

Saint Asaph Square Newsletter

September and October
2013

Board President's Report

Debbie Bowman, President



Dear Saint Asaph Square Neighbors,

I'm happy to announce that our community now has a web presence. Yes, that's right, we have our own website! You can find it at <http://www.st-asaph-square.com>. I hope you will bookmark it and visit it regularly to keep up with what is going on in our building.

You will see a number of tabs on the website with information you should find helpful. That being said, we are still adding to the site, so if there's something you would like to see there, click on the link on the website and let us know. In addition to information about our building and the neighborhood, you'll be able to find forms for updating your contact information, registering pets, rules on contractors working in units. We're hoping this will streamline some of the processes we have, and allow you to access information outside of office hours. We'll be emailing you separately with the password for the restricted section (Owners/Residents tab) of our site, so please make sure your contact information is up to date. Owners can also request access to an Owners Only page with still more information.

I also wanted to thank those neighbors who have already volunteered for the fire watch while we wait for the new pump. Your support is already making a difference and you really are helping Saint Asaph Square. Please contact Mr. Serry if you would like to volunteer.

Happy Fall and Happy Halloween.

Budget Committee

Dave Helfert, Chair



The Budget Committee continues to scour the 2014 annual budget looking for possible cuts and efficiencies. Our goal is to recommend no increase in condo fees for 2014. But it's tight. Facing the costs of work on the swimming pool, patio, and replacement of all three elevators, the association voted to use a combination of bank loans and reserve funds. We don't want those financial reserves to get too low, because that could mean having to pay higher interest rates on any future borrowing. And it could decrease in the financial solidity of the St. Asaph Square owners' association, which could affect your property value and ability to sell.

Now, we're dealing with another emergency, the replacement of the water pump for the parking garage sprinkler system. Here again, we're trying to find the best way to fund the cost — as much as \$30,000 — plus installation, plus costs of providing a 24-hour "fire watch" to patrol the parking garage while the sprinkler system is inoperative, as required by law. A replacement pump could take as long as four weeks to manufacture and install.

We have paid fire watches from midnight-8AM, and a number of residents have volunteered for three-hour watches between 6PM and midnight on weekdays and 8AM until midnight on weekends. We've saved nearly \$1000 already by not having to pay for a 24-hour fire watch.

The Budget Committee will meet again to finalize our recommendation to the Board for its consideration.



Welcome Wagon

*Debby Palmer-Mills & Shari Keefer,
Welcome Wagon Chair and Co-Chair*

We extend a very warm welcome to St. Asaph Square's newest residents.

Jenny Marion and Dale McNeil, #224
Beatriz J. Melgar, #212
Stacy Warren, #303
Sara Westfall, #433
Susan Langlitz, #210
Mark Standling, #223

Decorating Committee

Linda Burton, Chair

The new entry mats for the St. Asaph and South Pitt Street foyers have arrived, and the elevator cabs' interior paneling and flooring has been selected and approved by the Board.



Social Committee

Ginny Long, Chair

Our annual Ice Cream Social was held in late August, and the next item on the Committee's agenda will be the Annual Board meeting on Tuesday, October 15. Please plan to come to this event if you possibly can – it's a great way to meet your neighbors and participate in this important event of voting on Board membership. Coffee, wine, gingerbread, friendly neighbors... we just need you!



Speaking of needing you, the Social Committee would love to have a volunteer coordinator for our "dinners on the town". In the past, we've had fun outings to such restaurants as Red Rocks, Le Refuge, Dishes of India, and Taverna Cretekou --- and there's so many more to explore. Please email me at vlongmath@aol.com if you're interested, and I'll fill you in on the details.

Happy Hour continues at about 5:30 every Friday on the Saint Asaph Street lobby (or patio if the weather is nice). Come one and all to meet old friends and make new ones.



Landscape Committee

Bev Keane, Chair

For the Love of Ivy

You and I may think ivy is beautiful on buildings, but it becomes a problem when it attaches to mortar. Ivy grows small rootlets, appropriately called holdfasts, which make a glue that dissolves some of the mortar between bricks. Worse, the ivy traps moisture, dust and debris next to the building. Between acid rain and the decomposition of the debris, the acidity next to the building increases. That causes further damage to mortar as the carbonates in it dissolve. All

buildings with mortar eventually need re-pointing, replacing worn mortar. Ivy makes it happen sooner.

Mr. Serry and Leo are removing ivy from the outside of patios. We would appreciate it if you remove the ivy growing on the walls inside the brick patios. If you need assistance in removing the ivy or any unwanted growth, please contact the Landscape Committee or Mr. Serry in the Management office.

Around the Town



Ralph Rosenbaum

The Washington Post finally did what they have been threatening to do for nearly twenty years. They have sold their Robinson Warehouses on the north and south waterfronts of Old Town. This leaves the way for these underused sites to be redeveloped.

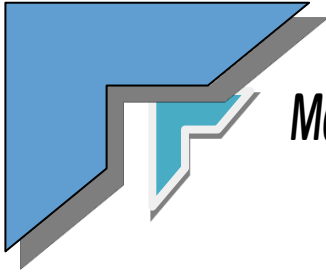
Two other sites where the City is encouraging redevelopment are the two used-car lots on King Street. These longtime businesses in Old Town represent the end of an era when the western end of King Street was home to many auto related businesses such as Brown Volvo and Tempest Buick. Now the used car businesses are in the process of leaving, one already having moved to Chantilly. In place of the car lots, the City would like to see retail development.

Those of you wondering whether the renewal of the sidewalks on South Washington Street will ever be completed will be pleased to know that only a few more weeks of avoiding piles of brick and walking through sand and mud remain. The entire South Washington Street upgrading which includes replacement trees, new bus shelters and street lights will be finished in six weeks.

Some of you may have noticed the BAR placards around Balducci's. These are only notices that Balducci's and the Bank which will occupy the space next to Balducci's have applied for a unified sign scheme. There must now be as many banks along Washington Street as along Wall Street.

For those new to the town, the *Farmer's Market* at 301 King Street in front of City Hall is open year-round every Saturday from 7 a.m. until noon. You can follow all that happening around Old Town at these two *websites*:

- <http://www.visitalexandriava.com/calendar-of-events/>
- <http://apps.alexandria.gov/Calendar>



Managements' Corner

Patrick M. Mazzei, Community Manager

Cardinal Management Group, Inc.
Agent for the Association

There are three topics that I want to cover this month. The first is replacement of HVAC systems, the second is insurance requirements of the Association and homeowners, and the third is the failure of the building fire control pump.

- HVAC (Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning) Condenser System Replacements

When your unit HVAC system fails, unit owners are responsible for the replacement. Some of these systems are located on the roof. It was recently reported by a resident who had his system replaced that in his opinion the contractors who are replacing systems are "selling up" larger systems than are needed to heat or cool the unit's square footage. I personally cannot attest to this fact. However, I feel it important enough to mention it to owners that when dealing with HVAC contractors be sure to have them provide you with their calculations as to the minimum and maximum size SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio) system that would provide the required heating and cooling to effectively handle your unit. Unfortunately, up-selling to unsuspecting unit owners is common in the industry. Also, please note that due to recent technology advancements and the use of lower VOC chemicals the physical size of the replacement unit may be larger than the originally installed equipment. If that is the case and the condenser unit (roof mounted systems specifically) encroaches on ANY area of the common roof, a special mounting application is necessary so that the weight of the unit does not damage the Sarnafil™ membrane roof covering.

- Association Insurance Coverage

The Association has insurance in place for general liability, umbrella business liability, fidelity insurance, and all-perils insurance for rebuilding your unit, to name a few. The important thing for unit owners and renters to know is that the replacement coverage does not cover personal property, betterments, and improvements to your unit. Nor does the liability coverage extend into your living space. What that means, for example, is that if a person slips and falls in your unit the master insurance will not indemnify and defend you against a liability claim. Also, if an owner has upgraded his/her unit and there is a peril loss resulting in a claim, the unit would be rebuilt only to the original builders' specifications as it conveyed at the time of the original building offering and declaration specifications.

What does that mean? It means that the kitchen wall that might have been removed, the upgraded tile, the expensive wall covering/granite counter tops/ upgraded cabinets and flooring, etc. that might have been later installed will not be covered in a rebuild claim; the insurance policy will also not cover any personal property loss. That is why it's very important for owners and renters to purchase additional insurance. Most companies provide this coverage at a minimal cost. The policy is commonly referred to as an HO-6 or an HO-4 (renter's) policy. While reviewing your insurance coverage, ask your agent if you are covered for the discharge of water and for zero deductible coverage which supplements the master insurance deductible (\$5,000) of the Association. As you or may not know, the owner is responsible for any damages, rebuilds, repairs and the insurance deductible if proven that the claim was *caused from or by a unit, whether the act was caused by negligence or not.*

What's a negligent act? Here is an example: In the past, the Association recommended that ALL unit owners replace their washing machine hoses, especially if they are 5 years old or older. Say the unit owner ignores the recommendation and the hose fails --- the water line snaps and discharges gallons of water, flooding multiple units. All the damages --including in single, multiple units and common areas, any repairs, and/or replacement components -- will be the responsibility of the negligent unit owner. Spend some time with your insurance agent to review your coverage. The time you spend on the phone may save you money in the future. Certificates of Insurance or evidence of insurance certificates are available from the Association's insurance broker, USI. They may be requested by emailing usi.certrequest@usi.biz or on the web at www.usicondo.com.

- Fire Pump Failure

The final topic for this newsletter is to solicit volunteers to help perform a fire watch of the garage area. The fire pump that is used to pump water into the fire lines of the garage has failed. The Board of Directors has approved a proposal from Simplex Grinnell/TYCO Industries for a replacement pump. However, this is a custom sized Peerless Brand pump that is custom cast and manufactured. The replacement pump will take approximately 4-6 weeks to be manufactured, installed, and tested. This leaves the garage area unprotected by the sprinkler system; the Fire Marshall thus ordered the Association to perform a 24/7 fire watch. This expense is what I classify as a "budget buster". It is an unplanned expense for the physical presence of a person walking the building's garage area (after regular business hours), checking for smoke, fire, etc. Thanks to those who have already stepped up to help. Mr. Serry is coordinating this volunteer effort and if you are interested in volunteering, please contact him at 703-683-5858.

Just a reminder that the Annual Meeting is scheduled for October 15, 2013. Sign in begins at 6:30 in the Pitt Street lobby, and the meeting starts promptly at 7:00 pm. I look forward to seeing you then.



Yahya M. Serry, On-Site Manager
St. Asaph Square Condominium

**DO NOT FORGET YOUR SMOKE
DETECTORS!**

The first line of defense in your home in case of fire is a good working smoke detector. In about a month and half, October 4 to be exact, daylight savings time will come to an end. It is the time most fire safety experts recommend servicing your smoke detectors in your homes. The most important thing you should do is change the batteries to your detectors. If you have the new types that do not require battery change, please get into the habit of testing them regularly.

For residents who still carry the hard-wired detectors that do not have battery backup, it is strongly advised to have them changed to battery backup ones; that way you get protection even during power outage.

Finally, if your detector starts to act funny, please replace it. Remember that it is *your safety* at risk, and no one else is responsible for it but you.

And now, we have the pleasure of introducing our newest column.....

Odds and Ends

Dave Anderson



One of the first things a home owner learns is the value of his or her property. Have you ever thought of what St. Asaph Square is worth? We have the luck to occupy a full city block in one of the most inviting and attractive cities in the country if not the world. Aficionados of *Downtown Abbey* are aware that the Earl of Grantham, played by Hugh Bonneville, sees his ownership of the Abbey as a sacred trust which he will not so much own but will keep and preserve until he passes it on the next "owner." If only we who own units in St. Asaph Square could see our ownership as a trust to be passed on the generations that follow us.

St. Asaph Square has 108 units. If the average value of a unit were to be something like \$300,000 say, then that would make our combined worth \$32.4 million as a base. To this we can add the value of our pool area and courtyard, the lobbies, the parking garage, and all that make up our small part of the world. And, don't forget the landscaping, which is the first impression anyone gets when they see our place. Anything that adds beauty

to our home here adds value to our ownerships, and that can be a tidy sum. By the same token, anything that detracts or makes us a less attractive place to live decreases the value of our holdings. So, as we go about our daily lives, we need to keep in mind that whatever we do to make St. Asaph a more attractive and inviting place to live adds to our net worth as well.



Reminders...

- The *Monthly Board meetings* are held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7 PM in the South Pitt St. lobby. The meetings are the place for the unit owner to voice questions, comments, concerns, criticisms and complaints to the Board.
- Residents are reminded not to park in neighbors designated parking spaces unless they have the owner's prior approval. Visitors who use the outdoor visitors' parking spots need to register these vehicles with the office. If the office is closed, please put a sign on the dashboard indicating which unit the car is visiting. The complex reserves the right to tow non-registered vehicles.
- We have a wonderful little library on the 3rd floor of the South Pitt Street side, and Van Keane has volunteered to be our new librarian. Thank you, Van!
- There is a **NO SMOKING** policy in common areas of Saint Asaph Square, including open air balconies. Violators will be fined.
- If you have a fire alarm in your unit, remember not to unplug it or remove it. Please call Mr. Serry if you'd like to have it removed.
- Please don't use your key to pull open the lobby doors as this can damage the door lock's pins.
- Please ensure that all trash and recycling is placed in the receptacles in the trash rooms and that trash chute rooms are kept free of non-bagged waste. Boxes should be flattened before placing in receptacles. Note: Single Stream Recycling is in effect. All recyclable material can be placed in the marked recycling bins and does not need to be separated by type as before.

MEET THE TEAM

Board Members

Debbie Bowman, President
Ginny Long, Vice President
Bev Keane, Secretary
Jack Burton, Treasurer
Rosenbaum, Member at Large

Board email:
saintasaphsquareboard@gmail.com

Cardinal Management

Patrick M. Mazzei , CMCA, AMS
Agent for the Association
p.mazzei@cardinalmanagementgroup.com

Front Office

Yahya M. Serry, CMCA On-Site Manager
St. Asaph Square Condominiums
801 South Pitt Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-683-5858
Stasaph801@verizon.net

Mr. Serry's Office Hours

Monday through Wednesday and Friday:
8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Thursday:
10:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

*Happy Birthday to our
Newsletter.....
One year old this month!*



*If you'd like to submit an item for publication in the
upcoming November/December issue,
please send to
SaintAsaphSquarenews@hotmail.com
by November 15.*

*To receive an electronic version of this newsletter,
please submit your current email address
to the same address.*

Your St. Asaph Square Newsletter editors,

Van Keane and Ginny Long

