



## Meet Leo Berger



### Our "Man with the Institutional Memory"

We Fellowship Square members call Leo Berger our "man with the institutional memory." Actively involved in Fellowship Square's management during the formative years, Leo remembers details of our early history that lend perspective to our current work and help shape our future plans. In a recent conversation with Leo, we asked him to describe what Fellowship Square was like when he served as board secretary in the late 1970s, and from 1980 to 1990 as Fellowship Square's first salaried executive director.

"Back then," said Leo, "things operated according to our founder Dr. John A. Scherzer's original concept: volunteers did everything! Dr. Scherzer's daughter Clara ran the office. Ads were placed in Lutheran publications asking people to sign up for a year of voluntary service, and many people did. Ralph Keister prepared all the financial reports. Pr. and Mrs. Victor Quello volunteered for two years to process applications for Lake Anne, the first Fellowship House. Two residents of that House kept the rental rolls, and other volunteers did the maintenance

*Continued on page 2*

## House News

### Summer Renovations at Lake Ridge

This late summer and early fall season has been busy at Lake Ridge with some renovations and upgrades. All the units on the 6th floor are enjoying the renovated kitchens with new stoves, range hoods, cabinets, and countertops. This floor completes all the kitchens in the building except for the handicapped units which are being planned for next summer. Also, the carpets on each floor's common areas are being replaced. The old carpeting was looking a little worse for the wear after



*Lake Ridge's common area carpets are being replaced and new floor expansion joints inserted.*

many years of repeated spills, stains, and cleanings. Also new floor expansion joints were put in along with the carpeting. Even the offices were included with new carpeting and an upgraded copier. ■

### Largo Landing Fellowship House



*New paint refreshes Largo Landing's hallways.*



*Largo Landing residents enjoy a Bowie Baysox (Baltimore Orioles' AA affiliate) game.*



### Lake Anne Fellowship House



*A Lake Anne resident prepares for winter at the annual flu shot clinic.*

### Hunters Woods Fellowship House



*Some of Hunters Woods' Chinese residents gather for Bible study.*





## Fellowship Square

50 Years of Housing and Hope

703-471-5370  
www.fellowshipsquare.org

### STAFF:

Kelly Amorin  
Director of Operations  
fsfhouse@aol.com

Sanda Voicescu  
Accounts Payable Manager  
svoicescu@fellowshipsquare.org

James Johnston  
Accounting Assistant  
jjohnston@fellowshipsquare.org

Rev. David G. Berg  
Chaplain

Louneta Beckles, Administrator  
Lake Anne Fellowship House  
703.471.6474  
lafh@unidial.com

Mihaela Burdubus, Administrator  
Hunters Woods Fellowship House  
703.620.4450  
mb@fellowshipsquare.org

Susan Bickell, Administrator  
Lake Ridge Fellowship House  
703.494.5337  
Susan.Bickell@lakeridgefellowship-house.org

David Digby, Administrator  
Largo Landing Fellowship House  
301.249.2100  
llfh1@comcast.net

### OFFICERS:

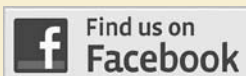
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**Editor:** Judith Koucky

**Contributors:** Louneta Beckles, Alice Benson, Susan Bickell, Mihaela Burdubus, Rev. Faye Codding, David Digby, C. David Hartmann, Charles R. Wortman

**Design:** D Banzon Design



## Meet Leo Berger, *Continued from page 1*

work. Later in the 1970s, Pennsylvania retirees the Hutchinsons moved to Reston, VA for a year, where Gene kept records on the construction of Hunters Woods Fellowship House and Gladys processed the applications for residence.” With Fellowship Square’s growth came the need for a salaried professional staff to handle increasingly complex management duties. After restructuring Fellowship Square to allow for a central and field staff of professionals, the board hired Leo in 1980 as its executive director. Leo remembered leading “an effort to build up the budget to a level where it could sustain paying staff at the market rate. It was a gradual process to move away from using only volunteers.” Because voluntarism had always been a basic principle of Fellowship Square, however, the professional staff continued to encourage volunteers. The result, Leo pointed out, is that Fellowship Square has become a model professional and volunteer partnership for other local nonprofit social service organizations.

Turning to the origins of the individual Fellowship Houses, Leo described the Lake Anne project as Fellowship Square’s first experience with national and state government housing agencies. Difficulties arose when Fellowship Square’s leaders asked U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) officials to finance a 240-unit structure for elderly individuals of limited income. “HUD wouldn’t approve that many apartments,” Leo recalled. “They said they’d give us 140, and if we filled up the building, they’d give us another 100. Well, we filled the House in a hurry and then applied for another 100 units.” By then, though, HUD had changed its funding procedures. HUD eventually financed the additional 100 units through the Virginia Housing Development Authority, but the two agencies had to use a different subsidy program for those units. “The two parts of Lake Anne have been a nightmare to manage,” Leo explained, “as each part is considered a separate project with its own regulations.” He credited the Central Office and Lake Anne staff members with providing equitable resident services, in that way fostering a spirit of unity at the House.

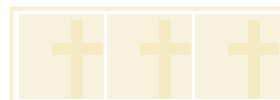
With each subsequent House, Leo told us, Fellowship Square’s leaders gained skill in turning setbacks into advantages; identifying developers willing to include elderly housing in their plans; and seizing opportunities to expand into other locations.

The construction of Hunters Woods was well under way in 1978 when the local fire marshal decided to enforce a new fire code ahead of schedule. Fellowship Square’s leaders complied. Despite the “quite a bit of engineering” required to meet the code, and a year’s delay in the opening of the House, Leo said, the result was a state-of-the-art pressure system able to keep the fire escapes smoke free.

Lake Ridge Fellowship House came into being after Fellowship Square officials heard that the Weaver Brothers developers were planning a community in Prince William County, VA similar to Reston’s. “The developers had planned a strip mall near a big ravine, virgin forest, and a stream,” Leo recalled. “They agreed to give us property there. We said the three things we needed in the strip mall were a grocery store, a drug store, and a bank—and we got what we asked for.” Further collaboration between the developers and Fellowship Square produced a beautiful setting for the House along the shore of a small artificial lake named Lake Ridge that gives hospitality to traveling waterfowl.

Fellowship Square’s leaders seized an opportunity to expand into Maryland in 1984, when the Riverdale Baptist Church voted to decline a HUD grant that Gaye Beasley, their housing consultant, had obtained for them. Ms. Beasley, who was also advising Fellowship Square’s board, urged the board to find a way to pick up the grant. As Leo remembered the story, “Gaye told the Baptist congregation, ‘Don’t do anything yet; think about it.’ So we worked out an arrangement with them. We took over the Riverdale Baptist Development Corporation (RBDC) by replacing three Riverdale members of their board with three of our corporate members. The RBDC then accepted the HUD grant, keeping the original name because the grant was made out to the RBDC. We changed the name legally to Largo Landing Development Corporation 10 years later!”

Looking back on Fellowship Square’s formative years, Leo said that the most important and most enduring qualities of Fellowship Square are its professional and volunteer partnership and the vision and perseverance of its leaders. ■



# Contributors *October 2010 – October 2011*

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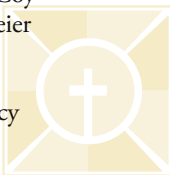
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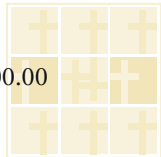
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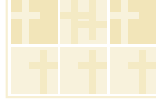


**Fellowship Square**

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## Give a Gift of Hope for Christmas

Before you know it, Christmas will be here. We are all accustomed to giving gifts at Christmas: a tie for Dad, a framed photo for Grandma, a piece of pottery for a special teacher. Gifts of Hope offers an alternative gift giving program. By giving a gift to a Lutheran agency such as Fellowship Square, you can help someone in your community and honor those you want to give a gift to.

Last year Fellowship Square received \$12,904 through the Gifts of Hope catalog. This year we have asked for the following gifts: \$25 for nutritious meals for the week, \$25 for dental care for a resident, and \$20 for in-home care for a senior. To see the complete catalog, log onto [www.giftsofhopemetrod.org](http://www.giftsofhopemetrod.org) or find a link on the Fellowship Square web page at [www.fellowshipsquare.org](http://www.fellowshipsquare.org). ■



## From the President



**Charles R. Wortman**

### Housing and Hope: The Work Continues

At Fellowship Square's annual meeting last May, I pointed out several actions that our leaders needed to take in the months ahead so as to ensure the continuing welfare and prosperity of our residents. I'm taking this opportunity to update you on three important initiatives taken by our Board of Directors.

- **The selection of a new executive director.** A search committee created by the Board has placed ads in professional and church-related publications most likely to produce quality applicants. Among these publications are *LeadingAge*, a magazine for non-profit organizations that support the elderly; and *MetroLiner Notes*, the newsletter of the Metropolitan Washington, DC Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). After having received the search committee's recommendations, the Board will interview candidates. The Board hopes to have a new executive director in place by year's end.
- **The implementation of a "Scattered Site Refinancing (SSR) Project" to enhance the cash flow from the Fellowship Houses.** Proposed to Fellowship Square by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Richmond, VA, office, this project envisions the refinancing of the Lake Anne and Lake Ridge Houses (and perhaps also Hunters Woods). A Board-appointed SSR Committee recently met with attorneys well versed in HUD projects to arrive at the most viable way to increase the Houses' cash flow. Interest rates are at historic lows, and the Board wants to take advantage of this opportunity.
- **A thoroughgoing analysis of Fellowship Square's infrastructure.** The Board is examining every standing committee to determine its relevance to our organization's stated mission. In addition, the Board is looking closely at the ways in which the Fellowship Houses interact with one another and with the Central Office staff. Modifications in Fellowship Square's infrastructure have already been proposed and will be presented for action at the Board's November meeting.

I want to thank all of you—administrative staff, residents, corporate members, and friends—for the work that you've done on behalf of Fellowship Square and the support that you've given our organization this year. We've experienced unusual challenges in 2011, ranging from personnel issues to natural events (who could have foreseen an earthquake, a hurricane, and torrential rains in the same year?). By God's grace, we have persevered in the face of such difficulties. All honor be to His glory! ■