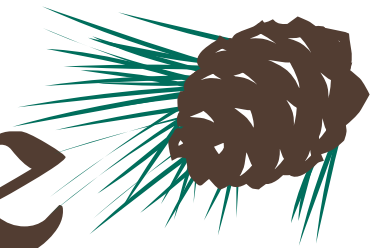


The Needle



The official publication of the Pinewood Lake Homeowners Association • Community Connected



Free movie in office parking lot

Queen of Katwe (rated PG), was rained out in June, so it will be shown on Saturday, September 30, at 8:30 p.m. in the parking lot of the PLHA office. This is a biographical film about a girl from Uganda who sees her world change rapidly after she is introduced to the game of chess.

...

The Hospitality Committee invites you to mark your calendar for upcoming Pinewood parties and events.

Pool party and BBQ, September 4, 5–7 p.m.

Come to our annual Labor Day BBQ by the pool: free hamburgers, hot dogs, and lemonade.



...

2nd annual Labor Day Doggy Swim, September 4, 7–8 p.m.

The last hour of the last day of the pool season is our Doggy Swim. Bring your pooches (proof of vaccination is required; contact office for details). Bring your kids, friends, and neighbors to watch the dogs splash with joy!



...

Save the date for:

- Community Yard Sale, Saturday, October 14: 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Rain date: Sunday October 15.
- Fall cleanup: Saturday, October 21, 9 a.m. – 12 noon

...

Thank you!

On behalf of the Board, community, and staff, thank you!

Fil and Mary Helen Martinez, who have owned a home on Central Park Circle for many years, have worked in various ways to make Pinewood Lake a great place to call home. They have worked many community cleanup days, distributed *The Needle* to Central Park Circle, served on the Marketing Committee, and helped start up and lead the Cinema Committee. Pinewood Lake will miss Fil and Mary Helen as they move out of Pinewood Lake.

Thanks also to **Brian Palazzolo**, who is resigning from the Maintenance Committee. He has provided extensive service to the committee and community. We're glad we will still have him on the Cinema Committee.

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School is back in session EARLY!
Fairfax County Public Schools
start on August 28.



The Needle

is published by the

Pinewood Lake Homeowners Association

www.pinewoodlake.net

8159 Fernlake Court
Alexandria, Virginia 22309-1209
Phone: 703-360-6212 • Fax: 703-360-6771
Email: manager@pinewoodlake.net

Office Hours

Monday – Friday: 12 noon – 3 p.m. • Saturday: 9 a.m. – 12 noon

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Assistant Community Manager: Karen Mestemaker
Administrative Assistant: Vikki Silver

Architectural Control Committee (ACC) Administrator: Leigh Anderson
703-203-4506 • ACC@pinewoodlake.net

Community Support Liaison (CSL): Karen Mestemaker
571-213-5500 • CSL@pinewoodlake.net

Maintenance Committee Administrator (MCA): Karen Mestemaker
571-213-5500 • MCA@pinewoodlake.net

The Needle staff

Editor Heather Harris Roemer
Contributing Editor Gina Toro-Lugo
Copy Editor Doug Roemer
Photographers Donna M. Wright, Gina Toro-Lugo
Board Liaison Richard Hall

Pinewood Lake publications staff

Webmaster Kirsten Davis
ListServ Manager Scott Lusebrink
Advertising Manager Lois Passman

For commercial ads, contact Lois Passman at 703-781-7626.

The Needle is the official publication of the Pinewood Lake Homeowners Association (PLHA). Advertising in *The Needle* does not imply approval or sanction of products or services by PLHA. Noncommercial classified ads for goods are free to residents. Contact Kirsten Davis at the PLHA office.

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Email contributions to:
publications@pinewoodlake.net



PLHA Calendar

Meetings are held at the PLHA office at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise stated.

- August 28 first day of school, Fairfax County Public Schools
- Sept. 4 Labor Day holiday (trash collection not affected)
- Sept. 4 Labor Day cookout 5 – 7 p.m., and Doggy Swim, 7 – 8 p.m.
- Sept. 5 Architectural Control Committee
- Sept. 6 Hospitality Committee
- Sept. 14 PLHA Board
- Sept. 18 .. 50th Anniversary Committee, 7 p.m.
- Sept. 20 Pool Committee, 7 p.m.
- Sept. 21 *The Needle* October deadline
- Sept. 26 Maintenance Committee
- Sept. 28 Marketing Committee
- October 14 Community Yard Sale, 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Rain date: October 15
- October 21 Fall cleanup: 9 a.m. – 12 noon

PINEWOOD LAKE NEEDS YOU

to help celebrate our **50th anniversary**.



We're looking for:

- Old family photos, showing Pinewood homes or the PLHA pool/lake.
- Copies of *The Needle* from before 2009.
- Stories about your time in Pinewood.
- Suggestions/donations for a big 50th anniversary celebration next year.

Send your contributions to the PLHA office or publications@pinewoodlake.net.

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Community letters

Greetings Pinewood Residents!

By Gina Toro-Lugo

Are you aware that we live in a self-governing community? Do you know what that means?

A self-governing community depends on the volunteer work of its members. The volunteers do not get paid; no matter how hard he or she works, or how much time he or she spends while assisting running the community. He or she must however be aware that they will be the target of protests and criticism from disgruntled and dissatisfied community members, and must learn to act civilly when that happens, something that few are able to do.

Nevertheless, our volunteers continue to serve and maintain the family atmosphere that attracts buyers in search of a nice place to raise a family. There are advantages for a community to be run by its own residents. Like the fact that there is a stronger interest in the proper maintenance of the community amenities that help maintain or raise property values. Another and even better advantage is that the monthly fees stay low in comparison to communities run by management companies. The Board of Directors and the members of our various committees are committed to do just that.

But a gentle reminder to those of you afraid of commitment; you do not have to commit to any committee to help. From assisting during the community cleanups twice a year, to making popcorn on cinema nights during the summer, or writing monthly articles for *The Needle*, every little bit helps. One way or another, your contributions bring value to our community.

All the way!

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Commercial vehicle parking

Parking on Lakepark Drive, Central Park Drive, and Lawrence Street is governed by state and Fairfax County rules. A few years ago, Fairfax County passed a law limiting which commercial vehicles can park on these streets.

Section 82-5-7 of the Fairfax County Code prohibits parking of commercial vehicles in residential districts. Vehicles parked in violation are subject to a \$100 fine for each violation and may be towed at the owner's expense. Commercial vehicles are defined as:

- Any vehicle licensed as a common or contract carrier or limousine (with below exception for taxicabs and limousines).
- Vehicles that exceed size and weight limits: more than 21 feet long, more than 8 feet high, more than 102 inches wide, or a gross vehicle weight of 12,000 or more pounds.
- Vehicle carrying commercial freight in plain view.
- Trailer or semitrailer except camper, boat, or single-axle utility trailer (utility trailer defined as a small non-motorized trailer generally pulled by a motorized vehicle and featuring an open-top rear cargo area).
- Any vehicle with three or more axles.
- Parking restrictions on service drives: Where a service road is adjacent to a residentially zoned area, parking restrictions apply to the side of the service road that is adjacent to the residential area, except as otherwise provided in section 82-5-37(5). This allows prohibiting commercial parking on that side of the street, which is zoned for a use other than residential to further the residential character of the abutting community.

The restrictions do not apply to commercial vehicles when temporarily parked while performing work or service.

Exception for taxicabs and limousines: One resident of each single-family dwelling unit may park one vehicle licensed and registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia as a taxicab or limousine.

Exemptions from size and weight limits: Commercial vehicles used by a public service company, watercraft or motor home, school buses, vehicles driven by or used for transporting persons with disabilities, vehicles for cable television service, moving vehicles for 48 hours, and vehicles for propane gas service. These "exempted" vehicles can park in a residential area unless restricted elsewhere in the Code (e.g., boats and motor homes are not allowed to park in areas that are Community Parking Districts).

Additional provisions are given in the Code. For more details, visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/parking/parkingcode.htm>.

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Response to letter to the editor

from the Finance Committee Chair

This is a response to the Letter to the Editor from homeowner Warren Wesley published in the August 2017 *Needle*. Mr. Wesley raised some concerns that need to be addressed.

1. It is true that the operating surplus for 2016 was not as large as I stated in my February article. I wrote that article based on preliminary figures. Those figures did not take into account homeowner prepayment of 2017 assessments or bills paid for 2016 that had not been posted at the time.
2. Mr. Wesley is concerned that the Association runs operating surpluses but reserve account deficits. First, any operating surplus is transferred to the reserve accounts at year end. Second, there is no such thing as a reserve account deficit. The Association established reserve accounts more than 20 years ago in order to accumulate sufficient funds to meet catastrophic failures to the common areas and to rebuild sections of the common area that had reached the end of their useful life. By its very nature, the Association will expend more reserve funds than it takes in some years, and other years it will expend less. That is planned for and expected according to the reserve study.
3. In spite of the so-called deficits Mr. Wesley refers to, the actual balance of the reserve accounts fell only \$162,928 between December 31, 2012 and December 31, 2016, or 1.8% per year.
4. Mr. Wesley is concerned with the cost figures in the reserve study. By its very nature, a reserve study only deals in estimates. It is only intended to be a financial planning document, not a project-scoping document. Its purpose is to project where an association's reserve funds will be at certain points in the future should there be no catastrophic failures and normal rebuilds of or additions to each segment of the common area. The projects it lists assume a total rebuild of a playground or road when it reaches the estimated end of its useful life, construction costs rising no more nor less than inflation, and no additional and no lesser work is required. That almost never happens, because things last a longer or shorter time than expected; sometimes only patching is required, and sometimes you need to dig deeper because of subsoil failure.
5. Mr. Wesley is concerned that 2018 projects might deplete the reserve fund. First, \$802,480 is to reconstruct the community center. Given the County-forced delays and outright intransigence on the shed rebuild, I doubt

that the community center will be built even within five years (if not longer). Second, the shed costs are already included in the 2017 budget. Third, the Board is not going to spend \$500,000 to rebuild Birchlake Court. Both Saint Anne's Court and Birchlake Court have serious subsurface and drainage issues, and the Board will test the durability of various solutions before committing to any major expenditure.

6. Nonetheless, Mr. Wesley is right to be concerned about the state of the reserve accounts, as should we all be. These funds restore and refresh the common areas of Pinewood Lake and keep the community competitive with newer associations. The Board must continue to be prudent with expenditures, find ways to increase its contributions to the reserve accounts, and not listen to those who think the accounts are too flush. As it stands now, even the reserve study predicts that without a special assessment by the early to mid-2030s, the reserve accounts will run out of funds.

Mike Shigley, Chair, Finance Committee

...

**Did you
know our
Board is
ALL
volunteer?**



Now is a great time to get involved!

**We're seeking candidates for the
PLHA Board of Directors election.**

**There will be four positions open, and
elections are held at our December
annual meeting.**

Email manager@pinewoodlake.net, or call the office at 703-360-6212 for details if you are interested in running.

Regular pool hours extended!

Pool hours will remain 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. through Monday, September 4.

Board happenings

At its August 10, 2017 meeting, the Board:

Heard a summary of the successful National Night Out on August 1.

Heard a reminder about the Labor Day BBQ on Sept. 4 at the pool. Hospitality is working on plans for the upcoming meeting and growing the committee.

Heard about the pool company's staffing problem for the swim team's private pool party and how they will address it.

Discussed the Treasurer's Report and separating prior-year and current-year obligated funds in the report.

Heard that the next meeting of the PLHA 50th Anniversary committee will be at 7 p.m. on September 18 in the PLHA office. The committee anticipates budgeting \$5,000–\$6,000 for the event.

Appointed Gina Toro Lugo and Carlos Hodges as Hospitality Co-Chairs.

Approved the Second Annual Doggy Swim on Labor Day from 7 to 8 p.m. at the pool.

Approved up to \$21,000 for National Paving and Repair to install a drain on either side of Saint Annes Court to handle underground water.

Approved up to \$23,000 for National Paving and Repair to complete more in-depth patching of the eight identified areas on Saint Annes Court.

Approved up to \$35,000 for RCR Services to perform emergency tree work, focusing on priority areas near vehicles, playgrounds, and walking paths. Trees will be removed where necessary and dead wood removed from standing trees where appropriate.

Approved up to \$35,000 for RCR Services to replace the rip rap between pilot project 2 and the outfall on Oaklake Court.

Approved up to \$7,500 for All Recreation of Virginia to supply and install three new park benches and to supply and deliver three new ADA complaint picnic tables to replace wooden picnic tables in the parks.

Approved up to \$10,000 for National Paving and Repair to widen to five feet the lake path between the ramp at the end of Pinelake Court and the entrance to Oaklake Court.

Approved up to \$12,000 for National Paving and Repair to install five 20'x20' asphalt pads in the squares for the picnic tables to sit on. One will be installed on Squiredale Square, Arendale Square, Scarborough Square, and one on each end of Central Park Circle.

Voted to continue the practice of sending all received prior year funds to the reserve account.

Accepted the resignation of Brian Palazzolo from the Maintenance Committee and thanked him for his extensive service to the committee and community.

Approved a revised roster for the Maintenance Committee without Brian Palazzolo as a member.

Heard a report on the status of the compound shed project. The Board directed the Community Manager to set up a conference call with the attorney and get an estimate on additional geotechnical work, directed Rich Hall to get an estimate on needed work from an arborist, and approved up to \$10,000 in additional funds for assistance from the land use attorney.

Heard that the gazebo on Central Park Circle will be removed next week for \$1,200.

Heard that there are four seats open on the Board for next year. Interested candidates for the Board should contact the PLHA office.

Authorized additional hours for maintenance work.

If you have any questions about Board Happenings, please feel free to contact Kirsten Davis at 703-360-6213 or manager@pinewoodlake.net.

...



Treasurer report

Period ending July 31, 2017, prepared by Jim Fetzner

Below is a chart outlining the total cash balance in the PLHA accounts as of July 31, 2017. The total cash balances for the prior month and for July 2016 are included for comparison.

TOTAL BALANCE	July 31, 2017	June 30, 2017	July 2016
Operations	\$120,987.83	\$134,636.51	\$131,246.97
Reserve	\$2,124,045.78	\$2,112,376.27	\$2,243,714.19
Total	\$2,245,033.61	\$2,247,012.78	\$2,374,961.19
DELINQUENT	July 31, 2017	June 30, 2017	July 2016
Total balance	*\$57,291.58	\$57,686.87	\$61,138.50
90 days or more	\$35,133.08	\$37,228.96	\$31,997.11

*15 accounts over \$1,000, of which 8 are over \$1,500.

Delinquent Accounts

The total balance in the delinquent accounts on June 30, 2017 was \$57,686.87. The chart above shows the current balance compared to the prior month and one year ago.

...

Preparing to sell your home

by Dany Abebe



In the past several months, the most frequently asked question by Pinewood Lake homeowners has been about how to make the necessary preparations to sell a home.

Making preparations to sell your home can be a long process, particularly when there's a lot of work to be done. Updated fixtures, landscaping, painting, and remodeling can all increase property value, especially for townhouses in Pinewood Lake.

However, it can be hard to know where to start. It's best to put your money where it matters most.

The essentials: No one will care about a kitchen remodel or an extra bathroom if there's a leak in the roof or puddles of water in the basement. Tackle these problems first, and think about improvements afterward. Be sure to check every area, from the foundation to the gutter system.

Bathrooms: This is one of the most important rooms in the house. Is the bathroom roomy enough? Is the toilet reliable? Does the room have reliable hot water? What about showerheads? All of these are great questions to ask yourself, and fixes are bound to pay off.

The kitchen: Another make-or-break location. A newly remodeled kitchen can fetch a ton of profit, so don't be afraid to dump some funds into new tile, an island, and a new counter-cabinet set. The more room the better, and remember to check the appliances. Newer is almost always preferable, especially among younger buyers.

Landscaping: Curb appeal is a powerful motivator. If the house looks shabby from the street, the buyer isn't going to be too excited about what's inside. Replace shingles, add plants and shrubs, and even try power-washing or repainting the exterior for good measure. A good first impression can land you a motivated buyer.

Extra stuff: A few added perks can tempt a buyer, especially when they're bound to save the buyer money. A new, more efficient HVAC or water heater, better lighting, and new windows can pull a lot of weight during your sell.

With a bit of elbow-grease and some effort, any home can be sellable. But with more investment and some planning, a house can be an easy sell. Remember that when you invest in the right places, you can make your home more appealing and make a profit off of your improvements.

...

Dany Abebe is a licensed Realtor in Virginia and a homeowner in Pinewood Lake since 2003. Call or email for any guidance you may need. cell: 703-989-0893 • email: danyabebe@gmail.com

Real estate update July 22 - August 16

by Maggie Srivastav



Once again, in this three-week period, only lower-priced homes sold.

Pending

- 4409 Scarborough Square, \$339,900
- 7907 Central Park Circle, \$324,999
- 4318 Birchlake Court, \$344,500
- 8073 Saint Annes Court, \$334,900

On the Market

- 4501 Squiredale Square, \$400,000
- 4311 Amblewood Road, \$361,900
- 4331 Cedarlake Court, \$355,000
- 4335 Gramercy Circle, \$354,900

...

You got an interview: Now what?

By Gary E. Woodlin



You received the phone call or email you have been waiting for. Your resume and application made it through the sifting and discarding of 100+ resumes received for the position. Your contact asks if you are available to come in for an interview. One of two things will occur; they will give you a designated time, or they'll provide you with a list of timeslots available. Resist the temptation of grabbing the first slot available without checking against possible scheduling conflicts. If you were just going to play a round of golf at that time, no biggie. However, if you are supposed to be taking your five-year old to their first day of school, the interview will have to wait. The employer will appreciate your honesty and dedication to what is important.

Preparation for interviews should not be taken lightly. Learn all there is about the organization, the position, and the industry. Gather the information you'll need to respond to questions they may pose. Ask a friend or your spouse to read questions to you, in order to help you formulate your responses. Often times, we take literally what they are asking and miss an opportunity to showcase our talents, or demonstrate why we are a great fit for the job.

There are a number of resources online that can help you prepare for an interview. You can visit www.monster.com/career-advice/article/top-10-interview-questions-prep, which can help you respond to the most common interview questions.

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