

## WINTER/SPRING 2012 NEWSLETTER

### FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

#### Partnerships

Your 2011-12 Board has been busy enhancing Association partnerships. Many of these are with vendors who provide services to our neighborhood. We recently negotiated contracts with snow removal, grounds maintenance and lighting companies. While we pay for their services, we expect these firms to be our partners maintaining a beautiful neighborhood.

We've also been working on partnerships with several City of Kansas City departments. Our conversations with Public Works officials improved snow removal efforts on major streets in our neighborhood. The Parks and Recreation Department has agreed to remove dead trees along State Line Road at no cost to the Association and to provide extra lawn maintenance in Migliazzo Park at a very low cost. We're working with City officials to get assistance repairing crumbling curbs and help replacing dead or dying trees in parkways throughout our neighborhood.

While a small group of volunteers actually manages our \$110,000 annual Association budget, every Verona Hills resident is a partner in keeping ours a safe, attractive neighborhood. We do that by maintaining our properties in a manner that enhances the value of the neighborhood and by treating our neighbors as we would like to be treated. In return for our modest annual dues, we benefit by having a great place to live and a neighborhood that enhances the value of our homes by thousands of dollars.

Thanks for your support. Contact me at any time with suggestions on improving our neighborhood.

Sincerely,

*Joe Davidson*

#### 2012 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joe Davidson, President (816-392-4012)  
Larry Engel, Secretary/Treasurer (816-942-8229)  
Paul Jokerst, At Large (816-943-1201)  
Tom Kenagy, At Large (816-942-5161)  
Ed McHardie, Common Areas (816-674-3939)

Larry Otto, Snow Removal (816-942-5636)  
Susan Richart, Compliance (816-942-6121)  
Richard Scarritt, Security (816-523-8181)  
Shirley Weglarz, Communications (816-916-3353)  
*To Be Named: Vice President and Director, Events*

VHHA Volunteer Help Wanted: Director of Events and Garage Sale Coordinator.  
E-mail [info@veronahills.org](mailto:info@veronahills.org) if you are interested, or if you need more information.

## **MONEY MATTERS: Treasurer's Report**

As of the end of January, **VHHA Secretary/Treasurer Larry Engel** reported that income exceeded budgeted revenue for the current fiscal year by about \$9,000 (see Income Statement detail on the next page). This good news is due in large part to collecting about \$8,500 of past due homeowners' association dues and interest charges. Legal fees and court costs for six judgments, which enabled us to collect these past due amounts, amounted to just under \$12,000, of which we have recouped about \$4,200 to date. This activity also resulted in the collection of an additional \$6,000 in HOA dues and related legal costs without the necessity and expense of judgments.

Partially by plan and partially due to the exceptionally mild winter (most of the snow removal budget has not been spent), expenses may come in another \$10,000 to \$20,000 under budget. \$5,000 of this will be earmarked to replenish reserves depleted by diminished cash flow last fiscal year. The remaining savings will most likely be used to fund needed capital improvements in our area.

## **Q&A: COLLECTION OF ANNUAL HOA DUES**

### **► HOW DOES VHHA COLLECT THE \$150 ANNUAL HOA DUES (ALSO CALLED ASSESSMENTS)?**

The Home Owners Association of Kansas City (HAKC), notifies each homeowner annually about the \$150 assessment well in advance of the June 1 due date. Most homeowners pay their HOA dues on time.

### **► WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HOMEOWNERS DON'T PAY THEIR DUES?**

Homeowners late in paying their dues are sent monthly reminders that encourage payment and/or payment plans. Interest (and more dues) begins accruing. When over \$300 is owed, a lien is filed against the property. The lien affects the homeowner's credit rating. Liens are collected in their entirety, including the filing cost and interest, when the home is sold. The VHHA has less money to make neighborhood improvements.

### **► CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT THE LIEN PROCESS?**

**VHHA Secretary/Treasurer Larry Engel** reports the following Board guideline: If an account is two years in arrears, we will file a lien which legally protects our right to collect money owed for up to five years. Although assessments are due on June 1 each year, we generally wait a few months before filing the lien.

When a property exceeds four years in arrears we begin the process of filing a lawsuit. The resulting judgment protects our right to collect for ten years. The first step in this process is to send a demand letter to the homeowner. If we do not receive an adequate response we then proceed to hire an attorney to file the suit. Last summer we initiated ten lawsuits, which resulted in six judgments and four settlements. Typically, the judge will include legal fees and court costs in the judgment amount. For the six recent judgments, the outstanding assessments amounted to \$7,536. Legal costs added another \$4,453 for total judgments of \$11,989.

As you can see, this process can add a significant amount to the homeowner's account. Even the lien filing currently costs around \$100, and is added to the amount due. The Board certainly does not enjoy taking these steps, but we have a fiduciary responsibility to the association to do what we can to enforce collection of assessments. We also understand that we are dealing with our neighbors and that we all go through tough times. We strive to work with a homeowner who shows a willingness to make an honest effort to avoid the necessity of costly legal action.

### **► WHAT IF I JUST CAN'T AFFORD TO PAY MY DUES RIGHT NOW?**

Please contact **VHHA President Joe Davidson** or any Board member to arrange a payment plan.

### **► WHICH RESIDENCES ARE NEWLY DELINQUENT?**

We currently have 14 accounts that are one year in arrears, that is, they have not yet paid their June, 2011 assessment. According to the Board's policy, we have recently filed new liens on the following two properties that are two years in arrears: 11827 Washington and 301 West 115th Street.

# VERONA HILLS HOMES ASSOCIATION

## VERONA HILLS HOMES ASSOCIATION Income Statement - Cash Basis January 31, 2012

	Current Period		Annual Budget	Budget Balance
	Jan '12	Year to Date		
<b>DUES ASSESSED - JUNE 1, 2011</b>		111,750.00		
<b>REVENUE:</b>				
Dues Collected	\$ 680.00	\$ 108,643.99	\$108,000.00	\$ (643.99)
Bad Debts Collected	536.95	8,174.02	0.00	(8,174.02)
Interest on Investments	12.90	401.91	300.00	(101.91)
Interest on Assessments	20.65	440.91	500.00	59.09
Legal Fees Collected	0.00	1,339.08	0.00	(1,339.08)
Other Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Social Activities Income	0.00	240.00	0.00	(240.00)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,230.50</b>	<b>119,239.91</b>	<b>108,800.00</b>	<b>(10,439.91)</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>				
Administration	529.20	4,233.60	6,350.00	2,116.40
Annual Meeting	0.00	3,282.50	4,500.00	1,217.50
Other HAKC Services, Copies	105.25	463.65	1,200.00	736.35
Insurance	0.00	1,360.00	1,650.00	290.00
Legal Exp, Filing Fees	63.00	7,334.46	4,000.00	(3,334.46)
Common Area Maintenance	2,656.05	22,448.44	29,000.00	6,551.56
Extra Mowing-Migliazzo Park	0.00	0.00	3,500.00	3,500.00
Capital Impvt-unallocated	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Capital Impvt-Monument lighting	0.00	0.00	500.00	500.00
Capital Impvt-mailbox repair	0.00	2,400.00	2,200.00	(200.00)
Capital Impvt-new mailboxes	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Capital Impvt-sidewalk repair	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
ContingencyFund	0.00	0.00	13,840.00	13,840.00
Postage	19.43	949.83	4,000.00	3,050.17
Meetings	0.00	60.00	300.00	240.00
Snow Plowing	0.00	0.00	12,500.00	12,500.00
BBQ/July 4 parade	0.00	716.69	1,000.00	283.31
Easter Egg Hunt	0.00	0.00	750.00	750.00
Movies in the Park	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Garage Sale	0.00	594.65	500.00	(94.65)
Newsletter	0.00	792.81	1,750.00	957.19
Directories	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
Stationery & Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Telephone Alert	0.00	324.10	500.00	175.90
Security Service Fees	840.00	6,720.00	10,850.00	4,130.00
Real Estate Taxes	0.00	57.60	60.00	2.40
Web Site	0.00	165.00	500.00	335.00
A/R Written Off	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Utilities	42.28	344.29	600.00	255.71
Contributions	0.00	600.00	750.00	150.00
Replenish Reserves	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>4,255.21</b>	<b>52,847.62</b>	<b>108,800.00</b>	<b>55,952.38</b>
<b>Net Income/(Loss)</b>	<b>\$ (3,024.71)</b>	<b>\$ 66,392.29</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>	

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

### VERONA HILLS' COMMON AREAS

#### **Big Savings on 2012 Landscape Management Contract**

Visitors often remark on Verona Hills' attractive islands and common areas, lush with trees, shrubs, and flowers. **Board Member Ed McHardie** has been busy arranging for maintenance of Verona Hills' many common areas and has finalized negotiations for this year's landscape management contract with Arbor Masters. The contract for common area mowing, shrub and tree trimming, fertilization, debris pickup, horticultural services, turf management, and the general upkeep of 43 individual areas, including Migliazzo Park, will be accomplished at a savings of \$5,500 compared with 2011!

#### **City of Kansas City Steps Up for Tree Removal**

Discussions between **Board Member Ed McHardie** and City staff have resulted in plans for the City of Kansas City to cut down all the dead or dying pine trees along State Line from Minor to Santa Fe and remove the stumps at no cost to the VHHA. This is HUGE, as estimates for this work approached \$20,000. The timing has yet to be decided; the City typically requires a written tree replacement plan to schedule removal. **Ed** is also working with the City to take advantage of the City's tree replacement plan that is already in effect.

#### **Return of Monument Lighting**

Remember when the Verona Hills monuments at State Line and Wornall at Minor were lighted at night? Instead of repairing the lights, we will replace them (as a cost-saving measure) with low-voltage 4 watt LED lights with a photoelectric eye. Our gateways will be illuminated dusk to dawn for only pennies a day!

## SECURITY MATTERS

#### **Did You Know That Your VHHA Dues Pay For Neighborhood Police Patrols?**

**Board Member Richard Scarritt** would like you to know that your Homes Association engages a group of off-duty City police officers to make frequent patrol runs through our neighborhood. Our police patrols keep an eye on things, take appropriate action when warranted, and simply by their visible presence deter bad guys by making them aware of the increased risk of committing crimes in Verona Hills. Our officers try to avoid forming predictable patterns, trying instead to conduct their patrols on different days, at different hours, and using different routes. These patrols supplement efforts by the Kansas City Police Department.

#### **9-1-1: Not Just for Emergencies**

The Police Department and our own officers urge us to contact 9-1-1, not only when we see or suspect illegal activity, but also if we spot something suspicious or "just not right". The officers stress that 9-1-1 dispatchers will categorize and prioritize calls, so we needn't worry about whether it's important enough to call. It's always best to make the police aware of our concerns.

#### **Verona Hills' Crime Is Down: Let's Help It Stay That Way!**

Thankfully, Verona Hills has had very few incidents over the past year. Most of the problems our officers report are residence checks, most often triggered by open doors, and checks of ungaraged cars.

But we cannot become complacent. Crimes do occur in our neighborhood, and we must not make it easier on the bad guys by leaving valuable items in plain sight (in a car or near a residence door or window), or by leaving doors and windows open or unlocked. Just this past week, money and valuables were stolen from a guest's car parked in a Verona Hills resident's driveway. Granted, the guest made the crime easier by leaving cash and valuables in an unlocked car, but it's still disturbing when a crime occurs so close to home. Let's look out not only for ourselves and our own property, but also for anyone who visits Verona Hills as well. Let's be ever vigilant as to who's in our neighborhood and what they're up to ... and let's not be hesitant to call 9-1-1.

If you have questions about neighborhood security or think something suspicious is underway (after calling 9-1-1), please contact Security Committee **Board Members Richard Scarritt, Susan Richart, or Ed McHardie**.

# VERONA HILLS HOMES ASSOCIATION

## GRAFFITI AT MIGLIAZZO PARK

There have been two unfortunate incidents of profane graffiti on the playground equipment in the park during the past 6 months. Verona Hills is fortunate to have a City park within our boundaries and maintaining it as a showplace among City parks is a priority of this Board. In both these cases the markings were removed with some good elbow grease by Verona Hills residents within 48 hours. Police and Parks Department officials were notified of both incidents and will continue to monitor the area, especially on weekend nights. If you live near the Park or are traveling past it and see any suspicious activity (which includes most activity after dark), call 9-1-1 to report it.

## IMPORTANT TRASH DATES

Our next scheduled leaf and brush pick up is **Wednesday, April 18**. Sacks and bundles should be curbside by 7 a.m. on that day. For the city's requirements for this pickup, or for more information, go to [www.kcmo.org/trash](http://www.kcmo.org/trash).

Trash pickup will be delayed one day (moved from Wednesday to Thursday) after the following holidays:

**Memorial Day** - May 28, **Independence Day** - July 4, and **Labor Day** - September 3.

## SIDEWALKS: YOUR OPINION NEEDED

Don't be alarmed if you see someone walking slowly, peering intently at what looks like their feet, making notes on a clipboard. There's a good chance that you've run into one of your VHHA Board members, who is wearing the hat of sidewalk surveyor.

The VHHA Board is trying to get a handle on the state of our sidewalks. Some are in great shape; others are downright dangerous. Can you help by providing some feedback?

**VHHA Board Member Larry Otto** is in charge of the sidewalk survey. In his role as a VHHA Board member, he learned that sidewalk repair is the homeowner's responsibility. Larry is looking for possible ways - within VHHA's very limited budget - to help out VHHA homeowners with the expense of sidewalk repair.

One possibility is to have VHHA get a competitive bid on repairing a large number of sidewalks in Verona Hills. Although the bid would include a separate cost for each address, the cost for each homeowner would be reduced because of the scope of the project and the competitive bid. In addition, VHHA would provide oversight of the project, so it would be less of a hassle for the individual homeowners who decide to have their sidewalks repaired.

Please contact Larry with any thoughts about sidewalks or if you would like to report the address of a potentially hazardous sidewalk. Larry's e-mail is [westcoastotto@aol.com](mailto:westcoastotto@aol.com).

## CHECK YOUR DIRECTORY ENTRY AT [www.veronahills.org](http://www.veronahills.org)

Thank you to many of you for providing updates for the Spring 2012 VHHA Directory! To ensure the directory is as accurate as possible, please double check your entry for the directory. Go to the website ([www.veronahills.org](http://www.veronahills.org)). The password is Verona. E-mail any changes to [info@veronahills.org](mailto:info@veronahills.org) by Sunday, April 15.

To save the substantial cost of mailing the directory (about as much as the printing cost), we'll be arranging for volunteers to hand-deliver the directories in April.

Please direct questions about the directory to **Board Member Shirley Weglarz** at [shirley\\_weglarz@yahoo.com](mailto:shirley_weglarz@yahoo.com) or (816) 916-3353.

## ARE YOU GETTING VERONA HILLS NEWS/UPDATES?

The VHHA Board has two ways to communicate with you quickly and inexpensively: phone alerts (30-second recorded phone messages) and VHHA e-mails. (A third way is the VHHA website, which is updated frequently.) Phone alerts inform you of such things as delays in trash pick-ups, neighborhood safety issues, and upcoming events. These messages are very short and infrequent, no more than 20 or so in a year. If you're not getting these important messages and would like to, please send your phone number and/or e-mail address to [info@veronahills.org](mailto:info@veronahills.org) so you can be in the know about what's going on in Verona Hills.

## THANKS, NEIGHBORS!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. . .

### ***For paying your HOA dues on time***

The Board thanks the majority of you who have made the sacrifices necessary in a tough economy to pay all or a portion of your outstanding assessments.

### ***For looking for ways to cut costs***

VHHA Board members are giving extra-close scrutiny to expenses this year to make sure the Verona Hills budget stretches as far as humanly possible. Competitive bids are being obtained for all major expenses.

### ***For serving as our volunteer webmaster***

Many thanks to Cathy Stoetzer, who is a master at keeping our website up-to-date.

### ***For taking such good care of your houses and yards***

Your pride in where you live is evident. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

### ***For helping with updates***

Many thanks to Doris Holderness, who has been a great help with e-mail updates.

### ***For bringing food donations for Harvesters to the 2011 Annual Meeting***

Thanks to everyone who filled the barrel with food for Harvesters at the November 2011 VHHA Annual meeting. Let's make this an annual tradition!

## ANOTHER WAY TO BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

### **Fitting Into the Neighborhood**

The Board gets several questions a year about our deed restrictions on new construction items – fences, roofs, and other structures. Many of these items are covered in our Association Covenants and Restrictions, a copy of which can be found on our website, [www.veronahills.org](http://www.veronahills.org). These documents were drawn up in 1962, are somewhat dated, and don't cover every situation that arises. (For example, has anyone actually seen a pergola? FYI, a pergola is defined as, "An archway in a garden or park consisting of a framework covered with trained climbing or trailing plants." --Wikipedia)

When you're considering a change to your house or property, **Board President Joe Davidson** suggests you look around at your neighbors' properties and try to make your improvements consistent with the neighborhood. Is a chain link fence the best choice if all others in your area are fashioned from wood pickets? Asphalt shingles in a muted color blend well with most any roof in our neighborhood. Earth tones may be boring, but generally neighbors and potential homebuyers find those more acceptable for houses than bright colors.

Outbuildings are specifically restricted by our covenants but they can be found throughout our neighborhood. The Board hasn't enforced their removal, but we would ask that you be considerate of your neighbors and keep them in good condition and in a location that is acceptable to your neighbors. A good custom storage system in your garage is an even better solution.

## THANK YOU FOR BEING A GREAT NEIGHBOR!

**"While the spirit of neighborliness was important on the frontier because neighbors were so few, it is even more important now because our neighbors are so many. "**

*—Lady Bird Johnson (1912 - 2007)*

## NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS:

### WHAT'S HAPPENING. . .

**EASTER EGG HUNT:** SATURDAY, MARCH 31, 10 AM, MIGLIAZZO PARK  
(INCLEMENT WEATHER DATE APRIL 7)

Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 31 at 10:00 am. Meet the Easter Bunny in person at Verona Hills' annual Easter Egg Hunt for children 10 and younger in Migliazzo Park. The Easter Bunny will "hide" more than 2500 plastic eggs filled with candy and prizes throughout the east side of the Park. Children younger than 5 have a separate special area to hunt for eggs filled with age-appropriate candy.

Stop by for juice, coffee, and donuts, and to participate in giveaways, whether or not you have a child in the "hunt." Don't miss 15 minutes of the fastest action you'll ever see in the Park!

If your business would like to donate prizes or you'd like to help with the event, contact Joe Davidson at (816) 392-4012 or [info@veronahills.org](mailto:info@veronahills.org).

**GARAGE SALE:** FRIDAY-SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21-22

It's never too early to move your treasures to the garage in anticipation of our neighborhood sale.

**NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE DAY:** (FALL) DATE TO BE DETERMINED

We're excited about a new event planned for this fall that pairs a Service Day with a BBQ. Verona Hills volunteers will help neighbors in need and spruce up the common areas. Then, we can brag to each other about our efforts as we feed our hungry faces at the neighborhood BBQ that follows. If you have suggestions for this or other events, please send them to [info@veronahills.org](mailto:info@veronahills.org).

**ANNUAL MEETING:** THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 7PM, PLACE TO BE DETERMINED

Some serious stuff – usually City leaders' vision and the Verona Hills budget – is supplemented by food, fellowship, and prizes. Don't miss this popular event!

### AND WHAT'S NOT. . .

**NO 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY BIKE PARADE THIS YEAR**

**NO MOVIE NIGHT THIS YEAR**

Although a small number of Verona Hills residents enjoyed the Independence Day Bike Parade and Movie Night in the past, other events that appeal to more of our residents are being considered for this year. As a result, ***there will be no bike parade or movie night this year.***

If you have suggestions for an event you would like to see scheduled, please e-mail [info@veronahills.org](mailto:info@veronahills.org).

*Remember to visit [www.veronahills.org](http://www.veronahills.org) for the latest updates on community news and activities.*