
SCENIC RIDGE HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION

One Amber Drive, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520

mailto:info@scenicridgehomeowners.com

<http://www.scenicridgehomeowners.com>



The View

Homeowners' Association Newsletter

May 2009

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Table of Contents

Letter from Howard Millman, President.....	1
Scenic Ridge Email List	1
SR Board Meeting Schedule 2009.....	2
Pool Opening	2
SR Board Election Update.....	3
Secretary Debra Maiorano Profile	3
Treasurer Earl Faber Profile	3
Other Matters--	
Passports & Employment	4
Q&A with Cari Daddio, Board VP	5
New Mayor at City Hall	5
Clearwater Festival, June 2009.....	6

Board of Directors

Email at: info@scenicridgehomeowners.com

Howard Millman	President
Cari Daddio	Vice-President
Melanie Friedlander	Vice-President, Finance
Earl Faber	Treasurer
Debra Maiorano	Secretary

Other:

Brian Hickey	Maintenance Manager
Stella Johnson	Newsletter Editor/Writer
Cory Notrica	Website and Advisor

THE SCENIC RIDGE EMAIL LIST

To subscribe to the e-mail list, e-mail your request to: sceniclist-request@scenicridgehomeowners.com with the subject "Subscribe."

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Letter from SR Board President Howard Millman

Dear Homeowners,

Summer is fast approaching as Scenic Ridge residents experience the results of last year's varied landscaping and ground improvement projects, including new perennials, shrubs and trees, as well as improvements to stone walls and fences. While we remain especially budget-conscious and especially vigilant these days, the Board will continue to make modest capital improvements on an as-needed basis throughout 2009.

That said, all SR Board members are pleased to note that **last year's community-wide staining project of all 97 units has been completed**; an issue that won't have to be re-addressed for years to come. The contractor, Bradsell Painting, was responsive and ethical; and, when we encountered the inevitable minor problems, they were quickly resolved.

Since the project's completion, many SR residents and neighbors have commented on the attractiveness of our new appearance. Fortunately, we can all relax and enjoy the new look—especially since we do not expect any other projects or assessments of this magnitude for some time.

What is on the horizon and on everyone's minds, however, is **the nation's current financial crisis**. As we all adjust to the pressures of the day, this situation has obviously effected what was, only a few years ago, a booming real estate market here in the county. But, like everything else, the market reflects what is happening across the nation, with home values comparatively down everywhere.

All things considered, it is positive to note that area real estate agencies still consider the **Scenic Ridge community one of the best values in Westchester**. Our low common charges, combined with an attractive and safe environment, make our community an outstanding value. (Commuters especially like having Metro North nearby.)

Anyone who *is* planning to sell their unit, for whatever reason, may have to wait a little longer than usual to get their

Continued on following page...

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2009 Board Meeting Schedule

Board meetings are generally scheduled the 2nd Monday of the month. For the remainder of the year, the dates are as follows:

June 8, July 13, August 10, September 14, October 12, November 9, and December 14.

“Summer” meetings will be held at the pool house in our new meeting room. After Labor Day, meetings generally resume at Village Hall unless the weather is warm enough to meet on the property. Always visit our website first to confirm date, time and place. All Scenic Ridge association members are encouraged to attend all Board meetings to discuss common concerns and interests. Please attend.

2009 SR Pool Opening

At this writing, the Scenic Ridge swimming pool is set to open on time come the **Memorial Day** holiday weekend, Saturday May 23 - Monday May 25. Please note, it will then be open on weekends only until the end of June. After that, the pool will be open daily, weather permitting, through Labor Day.

Pool hours are 10:30 AM - 8 PM, but are subject to change due to weather, maintenance or staffing.

Have a happy and safe summer everyone! –*The Members of the Board*

Letter from the Board President, continued from pg. 1

asking price, or acquiesce to the marketplace by lowering the price tag. Be assured: Units are still selling (two 3-bedroom units and one 2-bedroom unit were recently sold), but not at the home prices we saw only 18 months ago. Also of note: rental units remain well under the 10 percent cap, which is the allowed limit.

For your assurance, the Board closely monitors our common charge revenue. Unfortunately, arrears have increased over the past year but are still within tolerable limits. Also, two units, 33 Amber and 15 Lark, are facing foreclosure. We have filed liens for back common charges to protect our financial interests.

The Board's frugality, meaning watchful spending on improvements and other expenditures (such as insurance and legal services), leaves SR in the enviable position of having adequate reserves for all operating and some capital improvement needs (see note #3 below). One of the major savings we enjoy here is avoiding the cost of paying an estimated \$75,000 annually for property management because the members of this Board volunteer their time and services.

Before closing and as a friendly reminder, several items worth mentioning are:

1. All homeowners must contact a Board member before removing any shrubbery or trees from their property, or making any significant changes that alter the exterior's overall appearance.
2. Anyone wishing to dispose of an old air conditioner must first obtain a designated Freon sticker from Village Hall on Van Wyck Street before they can do so. Otherwise, the appliance will sit there as the sanitation department will not remove it without a sticker.
3. While we hope to postpone renovating the swimming pool and making additional repairs to the pool liner until next year, we are about to install a vacuum-breaker, water drainage unit as required by Westchester County code.

Speaking for all Board members, may I offer a sincere “Thank You” for your continued support and for your efforts in making Scenic Ridge one of the most attractive, safest and affordable communities in which to live.

Howard

Howard Millman, Board President

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Scenic Ridge Board Election Update

As most of you know, the Scenic Ridge Homeowners' Association held its Annual Meeting last December, at which time it also held its annual Board elections. On this occasion, two Board members were re-seeking office: Debra Maiorano, secretary, and Earl Faber, treasurer. The Board is pleased that they have been re-elected accordingly, which is in keeping with the continuity we wish to preserve in terms of corporate governance. Although both have been long time residents, as well as Board members, we would like to re-introduce them, as outlined below, to any newcomers who may not be familiar with Secretary Debra Maiorano and Earl Faber.

Debra Maiorano, Board Secretary, Re-Elected!

"...trying to make Scenic Ridge a nice neighborhood for our families..."

Debra Maiorano was born and raised in Alabama, came to New York around 1989 and has lived at Scenic Ridge for the past 14 years. Although Debra graduated from Auburn University with a degree in fashion merchandising, she is currently employed in school services for BOCES in Yorktown "in the Science 21 Department, providing extra services for the elementary school students and teachers around Westchester and the state."

For the past five years, Debra has been serving the Scenic Ridge community as secretary on its Board of Directors. "The biggest challenge to being Secretary is probably the same for me as the other members of the Board," she says, "and that's trying to make Scenic Ridge a nice neighborhood for our families and trying to get everybody to follow the guidelines, both of which help ensure the quality of life we all want and expect."

What Debra likes best about Scenic Ridge, however, is not only the people who live here, but SR's excellent location on the Hudson, "as well as the recreation areas for children and their friends to play almost right outside the door."

What would Debra like to see improved over the next few years? The re-elected Board Secretary states updating the pool area, repairing some stone work, improving some overgrown landscaping and removing several old oak trees that aren't doing so well right now—"all on a tight budget, of course!"

Earl Faber, Board Treasurer, Re-Elected!

"...being able to take a walk and talk to people is great."

Born in Brooklyn, raised in Queens and determined "never to live on Long Island," CPA Earl Faber has lived at Scenic Ridge for nearly seven years and has been the Board's treasurer for the past five.

As Earl states, the only challenge he faces in this capacity is "giving up a half day every Sunday to make sure the bills are paid and the books are up to date." Currently, he is employed as the Comptroller for a company that provides litigation support services to the legal profession.

What Earl likes best about the Croton community is the feeling of an actual neighborhood. "Being able to take a walk and talk to people is great," he says. "Plus, there are some really good restaurants in Croton and it's an easy commute to New York City, where I once studied accounting at NYU (and, later, finance at Pace)."

For 2009 and beyond, Treasurer Earl would like to see the complex complete its landscaping project, "like replacing the oaks with more appropriate plantings and getting rid of some old evergreens."

After living in a detached home in Cortlandt Manor for 18 years, however, Earl concludes, "I much prefer Scenic Ridge and the ambience of the complex."

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OTHER MATTERS

Got Passports?

Planning a summer vacation outside the U.S.? Remember passport laws continue to change (as is the case for air travel to Canada, Mexico and Bermuda). Please note:

1--Passports take six weeks to process

2--Applicants must fill out DS-11 form and have original documents with raised seals

3--Two color photos that measure 2 inches x 2 inches, and are full-face with no headgear, are required

4--Proof of U.S. citizenship includes your outdated passport or a birth certificate (minors under 16 must have both parents names listed)

5--Proof of ID includes a passport that was issued within the past five years, current driver's license, government or military ID card

Basically, passport fees are \$100 to process, and \$85 for minors. Should the applicant need to expedite the process, or for more information, call 995-3086. Also, visit www.cc-passports@westchestergov.com.

Youth Employment

If you are looking to fill a job on a one-time or on-going basis, or if you're a young person looking for a part-time job, it might be a good idea to start with the Croton Youth Employment Service. The types of jobs they've recently filled include baby-sitters, yard workers, party aids and dog walkers, among other positions.

For more information, or to be placed on the referral service list, stop by the Recreation Office on the 2nd floor of the Municipal Building and pick up a Youth Employment Referral List. You may also call 271-3006 for any necessary forms. (In order to remain on the list year-to-year, students must provide updated information at the beginning of each school year.)

Please note that the Recreation Department does not check references of anyone on the Youth Employment Referral List.

It is strongly suggested that residents check all references before hiring anyone.

Summer Employment

The Croton Recreation and Parks Department offers summer employment opportunities, both at the day camp and the Tiny Tots program.

The department also hires lifeguards, gate attendants and park maintenance workers. Contact the Croton Recreation Department also at 271-3006 for an application or further information.

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Q&A With Cari Daddio, Board Vice President

“The value of our townhouses has remained consistent with the twists and turns of the real estate market.”

1-- How long have you lived at Scenic Ridge and how many years have you served on the board? I've lived in SR for nine years and this is my sixth on the Board of Directors.

2--During this time, how has SR changed? We've seen lots of young families move in and the overall appearance of Scenic Ridge has been dramatically improved with new stone walls, plantings, sidewalk improvements, new playground and renovated pool house; as well as the recent community-wide re-staining project.

3--What were the past problems and how were they resolved? Now, and in the past, the Board tries to address whatever neighborhood issues that we can. However, some problems are out of the scope of what a resident-run Board can tackle. On occasion, we do have to ask our attorney or other agencies, like the police department or code enforcement, for assistance.

4--What challenges are ahead? As our neighborhood ages, we continually have to address the need for tree work, road and sidewalk repairs, pool maintenance, and so on. Financially, with the economic downturn, we are unsure of what we might be faced with. We hope our residents are all doing as well as can be expected, and that they remain in good financial standing with the association and their mortgage companies.

5--Why is SR still a good value, especially in today's economy? Scenic Ridge remains an excellent value because the value of the townhouses has remained consistent with the twists and turns of the real estate market. The affordability of the homes here and what you get for your money (beautiful community, onsite landscaping, pool/playground rights, excellent school district, and proximity to Metro North, NYC and White Plains), can't be underestimated.

6--Any special advice for newcomers to the SR community? Yes. Welcome! Please familiarize yourself with the neighborhood and get to know your neighbors—and definitely read your homeowner's handbook to learn more about living in Scenic Ridge and the surrounding Croton community.

7--How is the new meeting house working out? The new meeting house has been well received by our residents and is working out well. Our monthly meetings, weather permitting, are held there and some residents have, indeed, rented the room for small social gatherings.

8--How is everyone responding to the new community-wide re-staining project now that it is completed? The feedback we have received from residents and even non-residents, has been extremely positive. The uniform appearance of the homes has brought a fresh, updated look to our community.

New Mayor for the Village of Croton, Spring Election '09

Last March, Croton saw the election of a new mayor, former trustee Leo Wiegman (D), and two new trustees, running mates Ian Murtaugh and Demetra Restuccia.

Mayor Wiegman, who won by 20 votes, based his party's success in this past election on public concerns about financial issues, job losses, empty storefronts, and so on. According to one news source: "The election pitted differing views of re-development plans in the south end of Croton. Republicans have been skeptical of a rezoning study, urging caution while agreeing that some kind of redevelopment scheme was in order. Democrats were calling for a more urgent approach to changing zoning laws in a bid to attract new business to the sagging retail corridor."

Next year, 2010, the two other trustee seats will be up for re-election but, currently, Democrats rule. Mayor Wiegman and trustees Murtaugh and Restuccia will hold their seats until 2011.

GIVE 'EM A BREAK

Issues and questions for the Board should be sent via the website or asked at monthly Board meetings so the appropriate Board member can address them in a timely fashion. Board members should be personally contacted only in an emergency. Please remember, all Board members are volunteers. Be respectful of their personal time and space. Thank you and have a happy and safe summer.

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Clearwater Festival 2009: **Arlo, Old Crow & Havens!**

For Baby Boomers who need to get in touch with their “hippy” roots and for those who just like to create memories and traditions with the family, the **Great Hudson River Revival** is once again scheduled for June 20-21, Saturday and Sunday, at beautiful Croton Point Park, overlooking our legendary river.

Clearwater is an event that, for many in the Croton community, kicks off the summer season. For those who are new to the area, or are unfamiliar with Clearwater, the history of the mega annual event goes like this:

Back in the mid-sixties, after centuries of accumulated sewage pollution and industrial dumping of toxic chemicals, the Hudson River, like many of America’s most important estuaries, was declared “dead”. The river’s fragile ecological system was devastated. Not a single fish was found in many areas, and the level of commercial fishing had dropped so dramatically as to be regarded as nonexistent.

Recognizing this incredible social and environmental tragedy, Pete Seeger, a popular musician and respected activist, decided “to build a boat to save the river.” Holding small, fundraising river concerts throughout the Hudson River Valley, he literally passed his banjo among the crowd, collecting contributions to build the elegant tall ship that would become a symbol of environmental advocacy, the flagship of the American Environmental Movement, the sloop *Clearwater*.

This nomadic folk festival picnic continued to travel through out the Hudson River Valley, then in 1978 the gathering set down roots at a historic river park, Croton Point, on the Hudson River and was coined The Great Hudson River Revival. Ten years later, however, due to pollution problems with the landfill at the park, the festival was forced to move from the riverfront. This move resulted in a decade of exile inland at a suburban college campus.

In 1998, however, the Clearwater board of directors pushed to move the festival on or near the Hudson River, and a year later the Clearwater Festival returned to its spiritual home, the shores of the Hudson River at Croton Point Park.

This year, the ever-popular annual event, said to be the oldest music and environmental festival in the country, is expected to draw record crowds, especially since it will be celebrating several noteworthy landmarks:

The **400th anniversary** of Henry Hudson’s voyage up what is now the Hudson River on his ship the Half Moon; the **90th birthday** of Pete Singer, American folksinger and founder of the Clearwater Festival; and the **40th anniversary** of the launching of the Sloop Clearwater.

According to Clearwater’s new director, Jon Dindas, headline entertainment this year includes **60’s troubadour Arlo Guthrie, Blues star Susan Tedeschi, and “new grass” sensation Old Crow Medicine Show.**

In addition, there will be a number of other entertainers, including **Richie Havens**, sharing the spotlight during the festive weekend, as well as storytellers, family-style entertainment, environmental education sites, a “green-living” exhibit, juried arts and crafts, and, of course, the signature event, Circle of Song, where audience participation doesn’t need any encouragement.

Tickets are now on sale and can be purchased through the festival website, www.clearwater.org.