



# Association Newsletter

Fall 2010

## *Communication is the mother of community*

### **The Hilltop Farms Community** by Al Sanborn

Here's a dictionary definition of **Community**: "An interacting population of various individuals in a common location".

In our type of community we see some people who are not interested in interacting with others - and that is their prerogative. Fortunately, at Hilltop we have a number of neighbors who have been willing to step forward and volunteer to help the organization that is necessary to operate the condominium. They make sure we have good lawns, good streets and the various other necessities that exist in a condominium. They have volunteered their time and efforts to do this for the benefit of all of us. And they get absolutely no pay for this work.

Hilltop Farms operates on money - OUR money - as you know, so our Board of Trustees holds the responsibility to manage that money properly. And they face a myriad of decisions at their regular meetings. Currently there are three Trustees

Backing up the Board of Trustees are the various committees, Design Review, Financial Review, Landscape Review, Website and Newsletter. Fortunately we have people serving on each committee. However, the Newsletter Committee has just been formed, and is in need of more volunteers. If you have any skill at writing, you are invited to work on future newsletters.

Please consider serving on a committee. It's a great opportunity to get to know your neighbors and how the HOA operates. And, if you might like to become a Trustee some day, it is a good way to learn how our finances are handled.

[hilltopfarmshoa.com](http://hilltopfarmshoa.com)

### **HOT TOPICS IN THE FORUMS**

- HF Moms Group
- Ice Cream Truck
- Cardboard Boxes
- Bulletin Boards

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

### **WANTED: TEEN OR TWEEN TO WRITE A COLUMN**

Are you a Hilltop Teen or Tween that would be interested in writing for the Newsletter? We can make the column a regular feature. It might even be worth school credit. If interested, please contact [board@hilltopfarmshoa.com](mailto:board@hilltopfarmshoa.com)

## **HELPFUL MISCELLANY**

The walking path off Violet Lane is now in good condition. It goes along Milford Road, then along the street for 40m, then into the woods for a nice loop back to Violet

The two trail sections above Buttercup are good for hiking, as well. Take a hike!

A reminder to everyone: All unit owners are required to register their cars with the trustees. (Rules & Regulations # 13) If your car(s) is/are not registered, please call Jeff Robinson 508-898-3431 - or email him at [jrobinsonccm@aol.com](mailto:jrobinsonccm@aol.com)

If you have problems with ant infestations, try Ortho Home Defense, sprayed inside and out. Available at Lowe's.

If you prefer to deliver your recyclables to a center, there is one on Rt 140 in Grafton Center, opposite the fire station. The facility is open Saturdays 7:00 - 1:00. On weekdays they rely on volunteers to have it open - (and they are usually there) - Tuesday - Friday 7:15 - 3:15.

The small parking areas throughout Hilltop are there for guests. Please be kind to our guests by keeping your vehicle(s) in your garage or driveway.

### **Help Wanted**

The new Newsletter Committee has openings for 3 new members. Experience not required, but may be helpful. Opportunity to have fun while learning a new skill.

**Call June at 508-887-8878 and leave a message on machine.**

# OFFICIALLY

## Save money on your AC bill

Provided by National Grid:

1. Check the filter once a month, clean it as needed.
2. Turn the A/C off at night and leave windows open or put fan on.
3. Keep windows closed when the A/C is on.
4. When going away, set the A/C timer to turn on 30 minutes before returning.
5. Keep costs down by setting the A/C temperature higher. Setting it at 78 instead of 75 will save you about 18 percent!

The energy used in the average home can be responsible for more than twice the greenhouse emissions of the average car!

## Open House Notice

If you have your unit for sale, it is okay to display For Sale signs (on the lawn or driveway) beside your unit or at the entrance to the community only on days that you have scheduled your Open House. Please remove these signs once the Open House is complete.

## OUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES By Al Sanborn

### **Principles for Homeowners and Community Leaders**

Courtesy of Community Associations Institute

#### **Homeowners have the Right to:**

- A responsive and competent community association.
- Honest, fair and respectful treatment by community leaders and managers.
- Participate in governing the community association by attending meetings, serving on committees and standing for election.
- Access appropriate association books and records.
- Prudent expenditure of fees and other assessments.
- Live in a community where the property is maintained according to established standards
- Fair treatment regarding financial and other obligations, including the opportunity to discuss payment plans and options with the association before foreclosure.
- Receive all documents that address rules and regulations governing the community - if not prior to purchase and settlement, then upon joining the community.
- Appeal to appropriate community leaders those decisions affecting non-routine financial responsibilities or property rights.

#### **Homeowners have the Responsibilities to:**

- Read and comply with the governing documents of the community.
- Maintain their property according to established standards.
- Treat association leaders honestly and with respect.
- Vote in community elections and on other issues.
- Pay association charges and assessments on time.
- Contact association leaders or managers, if necessary, to discuss financial obligations and alternatives.
- Request reconsideration of material decisions that personally affect them.
- Provide current contact information to association leaders or managers to help ensure they receive information from the community.
- Ensure that those who reside on their property (e.g., tenants, relatives and friends) adhere to all rules and regulations.

**NOTE:** Your trustees must adhere to all of these items, in addition to responsibilities listed in the Trust and By-Laws.

***For a complete listing of the CAI Rights and Responsibilities, visit [caionline.org](http://caionline.org)***

## TRASH AND RECYCLING GUIDE (UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2010) by Al Sanborn

Everything is to be bagged (expect corrugated boxes). Use clear plastic bags for recycling only; use any other kind of plastic bags for trash. Clear plastic bags are available at Stop & Shop: 13 gal, about \$3 for a package of 35. Trash and recycling all go into the bin, and they will be sorted at Harvey's facility. Put all materials IN the bin. Harvey will only pick up materials that are in the bin. Put your bin out by 7:00 a.m. They do come that early sometimes. A reminder: We are saving \$20,000 per year using these methods, meaning you save \$78 each year.

### Recycling Bag #1, Food & Beverage Containers

Plastic food and beverage containers #1—#7 (no foam), Aluminum and tin cans, Clear and colored glass

Please empty and rinse before recycling. Plastic and metal caps are preferred removed, but acceptable. You can save space by crushing milk containers.

### Bag #2 Paper and Boxes

Newspapers and magazines

Stationary, envelopes, brochures, pamphlets, carbonless forms, and corrugated boxes (please crush or cut and place in bin)

### Materials prohibited from recycling

Metal, clothing, hard-covered books, sand and gravel, Styrofoam, egg cartons, pizza boxes, lunch bags, cups, napkins, floppy disks, candy wrappers, microfilm, blueprints, copy paper, wrappers, computers, and appliances.

**When in doubt, leave it out!**

## MONEY SAVING TIPS

1. Install a simple shower control that allows you to control the shower flow, available at hardware stores, for \$10.
2. Use less than half the amount of soap the dishwasher calls for. Your dishes will still come really clean.
3. Use cruise control whenever traffic is not heavy; it really saves money. Not good on mountainous roads. Do not use in heavy rain.
4. Check your tire pressure at least every three months, to improve fuel efficiency and tire life.
5. Don't use hot water to melt grease when running the garbage disposer. Grease will run down the drain, coat the pipe, cool and start catching food to form a clog. Instead, flush with cold water, which will cool the motor and solidify the grease into clumps that float through the pipes to the sewer.
6. Read about the special incentives you can have by improving your insulation up to the R-49 rating.

## REQUESTS FOR APPROVAL OF UNIT MODIFICATIONS

By Phil Partin

As you know, any modifications to your unit will require approval of the Trustees. All requests should be submitted to Jeff Robinson at CCM. In some cases, a permit from the town is required, as well.

Please note that requests require time for processing. First, the DRC (Design Review Committee) only reviews and makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The Trustees may choose to agree or disagree with the DRC's recommendations. Final approval will arrive in the form of a letter from the Board of Trustees.

Second, the time for approval will vary depending on the complexity of the request. For example, mounting a satellite dish on the deck can be approved quickly while finishing a basement will take more time. Depending on the complexity of the request the DRC will usually complete the review within 3 to 10 calendar days. If the request lacks sufficient detail, additional information may be requested which will delay your review. The review is then forwarded to the Board and they usually meet every couple of weeks. Please plan ahead and do not schedule any work until you have received the approval letter from the Board and if needed, a town permit.

Lastly, please bear in mind that the members of the DRC and Board are all volunteers with full time jobs. Depending on our work loads and travel schedule your request may be delayed. CCM can provide you status on your request. You can expedite the review by reading your condominium documents and providing as much detail as possible when you make your request. If you have any questions please send them to CCM and they will insure they are forwarded to the correct committee or Board member.

## BEWARE of SOLICITORS By June Bouvier

Outside their front door in August many residents found a plastic bag containing a notice about testing water and a small bottle. Instructions were to fill the bottle half full and leave outside the door for pick-up. The notice had no identifying name but only a telephone number and small print at the bottom that it was not connected to any state or county office. A call to the Grafton Water Department informed that this was from a private company trying to sell water conditioners. Businesses sometimes use misleading marketing. Notices restricting soliciting are posted within the Hilltop community but there is no law against it. Do not fall for this type of solicitation. If suspicious, call the town or municipal office or Jeff Robinson.

## WILDLIFE REPORT by Al Sanborn

Many of you have seen various animals in your area, and you are invited to tell about your observations here in future newsletters.

Some of us are very fortunate to live right by the detention pond area off Cherry Lane. Over the past 4 years we have watched several deer browsing on the grass, a skunk looking for its lunch, a fox traveling through - (he was hit and killed by a car that night) - 26 resident turkeys in 2008, 27 in 2009, but only 20 this year, nine bluebird chicks in the nesting boxes in 2008, eleven in 2009, but only five in 2010.

Three years ago, when there was water in the pond, we saw many ducks, a few geese and one great blue heron.

Two winters ago a moose - - yes, a moose, not a mouse - - left tracks on our lawn twenty feet from the kitchen window. But the most unusual animal we've seen was the peacock that walked across the back yard and into the woods - (that was about 2 months ago.)

We've heard of coyote sightings, but we have not seen them - - not yet. Have you?

We hope you will add your stories by submitting them to the Forums in our website.

