resp.
Never	6 resp.

Question 5: How often do you visit the Somerset Facebook page?

Weekly	0 resp.
Monthly	0 resp.
Quarterly	1 resp.
Never	24 resp.

Question 6: Do you like the quarterly Somerset newsletter?

Love it!	2 resp.
Like it!	11 resp.
Indifferent	12 resp.
I do not like it	0 resp.
I didn't know there was a newsletter	0 resp.

Question 7: Did you know there are open seats on committees?

Yes	15 resp.
No	10 resp.

Question 8: Would you consider volunteering to join a committee?

Yes	7 resp.
No	18 resp.

Question 9: Do you like the landscaping around the front of your unit?

- Yes 9 resp.
- No, needs more 3 resp.
- No, needs less 1 resp.
- No, needs different 7 resp.
- No, it's terrible 4 resp.

Question 10: Do you like the green sign at the entrance to the community?

- Yes, it's perfect 19 resp.
- No, out of date 5 resp.
- No, just don't like it 0 resp.
- No, it looks bad 1 resp.

From the ALC



By Greg Hodgson

As we wind down 2018, some previously approved projects are scheduled to be completed by the end of the year. This work includes drainage improvements at the fire lanes between buildings 12 & 13 and buildings 13 & 14 and yard overhauls (as a result of previous tree removals) at a few units on Kempston. Hopefully Mother Nature will cooperate, so this work can be completed in December.

In 2018 the association updated the master landscape plan. Several old, overgrown and inappropriately located trees were removed. Some of these locations will receive new, appropriately sized trees in the future. Please know that it takes 1-2 years before replacements can be planted in the same general locations, as the roots from the old trees need to die off and the soil needs to replenish. In 2019 and beyond, we will continue to implement the tree and landscape enhancement recommendations in accordance with the updated plan.

As you know, there are a lot of plantings in our community! While the ALC inspects the landscaping 2-3 times per year, it is quite difficult for us to catch everything. We've asked our landscape company to alert us when they discover

failed plantings and to remove them as needed. We will then approve replacements. But even with this two-pronged strategy, we're asking that residents make management aware of failed/distressed plantings that they see around their units. With everyone's help, we will be able to keep the property looking its best.

The record-setting rains during the summer were challenging for our landscape company. Everything from the mowing schedule to the brown patch turf fungus kept Image hopping. Over all, we think they did a pretty good job keeping the community looking the best it could.

Judging by the resident survey taken over the last few months (the survey is included in this newsletter), there are several residents who would be willing to serve on a Somerset committee. The survey also revealed that we could do a better job in the area of landscaping. Put those two results together and I think we should be able to enlist at least a couple of residents to join the ALC! Really, we could use the help. If you're interested in joining us, please contact Stacy Martin at smartin@capitolcorp.com or 703-707-6404.

The Somerset sign spotlight and its housing were recently replaced, with the spotlight being updated to an energy efficient LED bulb. Installing this LED light means that all exterior lighting in the community is now energy efficient! If you've looked at the recently mailed 2019 budget, you'll note that the community's common electric bill has been reduced by \$3,000 – \$4,000 annually since all the security lights were upgraded to LEDs a couple of years ago. Thank you, Board of Directors!

Happy Holiday Season to all our residents! ☀

Real Estate Beat



By David Gray

The following is a listing of the most recent real estate activities for Somerset At Westridge.

SOLD (last 90 days)

12504 Kempston Lane
Sold: \$253,750
Seller Subsidy: \$7,500
Beds: 3
Baths: 2 1/2
Above Grade Fin SQFT: 1,651 / Estimated
Price / Sq Ft: 153.69
Year Built: 1989

4046 Chetham Way
Sold: \$245,000
Seller Subsidy: \$600
Beds: 3
Baths: 2 1/2
Above Grade Fin SQFT: 1,917 / Estimated
Price / Sq Ft: 127.80
Year Built: 1991

4045 Chetham Way
Sold: \$237,000
Seller Subsidy: \$6,000
Beds: 3
Baths: 2 1/2
Above Grade Fin SQFT: 1,684 / Estimated
Price / Sq Ft: 140.74
Year Built: 1990

4032 Chetham Way (Short Sale)
Sold: \$225,000
Subsidy: Undisclosed
Beds: 3
Baths: 2 1/2
Above Grade Fin SQFT: 1,931 / Estimated
Price / Sq Ft: 116.52
Year Built: 1991

ACTIVE

4029 Chetham Way FOR SALE: \$225,500
Beds: 3
Baths: 2 1/2

Above Grade Fin SQFT: 1,942 / Assessor
Price / Sq Ft: 116.12
Year Built: 1992

David Gray
Gray Realty Group
Cell: 703.598.4946
E-Mail: David@GrayRealtyVA.com
Website: GrayRealtyVA.com ☀

Winterizing Outside Faucet/Hose Bib

By Greg Hodgson



It's important to remember to winterize your outside faucet/hose bib during the winter months. This simple but important maintenance procedure will help prevent costly water damage due to a frozen outside faucet and/or water line.

Step 1: If present, disconnect the garden hose from your outside faucet/hose bib and store it for the winter.

Step 2: Find the water shut off valve inside your unit that controls the water going to your outside faucet/hose bib and **turn it OFF**. The shut off valve will likely look like one of the two photos above.

Step 3: Place a bucket/small container under the inside shut off valve and unscrew the small drain/bleeder valve cap. This will allow water in the shut off valve to drain out.

Step 4: Open the outside faucet/hose bib to allow any trapped water in the line to drain out, and then close the faucet/hose bib.

Step 5: Screw the small drain/bleeder cap (that you removed in Step 3) back onto the inside shut off valve.

To use the faucet after the winter, all you need to do is turn on the inside shut off valve and you're good to go! Please call a plumber if you're unsure which valve

controls your outside faucet/hose bib or you're unsure how to perform this procedure. ☀



Somerset Spotlight



The Spotlight is intended to highlight some of the accomplishments of our residents. As we've said before, we believe our people are special and we'd like to show you why. The stories don't have to be as accomplished as our first selectee below, so don't think each person has to walk on water. For example, we want to celebrate our first responders, military personnel, teachers, and students. We look forward to hearing your stories.

Amy T. Rose

Amy is a long-time resident of Somerset and, while only 20 years old, she's established an impressive record of scholastic and aviation achievement.

- *High school:* Woodbridge Senior High School, *Advanced Studies Diploma, 2012 – 2016*, Graduated Summa Cum Laude in June 2016.
- *College:* George Mason University, Geospatial Intelligence and Aviation Systems Engineering major, 2016-2019, current cumulative GPA: 3.55, Dean's list 2016-2018
- *Linguist:* Proficient or conversant in 8 languages (English, Hebrew, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Galacian, Ladino, and Italian)
- *Aviation:* Earned her private pilot's license in December 2017 and achieved her instrument rating 6 months later in June 2018.
 - Selected as the sole U.S. representative to participate with 44 pilots between the ages of 18-24 in an international air rally in France. Flew cross-country to and from 8 French airports in air rallies.
 - Placed first in the first rally competition
- *Musician:* Orchestral, ensemble, and solo violinist
- *Other accomplishments:*
 - Explainers Program, Smithsonian Institution National Air and Space Museum; February 2017 – Present
 - Customer Service Representative, Aviation Adventures; August 2017 – Present
 - Intern: The David Project; August 2017 – Present
 - Blogger: Finite Languages; July 2017 – Present

With all of that you'd think she wouldn't have time for much else. However, Amy also babysits and gives music and language lessons in the community. We are happy she is a member of our Somerset family! ☀

Upcoming Board Meetings

January 8
February 12
March 12

Residents are welcomed and encouraged to attend Board meetings, which are held at the Westridge Clubhouse and begin at 7:00 PM. Annual Unit Owners Meeting Notices will be mailed to each owner in September.

Somerset at Westridge, A Condominium

Management Company: Capitol Property Management
3914 Centreville Road, Suite 300, Chantilly, VA 20151
Manager: Stacy Martin; 703-707-6404; smartin@capitolcorp.com
After Hours Emergency: 703-401-1918
Somerset Website: www.somersetatwestridge.org
Board of Directors: bod@somersetatwestridge.org
Architectural Landscape Committee: alc@somersetatwestridge.org

Westridge Swim & Racquet Club

Management Company: Legum & Norman
12764 Quarterhorse Lane, Woodbridge, VA 22192
General Manager: Debbie Carter; 703-590-1600; HOA@Westridgeva.org
Westridge Website: www.westridgeva.org

Additional Contacts

Emergency Police, Fire, Ambulance: 911
Police Non-Emergency: 703-792-6500
Washington Gas: Emergency, 703-750-1400; Non-Emergency, 703-750-1000
Dominion Virginia Power: 1-888-667-3000
Towing: Dominion Wrecker Service; 703-590-0994
Trash: American Disposal Services; 703-368-0500; <https://www.americandisposal.com>