

KNOLLS NEWS

December 2023

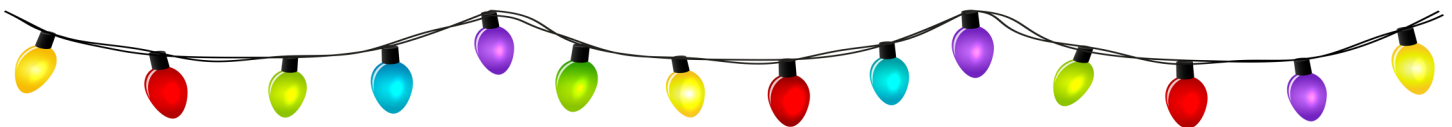


**Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas,
Happy Chanukkah,
Happy Kwanzaa, Joyeux Noel
Felice Navidad**

**From our house to yours, may this season
be one of happiness and joy,
good health and prosperity.**

Members of the Board and our Building Staff

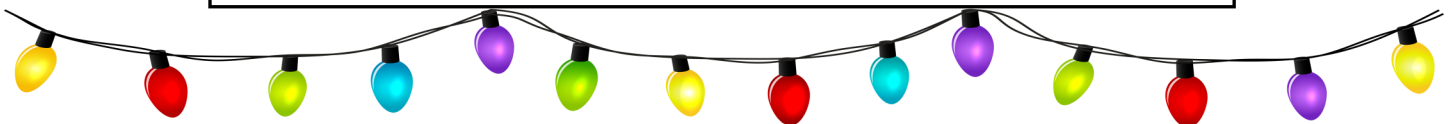
**Rick Trevino, Shoukoufa Aboubakri, Luis Andres,
Marcus Haeseler, Gabriel Mendonca,
Alex Castillo, Brian Block, Wendy Shelley
Larz Pearson, Minter Cooper,
Charles Wilson, Michael Sullivan, Naail Iqbal**



Come on down and have some fun !

On Saturday, December 2nd, 9am, the DECORATING ELVES will transform our Lobby and surrounding areas with the many holiday decorations we've collected over the years — as well as a bunch of new ones! It really IS 'transformational' and we want YOU to be one of the Elves!

It's lots of fun and another easy way to 'volunteer' to make our home even more beautiful at this time of year! Join us!





President's Message

Another year is nearly behind us and there are a lot of accomplishments which we can be proud of this year, including:

Financial Maximized returns on \$1.2 million Reserve Investment portfolio by taking advantage of current return rates on investments; Updated and reissued the Collection Policy which outlines the process for collecting delinquent accounts; Reduced delinquencies by nearly 50% through more aggressive and timely resolution of outstanding balances; Commissioned a new Reserve Study to help us plan our Reserve spending over the next few years

Structural and Building-related Initiated the Hallway Project and approved a final design. Construction is expected to begin in January; Completed several follow-up studies of issues identified in 2022 Structural Assessment and a contractor was selected for the repairs identified in the studies; Installed new lighting for the tennis court

Other Successfully delivered five Master Deed and By-Laws Amendments for co-owner ratification and reached majority quorum for ratification; Fully re-opened our fitness facilities after having a reservation-only process established during the COVID years.

There are still challenges to address, but we've made a lot of progress this year. We have much more to accomplish in 2024, and I look forward to the improvements we will see.

Happy Holidays to All!

Rick Treviño

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Reported Financials

The Association is fully funded. Delinquent residential accounts totaled \$65,261.

| | <i>October</i> | <i>November</i> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Total Cash and Investments</i> | \$1,731,548 | \$1,816,336 |
| <i>Year-to-Date (YTD) Income</i> | 1,828,727 | 1,994,328 |
| <i>YTD Expenses</i> | 1,653,642 | 1,857,352 |
| <i>YTD Net Income</i> | 175,085 | 116,976 |
| <i>YTD Reserve Contributions</i> | 404,650 | 424,883 |
| <i>YTD Reserve Expenditures</i> | (605,641) | (230,131) |
| <i>Total Reserves</i> | \$1,017,963 | \$996,258 |

BOARD ACTIONS

ACCEPTED proposal of HPMA to repair the Internet connection on the roof as essential to Densel's ability to monitor our systems remotely (as well as a service we rely on), for \$3,210.00.

ACCEPTED, at the Special Board Meeting on November 14th, the proposal of CRG for concrete work in the north and south stairwells for a total of \$256,726.00. This work will commence shortly, coordinating with and coincidental with the Valve Replacement and Hallways projects during these next several months.

ACCEPTED, as written and discussed, the updated Policies relating to Assistance Animals for Disabled Residents, as well as a Reasonable Accommodations Policy. Those documents will be available to us in our Building Link Library.



There's no business like snow business ...

It's the time of year when we have to keep our eyes on the weather forecast and be ready for the eventuality of snow. Life on the Knoll can mean pretty slippery-going, so always exercise caution when you venture out during or after a "winter event." The Office has a set of procedures to refer to in the lead-up to snow and ice, including pre-treating sidewalks and steps and outreach to the owners of particular parking spots that are identified for snow storage or that are likely to be blocked in by the plows. Additionally, the four visitor spaces in the "F" cul-de-sac may be cordoned off to keep the driveway clear. **If you park in B-1, B-41, D-1, D-16, F-11, H-1, H-31 or K-1, be sure to stop in the Office the day before moderate snow (more than 2 inches) for arrangements for an alternate parking spot.**

Parking spaces are **privately owned property**. Do not shovel snow from your space onto someone else's spot. You are ungenerously gifting them the task of shoveling twice as much snow. We're all in the same boat; let's get through winter storms together!



Shopping for a Certificate of Deposit?

Consider these tips for choosing wisely, including ways to avoid scams

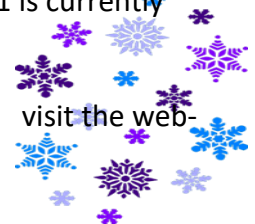
A bank certificate of deposit (CD) typically offers a higher rate of interest than a regular savings account, in exchange for you keeping the money for a specified term on deposit, usually from three months to five years or more. Whether you are considering buying a simple, fixed-rate CD or one with more complex features, here are tips for selecting the right CD for your financial needs and goals.

[Read the News](#)

Smart 911

The [free Smart911 service](#) allows individuals and businesses to create online safety profiles with home, workplace and mobile phone numbers, along with additional information that would be valuable to dispatchers and first responders during an emergency. Smart profiles are kept confidential and secure, and are available only to trained dispatchers in participating 911 centers across the country. This allows mobile phone users to provide their profile information when they travel, and makes it easy to update profiles with new landline numbers after a move. Smart911 is currently available in more than 1,500 communities in the U.S., across 40 states.

For more information, call 311 or 703.746.4311 or site at [Smart911 | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#).



In an emergency, what should I keep in my car during Winter? ...

A **shovel** to clear snow from tailpipes and tires; **scrapers** to remove ice and a **brush** to clear it away; **gloves and handwarmers**; a **hat** to keep your ears covered; a **blanket** inside the car; **flares** or **reflective triangles** in case you break down; a **bag of sand or kitty litter** to spread around tires in icy patches; a spray can of **de-icer** for door handles, locks, windows, headlights, and windshield wipers. **Jumper cables** can be life-savers; too many of us don't have them! **Flash-light and batteries** for nighttime emergencies; **water and snacks** would be good, too. And of course your **cell phone and recharger cord**! The best idea: **NEVER, EVER HAVE LESS THAN A HALF-TANK OF GAS!** Another possibly good tip is to **carry a (smaller) can of de-icer for the driver's door keyhole** (in case your remote opener doesn't work!).



**Those pesky condo fees, or,
How our Association spends OUR money!** (with credits to Terri Hansen)

Each month at bill-paying time we take out our checkbooks and pay a multitude of bills: mortgage; car payment; credit cards, etc. One of the least understood (and possibly the least favored) that we pay is the monthly assessment – “condo fees.”

Every year the Board approves a Budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The Budget lists all the anticipated expenditure categories for our Association, including the master insurance policy; utilities; common area maintenance costs; administration (Staff, CMC, postage & copier). A good portion is set aside every month to go into Reserves. Our reserve fund pays for the repair and/or replacement of the capital assets owned by the Association – remember now the extensive and costly renovations to our garages this year! An adequately funded Reserves reduces the chance that a special assessment would have to be passed to pay for repair or replacement of those assets.

Each month in **Knolls News** we list income, expenses, total investments, and information about delinquencies that affect overall financial health. When you write out that monthly check, remember it covers *many* items necessary to ensure our Association maintains reserves and enhances our property values.



.... And more about why Reserves are necessary ...



Equipment and major components (like the roof and the garages) must be replaced from time to time, regardless of whether we planned for the expense. Your Board prefers to plan and set the funds aside on a current and continuing basis. Reserve funds aren't an *extra* expense; they just spread out expenses more evenly.



Reserve funds provide for major repairs and replacements that we know will be necessary at some point in time. Although a roof may be replaced when it's 25 years old, every owner who lives under it should share its replacement costs. Having been through recaulking the balconies, replacing the roof, and the inconvenience of the repaving effort, etc., it's a relief to have had the funds to do these restorations and not have to resort to a massive special assessment for these items (and more). And keep in mind – by the way! – that *planned Reserves* paid for the fabulous renovations of the first floor, *and* those restrooms, as well as partial renovation of the Community Room. More recently, as you'll recall, we went through what seemed to be *forever* to repair our three parking structures. More anticipated expenses will come in the next year-plus for the Hallway Project, plus additional stairwell concrete repairs, and so many other items we've identified in our :Board Actions: each month. There's always *something* requiring our close attention to maintain our home.

Why Reserves are necessary *(continued)*

Reserve funds enhance resale values. Lenders and real estate agents are aware of the ramifications for new buyers if the reserves are inadequate. Most states require associations to disclose the amounts in their reserve funds to prospective buyers (in the “condo documents”).

Reserve funds meet legal, fiduciary, and professional requirements. A replacement fund may be required by: (1) any secondary mortgage market in which the association participates (e.g., Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, FHA, VA), (2) state statutes, regulations, or court decisions, (3) the community’s governing documents (Master Deed & By-Laws)

The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) requires the community or association to disclose its reserve funds in its financial documents (e.g., Annual Report).

We encourage your participation at Board meetings!

Our Community has always encouraged Volunteering by any and all of our Residents. One of the easiest ways is to come to a Board meeting --- still on Zoom which makes it *really easy!* --- and participate by asking questions and by bringing up comments and concerns during the Open Forum for Residents. *(And remember to let Gabriel know that you’d like to speak so your mic can be opened during the Open Forum.)*

Click into the link that will be sent out from the Office (**next one is Tuesday, December 19th at 7pm**), and take part in our very own democratic process of running the building!

And it wouldn’t be remiss to remind you about the monthly (3rd Tuesdays) **in-person** meeting of the Budget & Finance Committee. Finance Officer Larz Pearson leads us through all the numbers of the Association financials, the Morgan Stanley investments, what’s happening with the year-to-date Budget, how our money will be invested for maximum return. All of this has a great impact on all of us — leading to next year’s Budget (and resultant condo fees!) — so it’s good to pay attention!

There will be no meeting of the B&F Committee in December.

It takes a lot more than just the seven directors. Your expertise is welcomed. Please join us!



If you have a holiday tree to discard ...

TrashAway will pick up trees on a schedule usually the second two Thursdays in January. At this point we have no firm dates, but the Office will send out a notice as soon as they know.

Helpful-to-know

Take your tree (hopefully wrapped in the tree bag!) to the Trash Room either the night before or by 7am on whichever day. There is no charge for these pickups. *If you discard your tree at any other time, you’ll be charged for such pickup.* (And we hope you’ve used a bag, to collect all the needles!)

HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

Everyone wants to have a safe and happy holiday season, but a simple mistake can ruin your holiday. Here are some hints for a safe and enjoyable season:



- Be sure your holiday lights are turned off when you aren't at home and before you go to sleep. Keeps a possible fire from happening AND can lower our electric bill!
- Be sure to get a **tree disposal bag** from the Office if you have a live tree. Slipping it over the trunk before attaching it to the stand means you just pull the bag up to have it all enclosed, eliminating needles all over your floor/carpet, the hallway, the elevator and the lobby! The Office will let you know when you should have your tree at the trash room for special pick up.
- Remember that in our heated units, moisture evaporates quickly so your tree needs plenty of water to keep it fresh; check it daily.
- When you're out shopping, keep your car locked and gifts/valuables out of sight. Shopping bags in the back seat are an invitation to mischief!
- Keep your pets in mind when leaving goodies out for Santa. Some stuff, especially chocolate and poinsettias, are dangerous for them.
- In addition, pets can choke on small ornamental tinsel, bows, and other glittery things as well as light cords.

And this is a good time to remind you FOR your housekeepers: They should take ALL trash from the holidays down to the trash room outside the canopy. All boxes are to be flattened. Smooth out all the paper and fold or roll into a nice bundle. Tape the bundles and the boxes so they're easier to carry and discard properly in the trash room! Remember that the bottom of the trash chute is a compactor so it's going to put the chute out of commission to throw cans and bottles and wooden or wire hangers and cardboard boxes down there – which means each of us pays in increased condo fees for those repairs.



THINKING MORE ABOUT THAT DREADED WORD —- SNOW

As dreaded as it is, the weather is turning colder and we are likely to have a snow storm in the coming months (or maybe just *weeks!*). We are fortunate to have terrific staff to dig us out, as well as some generous AKW residents who come to the assistance of their neighbors.



A note to some of our new (and long-term) residents: ***Empty parking spaces are privately owned property.*** Do not shovel snow from your space onto someone else's. You are ungenerously gifting them the task of shoveling twice as much. We know it's difficult to find space for all of it. Keep in mind we are all in the same boat! It's aggravating and an inconvenience, but please don't "pile on" to your neighbor's parking spot!!

For You or Someone You Know



DOT Paratransit Program

DOT Para-Transit provides safe, reliable, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant, curb-to-curb taxi service, seven days a week for residents of Alexandria who find it difficult, or are unable, to use public transportation. DOT does not charge for one-way trips within the City of Alexandria. For trips up to five miles outside the City limits, the one-way fare is \$4.00 (for instance, to the Kingstowne shopping center). DOT's one-way fare for trips over five miles outside the City of Alexandria is \$6.00 (for instance, into DC). If you have any questions regarding this program, call (703) 836-5222 or click on [Transportation - Senior Services of Alexandria](#)



Medicare Open Enrollment now through 12/7

During Medicare Open Enrollment, you can:

- Sign up for or change your prescription drug plan — also known as Medicare Part D
- Join a Medicare Advantage Plan with drug benefits
- Change from your current Medicare Advantage Plan to another Medicare Advantage Plan (Plan C)

All changes will be effective January 1. For more information click on [Medicare Open Enrollment | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#).

Good news from AARP this month – “Helping Caregivers”

Taking care of a loved one takes its toll – emotionally, physically and financially. An earlier AARP national report found that nearly 8 in 10 caregivers reported having routine out-of-pocket expenses annually of \$7,242 on caregiving related activities.

Nearly half have experienced at least one financial setback, and 53% report having to adjust things at work, such as taking unpaid time off. AARP Virginia wants residents to know there is help available to the more than one million caregivers in the state.

Visit aarp.org/va under Upcoming Events to find in-person and virtual sessions. Find more resources at states.aarp.org/virginia/caregiver-resources. AARP caregiver hotline is **877-333-5885** (English) and **888-971-2013** (Spanish).

The Share the Love Campaign

Beyer Subaru of Alexandria has again designated Senior Services of Alexandria as a “hometown charity” and will donate \$300 for every new vehicle sold or leased from Nov 16 to Jan 2nd to the customers’ featured charity of choice including the local charity—Senior Services of Alexandria.

In connection with the *Share the Love* Campaign, SSA is holding a glove/mitten drive for its Meals on Wheels clients through December 15th. You can drop off donations at SSA’s Office at 206 N. Washington St., Suite 301 in Old Town or at Beyer Subaru located at 7416 Richmond Highway in Alexandria.

Just another way we can support this agency!



With wishes to All for a Happy Holiday and New Year!

Thanks to Staff: AKW Residents should know that employees are not allowed to accept or solicit tips or cash-equivalent acknowledgements for performing their work, including work performed as part of the Resident Services Program and its In-Unit Service components. AKW Staff receive salaries and the Board authorizes an end-of-year bonus. But holidays are an excellent time for Residents who are so inclined to recognize the individual or all-staff efforts on behalf of the Community over the year.

If you wish to offer cash, a gift card or other acknowledgment, feel free to do so. You may either deliver individually or drop an addressed envelope in the Association Mailbox. To give to a communal fund, give directly to Gabriel for safekeeping for equal distribution. These “thank you” sentiments will be given in time for the Christmas holidays, and a timely decision (by the 14th) will facilitate the process. Photos of our Staff, by the way, are posted on the lobby bulletin board. We hope this goes without saying: *any gift is purely voluntary*; you are not required, obligated or expected to participate. *But if you DO, we say ‘thank you’ for sharing your bounty!*



Important Dates in December

There will no Budget & Finance Committee meeting this month.

Board Meeting *

Tuesday, December 19th, 7 pm (virtual)

*Board Books are available on the Friday before a Board Meeting. The links to ZOOM are sent by the Office prior to the meetings and are an event displayed on the lobby Video screen.

2024 Board Meeting Dates

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| January 23 | February 27 |
| March 26 | April 23 |
| May 28 | June 25 |
| July 23 | August 27 |
| September 24 | October 22 |
| November 26 | December 17 |

Important Phone Numbers

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Guard Mobile | 703-618-3235 |
| AKW Office Phone | 703-751-7541 |
| AKW Office email | office@akwcondo.com |
| AKW Fax | 703-751-2136 |
| A-1 Towing | 703-971-2600 |
| CMC Emergency | 301-446-2635 |
| Police Non-Emergency | 703-746-4444 |
| Police Emergency | 911 |
| City of Alexandria Info | 311 or 703-746-4311 |



When someone calls you from the Security Door downstairs and you need to buzz them in, **press 9** on your phone.

Board of Directors

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rick Treviño, President/Treasurer | rick@akwcondo.com |
| Michael Sullivan, Vice President | michael@akwcondo.com |
| Brian Block, Secretary | brian@akwcondo.com |
| Marcus Haeseler | marcus@akwcondo.com |
| Shoukoufa Aboubakri | shoukoufa@akwcondo.com |
| Wendy Shelley | wendy@akwcondo.com |
| Charles Wilson | charles@akwcondo.com |



Notary services available, at no charge, by appointment.
brian@akwcondo.com and charles@akwcondo.com

