

OFFUTT RIDGE HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION

HOA Summer Newsletter

Complete the Enclosed HOA Survey!

The President's Corner

By Rodney Butler

Summer greetings to you all from your local neighborhood volunteers, known as the Directors and Board of Officers. We would also like to extend a special welcome to all of those families that are new to our community. If you are new to the community and have not received a welcome basket and information packet, please feel free to contact a board member at your earliest convenience.



Well, the halfway point of this year has witnessed some interesting successes, as well as opportunities. For example, on the success side, we recently held our first dumpster day which went over very well. It went over so well in fact that we are planning a second dumpster day for **Saturday September 20, 2003**. The dumpster will again be located on Amanda Court. At the same time as the dumpster day, we attempted to hold our first community-wide yard sale. However, the "rain-worshippers" won out for two weekends straight. We may try this again as community input dictates.

Well here's to the balance of a great year and other upcoming events including:

- Annual HOA Community Picnic - New Date Sunday September 14, 2003 3pm - 6pm Amanda Court Tot Lot
- October Kids Event - To Be Announced

- General Meeting and Elections - November 20, 2003, 7pm
- Holiday Decorating Contest - December 2003

Finally, we would also like to say thank you to those community members who frequently take a few moments to say thank you or provide words of encouragement and appreciation. Additionally, we value those who provide regular feedback. One recent comment comes from a homeowner who has faced the challenge of a neighbor who likes to mow his/her yard frequently after nightfall. We would therefore ask that the neighbors of Offutt Ridge please remember the potential impact of our actions upon

Continued on Page 2

What's inside



Page 2

- Legislative Concerns
- How Fast was I Going?
- Talking Trash

Page 3

- New Trees
- Balto. County Newsletter
- Don't Let Your Guard Down

Page 4

- In the Garden
- Hard Water

Page 5

HOA SURVEY NOTICE

Continued from Page 1

our neighbors, even though we may have acres between us. By the way, some information on Noise Control parameters can be found at www.mde.state.md.us/programs/multi-mediaprograms/noise_pollution_control/keypoints.asp

Legislative Concerns

By
Adrienne Jones
3314 Peddicoat Ct
410-655-1279

As one of the Community's elected representatives, I would be interested in hearing from my neighbors any issues or concerns that might warrant legislation being introduced for the upcoming session. I find that the best ideas come from everyday people as opposed to high priced lobbyist. I would also be interested in hearing the views from my community on the slots issue, education, health care and other subject matters so that I am getting the views of my constituents who also happen to be my neighbors. I would also be interested in anyone who is interested in serving on a County Board or Commission. For legislative issues I can be reached at: 410-744-1300 (District), 410-841-3391(Annapolis) or 410-887-5557(County)

How Fast Was I Going?



One of the continuing challenges we have faced over the years is the ability of drivers in the

neighborhood to maintain the posted speed limits. We have sought support for traffic calming alternatives to aid in managing these speeds, with no success. However, we have managed to obtain a radar setup to help educate drivers in the neighborhood of the speed they are traveling. This radar setup has already started and will continue to appear throughout the community in an effort to increase our awareness of what speed we are going. We are attempting to increase awareness of speed limits through education. However, please "take heed when you speed" that the information we provide to the County on road monitoring, can lead to citations. Our early results have shown that the majority of drivers travel between 5 and 14 miles over the speed limit, with about 8% traveling 15 miles per hour or more over the limit. These excess speeds represent an ongoing danger which we hope to reduce.

Talking Trash



Every Wednesday and Friday, do you find yourself asking: *Is it bottles and cans or paper or just regular trash?* Well here's news from Baltimore County's Bureau of Solid Waste Management. Starting in June 2003, the Bureau began issuing a new round of trash/ recycling information guides and collection schedules. The process will take 21 months to reach all 235, 000 households on the County's "One & One" collection program. Offutt Ridge residents should receive their information by mail by the week prior to the old schedule's

Continued on Page 3

HOA Representatives

Save this column as a reference for contacting your HOA Representatives.

Board of Directors

John Mackey
Lynnette Fletcher
John D. Westmoreland

Officers

President
Rodney Butler
Vice President
Willis Williams
Treasurer
William (Bill) Heit
Secretary
vacant

Committee Chairs

Architectural Review

Andy Grosko

Maintenance

Andy Grosko

Hospitality

Sidney White

Newsletter/Web Site

Richard Jackson

Community Liaisons

Willis Williams

Arik Brown

By-Laws Review

Lynnette Fletcher



*Please consider assisting your HOA by volunteering to be our **Secretary** or joining one of the committees... help is always needed.*

Continued from Page 2

expiration. The new guide includes a message from the County Executive, an overview of the County's waste management program, ideas for avoiding waste and collection rules. There is also information about handing yard materials at home, residents' drop-off centers, and the TRASH/RECYCLING CONTEST. The collection schedule is good for four years and indicates what materials to place out for collection and when.

The TRASH/RECYCLING CONTEST is designed to encourage residents to look through and use these materials. There are 47 \$212 Hecht's gift cards provided by the www.mdrecycles.org

If you do not receive your new collection schedule after the current schedule expires in time to figure out what you should be putting at the curb, you can contact the Bureau's Customer Service Staff on (410) 887-2000.

New Trees

This spring your HOA filled in some holes in the community landscaping with 6 new Lilac trees. The new trees are easy to spot since they are freshly staked. We toured the entire community and are happy to report the community trees appear to be in very good shape. I think the unusually wet spring has helped tremendously. If anyone has questions regarding the plantings or would like information on obtaining trees please feel free to call your HOA



representatives and they will be glad to help.

Baltimore County E-Community Newsletter

Baltimore County has introduced a new service, the E-Community Newsletter. The newsletter is published in seven editions monthly, one for each councilmatic district. Each issue is to detail planning, zoning, development, and public works decisions and the impact on communities. The first issue is to be published in August. County residents can register to receive the newsletter by registering at www.baltimorecountyonline.info/subscribe/updates

Don't Let Your Guard Down

Did you know that a few years ago, three Offutt Ridge homes were robbed over the course of a few weeks? And before anyone really figured out how it was happening, another two homes were robbed. What was stolen and how did the thefts occur? No one broke in. The thieves simply looked for opportunities and took them. They targeted homes where the garage doors were left open. Valuable portables were taken - small lawn equipment such as mowers, weed whackers, and leaf blowers. In one case, the thieves made off with a brand new electric garage door opener that was still in the box.

The big question is could any of the robberies have been prevented. The resounding answer is **yes**. We could have prevented it if we had not let our guard down and left our garage

doors open. It also could have been prevented if we communicated more and earlier.

So far, we have been fortunate that, as far as we know since these incidents occurred, no one has been robbed in our lovely little spot here in Woodstock. However, we need to continue to be vigilant about protecting our families and our properties. According to Officer Earnest Sasser, Baltimore County Police, Community Outreach Team, Woodlawn Precinct, "I know your area and you are ripe for theft because your homes are so spread out. Don't give thieves an opportunity. We think the best advice is to keep your garage door closed at all times or within site if you are outdoors. Keep in mind if you can easily access your home through the garage, so can a burglar. Storage sheds may also be targeted."

Here's some additional information that may help. Did you know that the Baltimore County Police Department will do a free home security survey? If you would like to have that survey done, contact Officer Sasser at (410) 887-6802. "The survey only takes about 15 minutes but the assessment will provide valuable information that can make you and your loved ones less vulnerable." Officer Sasser added that he and other members of the Community Outreach Team are also available to make presentations on home security issues for homeowner associations.

Continued on Page 4

Continued from Page 3

According to the police, "many burglars will spend no longer than 60 seconds to try breaking into a home. Good locks- and good neighbors who watch out for each other - can be big deterrents to burglars."

There's more you can do.

- Join a neighborhood Watch group. One already exists for our area. Do all you can to support Citizens on Patrol.
- Never leave a message on your answering machine that indicates you may be away from home. Rather than saying "I'm not at home right now," say "I'm not available right now."
- Work with neighbors and local government to organize community clean-ups. The cleaner your neighborhood, the less attractive it is to crime.

Acre+ lots in a secluded setting make Offutt Ridge a lovely place to live. Let's continue to enjoy our community but not get too complacent and forget that our spacious and very spread out lots also make us a prime target for crime.

In The Garden with Sheila Abrams-Jones

OH DEER!
This is one of those good news/bad news stories. First, the bad news - according to the Maryland Cooperative Extension, damage to ornamental plants by white-tailed deer



has increased over the past decade. There are several reasons cited for the increase including: 1) rising deer populations; 2) human populations shifting to rural and suburban home sites; and 3) loss of deer habitat to development.

For those of us who have experienced the pain of deer browsing damage, nobody really needs to tell us that these four-legged eating-machines are an increasing problem. Those doe eyes are so cute and dear to look at but not when they happen to use your yard as their take-out restaurant. Nothing is more frustrating and disappointing then to see several branches stripped from landscape trees that you have spent time fawning over. Or, to see that a much anticipated bloom on a flowering plant or vegetable plant has been munched on for deer dessert. Talk about developing a taste for buckskin.

Now for the good news-knowledge is power. Deer actually feed selectively on fertilized and unfertilized landscape planting and managed cropland. Yes, just like humans, deer have their food likes and dislikes. Browsing damage can be reduced and even eliminated by planting less-preferred species or by establishing plants that are more susceptible only in protected areas such as close to the house or in a fenced yard.

As a gardening resource, you can refer to a list of ornamental plants adaptable to Maryland landscapes that notes their susceptibility to deer damage. You can get such a list by downloading Factsheet 655- "Resistance of Woody

Ornamentals to Deer Damage" from the Maryland Cooperative Extension's Home and Garden Information Center website at www.agnr.umd.edu/user/hgic/

Hard Water: Is it Affecting Your Family?



Do you find yourself using a substantial amount of detergent for laundering and dishwashing? Does your laundry feel rough and scratchy? Have you noticed a constant film on your shower doors and water fixtures? If you have answered yes to some or all of these questions, you may be experiencing the affects of hard water.

According to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, hard water occurs as water moves through soil and rock. Calcium and magnesium deposits are dissolved in the water and are the two most common minerals that make water "hard." This hard water makes your clothes feel rough, your skin and hair feel sticky, and your shower fixtures appear dirty.

What You Can Do

The first step you should take is to have your water tested. You can do this by contacting a professional company that specializes in water treatment equipment. Most companies will test your water free of charge if they are given an

Continued on Page 5

Continued from Page 4

opportunity to make a sales presentation. Another alternative is the "do-it-yourself" method by purchasing a water hardness kit and testing the water on your own.

If you find after testing that you do indeed have hard water, you may want to consider investing in a water softening system. Costs for these systems vary, ranging from hundreds to thousands of dollars. Therefore, you should be sure to shop around to find the system that best suits your family's needs and budget.

Water softening systems can solve several hard water related problems. An efficient system can save you money over time by reducing the wear and tear on your clothing, cutting costs for detergents and cleansers, and limiting sediment build-up in pipes and hoses.

In essence, **hard water** means **hard work**. If living with hard water has created more work for you and has become a nuisance, consider these suggestions so that your water can work for you.



**DON'T FORGET THE
ANNUAL HOA PICNIC
SEPTEMBER 14, 2003**

3pm - 6pm
Amanda Court Tot Lot

SPECIAL NOTICE

HOA Survey

WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The Offutt Ridge Homeowners' Association, Inc. was formed in May 1990 to perform certain functions on behalf of the owners of the lots within the Offutt Ridge community. In an effort to continually improve, the Offutt Ridge Homeowners' Association, Inc. would appreciate your feedback on the activities/services we have provided/coordinated.

Please fill out the enclosed survey and return it in the enclosed stamped self-addressed envelope no later than August 15, 2003.



Quote of the Day

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.

-- Helen Keller

Desktop Publisher - Rich Jackson