



# Association Newsletter

Summer 2010

## Letter from the Board

We are pleased to provide this newsletter as a means of communicating with all Hilltop residents. Going forward the BOT will make every attempt to establish regular newsletter communication in support of our belief; communication is the backbone of community spirit.

The BOT and Hilltop committees are busy working on several issues that can impact all residents:

Deck stair Building Code compliance, Roof issues, Road repairs, Building painting and powerwashing, Water pressure Code compliance, Saving money in the budget, and keeping the HOA operations going smoothly.

In 2010, the BOT has accomplished several goals, but new challenges come forward on a regular basis. We ask that you keep in mind that we are all volunteers, as are all of the committee members. We work full time, just as you do, and we still volunteer to work on big and small issues daily.

In recent months, numerous violations and complaints have been reported by residents to the HOA

ranging from excessive speeding, to open fire/tiki torches to unleashed pets. Such violations affect the communities' safety and security not to mention disturbs the peace and harmony of the community. Please be advised that moving forward, the HOA will strictly enforce the fee policy on all violations.

The BOT asks all residents to become active participants not only to support your neighbors but to strengthen the Homeowners Association. You can make a difference by:

- Volunteer to serve on a committee or participate in seasonal clean-ups.
- Become familiar with our Rules & Regulations, as well as Deed, Trust, By-Laws. Remember that you signed an agreement that you would abide by these "laws"
- Help by reporting violations. We have no police; we must rely on your help!
- Violations that have persisted in recent months include speed-

ing, unregistered vehicles, dog waste, parking or driving on lawn areas, and all-terrain vehicles.

- State Law prohibits ATV's on private property and Hilltop Rules & Regs prohibit ATV's from all of our streets and common property – and that includes sidewalks, lawns and driveways!
- Speeding has become a serious problem and we are considering installation of speed bumps. The cost will be borne by all residents. If you can stop the speeding, then we may not have to buy the bumps.
- Please call (508-898-3431) or write Jeff Robinson to report violations. Make sure to give the date, time, location, identification of the violator and address.

We encourage and welcome any idea or suggestion you may have to help our community. Together we can improve the services offered by the Association, save money, and have a richer experience here at Hilltop Farms!

- The Hilltop Farms Board

*The website is up and running at [hilltopfarmshoa.com](http://hilltopfarmshoa.com) Thanks for checking it out!*

### HOT TOPICS IN THE FORUMS

- Recycling Bags
- Dog Waste
- Hilltop Plaza
- New Nearby Restaurant

**Join the discussion!**  
[www.hilltopfarmshoa.com/vforums](http://www.hilltopfarmshoa.com/vforums) to sign up for an account.

### *Trash Pickup Reminder*

- Please note that trash pickup will take place on Saturday during holiday weeks. These weeks include the weeks of Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

## HELPFUL MISCELLANY

**Have a Paper Delivered?** If you receive a newspaper, you can save the plastic sleeves the paper comes in and place them all inside an empty sleeve. When the sleeve is full, place it out where the paper is delivered for your delivery person to take. You can write his/her name on it with a magic marker. Saves money and the environment!

**Get Involved:** Sign up for a HOA Advisory Committee and help out your fellow unit owners. Download a signup form from the documents section of the website.

**Local News:** In order to know what is going on in town, I urge you to subscribe to The Grafton News, a weekly newspaper featuring news of local interest. You can subscribe for only \$18 per year - (\$14 for seniors). Call 508-839-2259 to subscribe. .

### **NOTICE—Help the Association Save Money and Keep Your Monthly Fees From Rising**

Please sign up to have this newsletter only delivered electronically. This will expedite newsletters to you and significantly reduce costs to the Homeowners Association budget. Please do this now, for the benefit of all of us. The Board of Trustees appreciates your cooperation. Go to: [hilltopfarmshoa.com/?page\\_id=27](http://hilltopfarmshoa.com/?page_id=27) or send your email address to [webmaster@hilltopfarmshoa.com](mailto:webmaster@hilltopfarmshoa.com)

## OFFICIALLY

### *Proper Grill Placement*

Please be reminded that you must place your outdoor grill (gas or charcoal) on your deck surface to comply with the Association Rules and Regulations. Grill placed underneath decks are in violation and can be a fire hazard.

### *Help Save Sprinkler Water*

As the sprinklers begin to flow this spring, please help out the community by reporting excess water usage. If you see:

*Erratic sprinklers spraying into the street | Sprinklers operating during a steady rain | Water bubbling out of the ground*

Please call Jeff Robinson at 508-898-3431

### *Dog Waste*

Please make sure to clean up after your dog in and around the Hilltop Farms community. Help make this a nice place to live. If you see an infraction taking place, please identify the violator and report it to Jeff Robinson.

## EXCESS WATER PRESSURE By Al Sanborn

We recently found out that the water pressure in many of your homes may be in excess of the maximum allowed by the Building Code. We are working to get the situation corrected. For those of you who live in the higher sections of Buttercup and Daffodil, your pressure may be safe and acceptable. (For the record, the Code says that pressures under 80 pounds per square inch are acceptable.)

For those of you in the lower elevations of Tulip Circle, Buttercup Lane and Cherry Lane your pressure is probably high enough to require a pressure control device. We are working toward getting the problem resolved, and will let you know when a solution has been determined - hopefully soon.

There is no need to be overly alarmed. This condition has existed ever since Hilltop's inception. Some of you may have already experienced faucets or toilets or dishwashers that have sprung leaks, perhaps from the high pressure, and we hope to prevent further problems.

There is something that you may wish to do as a protective measure. If you are going to leave your home unoccupied for a period of time, such as weeks, you may easily shut off the water control in your basement. It is a simple lever - (probably yellow) - in the water pipe where it comes into your basement. Then you can turn it back on upon your return. .

If you have a problem with this, you may call Jeff Robinson, 508-898-3431.

## DOES INSULATION

### PAY? By Al Sanborn

On December 15, 2009 I had an insulation company install more insulation, bringing the R-Value up from R-30 to R-49.

Comparing the gas bills for December 2009 through April, 2010, against the bills for the same 5 months a year prior, I discovered that **my cost were reduced by \$461, which is a 33% reduction in cost.**

It gets even better! The total cost of the insulation project was \$1,175, and the Weatherization Program paid 75% of the costs, leaving me with an out-of-pocket cost of \$296. **The savings of \$461 actually exceeded the out-of-pocket cost!**

Watch for additional information about the Weatherization Program

## TRASH RECYCLING by Al Sanborn

Here at Hilltop Farms, we have been using the new recycling program since January 22, 2010. We are currently getting about 5% participation by homeowners.

### **Does that mean we are succeeding in our efforts?**

Let's look at some statistics for comparison. In 2008 Massachusetts residents recycled 28% of all residential trash. Newton recycled 29%, Lincoln recycled 34%, and the participation rates varied throughout the state. This suggests we have a long way to go just to be average.

The experts say that "Recycling saves up to five times more energy than incineration plants and sharply reduces disposal costs. When you're paying \$89.50 per ton for trash processing, **recycling translates into big savings.**"

In Grafton the new Pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) plan has been going for over a year, and they have the statistics to show that they are saving large amounts of money. Recycling materials **increased** by 52% and solid waste **decreased** by 39%, which resulted in **reduced expenses of about \$184,000!**

The point of these illustrations is that we can cut solid waste and the associated expenses by increasing our recycling. While we will not see a sudden reduction in our monthly charges by E.L. Harvey, those savings will definitely help to keep our monthly fees lower than they would have been, otherwise!

Many of you are recycling - thank you! - but too many are NOT. There must be reasons why you **do** or you **don't** recycle. We would appreciate it if you write and tell us why you do or don't, AND offer ideas that will help to get people to recycle. **Send your suggestions to [asanborn77@verizon.net](mailto:asanborn77@verizon.net)** - and they will be much appreciated.

You should know that this is a pioneer system we're using, so we all - including EL Harvey - are learning as we go. Please be patient. Some answers are provided in a separate message in this issue.