

OFFUTT RIDGE HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION

Woodstock, Maryland



Fall Newsletter

HOA General Meeting - November 20, 2003
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The President's Corner

By Rodney Butler

Well, believe it or not, another HOA year is beginning to wind down and it has been busy. I would first like to take a moment on behalf of the Board and Officers to welcome all of our new families to Offutt Ridge. We trust that you have found joy in your welcome baskets. If there is a new homeowner out there that we have mistakenly overlooked, please feel free to email me so that we may welcome you as well.



Thanks to everyone who came out to our Annual HOA Cookout on the 14th. The rain held off, as John Mackey predicted, and there was plenty of food, fun, and fellowship for all. A special thanks goes out to all of those who brought side dishes and desserts. My special favorite was Suni's Peach Cake. Thanks goes out to those who stayed behind to aid in a very speedy clean-up. Special thanks also to J.D. Westmoreland for the use of his property and to Sid White for chairing the event.

One of our other recent community events was our Second Dumpster Day. It was originally scheduled for September 21st but fell victim to Hurricane Isabel. We rescheduled for September 28th and expanded to two dumpsters; one near the end of Amanda Court and the second at the dead-end of Peddicourt Court. Due to the short turnaround on the change of dates, we were only able

to send out e-mail notices about the change as well as communicate through word-of-mouth. This appears to have worked to some extent, as the two dumpsters were full by mid-day. We would however like to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to get information quickly on news or events that change between newsletters and general meetings.

If you have an email address, send an email to me at **rhbutler@comcast.net** Be sure to include your name in the body of the text. We will use this to update our master list, and it will help us

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get information to you faster. If you do not have e-mail, please forward me your telephone number as we can attempt to set up telephone trees to ensure information gets out as well.

To also facilitate better community communication, we are planning to create an Offutt Ridge address book that contains your name, address, phone number and email address. This resource would be maintained by the Board and available as a resource for members of the community. You can help us by ensuring that the information we have on the mailing label attached to this newsletter is correct. If not, please let us know. **See you at the General Meeting.**

E-cycling Back by Popular Demand

Baltimore County's Next Electronics Collection Event is Scheduled for November 22nd.



On Saturday, November 22, Baltimore County residents can drop off unwanted electronics for recycling at the Carver Center for Arts and Technology in Towson (938 York Road), 1/2 mile south of Beltway Exit 26. The event will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., rain or shine. Items accepted for recycling include computers, monitors, printers, keyboards, scanners and other accessories, TV's, VCR's and other home electronics. No appliances will be accepted. This event is free, and open to all Baltimore County residents. However, you will need to bring

current photo identification and proof of residence. Your Maryland Driver's License will provide both the photo and proof that you live in Baltimore County. This event is only for electronics from residents' homes- no electronic materials will be accepted from businesses or institutions. Businesses and institutions interested in electronics recycling information are encouraged to log on to www.mdrecycles.org.

The Survey Results Are In And the Offutt Ridge Homeowners' Association is a Winner!



The results from the first Offutt Ridge Homeowners' Association Community Survey are in and overall the Offutt Ridge Homeowners' Association received high marks. We received 31 completed surveys representing 40% of the homes in the community (assuming 77 homes). Overall, the services and/or activities coordinated or provided by the HOA were viewed as good or very good with the majority of residents voting that the activities and services continue to be provided. Of the 16 services and activities which were rated, 10 were rated very good and 6 were rated good. The top rated services/activities included: the Community Dumpster with an average rating of 4.5, the Community Newsletter with an average rating of 4.4, the GPCA Clean Up with an average rating of 4.2, the Entrance Monument with an average rating of 4.1 and the Bash at the Barn with an average rating of 4.0. The lowest rated services/activities included: the 10 year plan with

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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

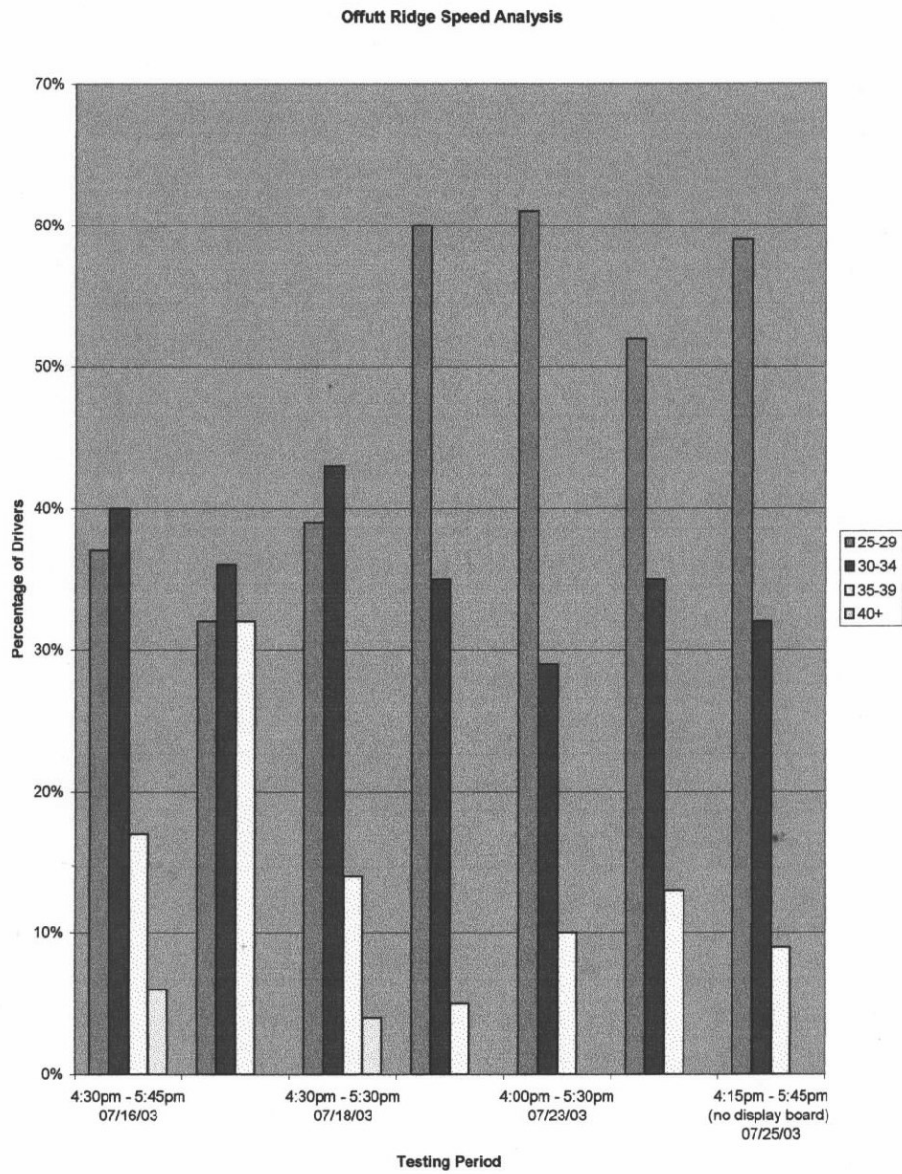
Committee Chairs

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.*

Offutt Ridge Vehicle Speed Analysis



Please drive carefully in our neighborhood!

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an average rating of 3.0, the Architectural Review with an average rating of 3.2 and the Holiday Decorating Contest with an average rating of 3.2.

Thanks to all who took the time to fill out and return the surveys. The information and feedback provided will be invaluable to this board as well as the next in trying to address the needs of the community and contribute to making Offutt Ridge a wonderful place to live.

**Tidbits
From Around the
Community**

1. Monument Update - As we hope many of you have noticed our entry monument has undergone a few changes. First, we've changed the plantings to provide some fresh fall color (yellow mums). As the seasons change we will modify the annual flowers to provide a fresh look. Secondly, we have started the process of adding lighting to the entry monument. The lights are part of a two-stage process. We have had the physical lights and wiring installed and are now in the process of getting BGE to install a electrical meter (like the one of your house) and do the actual hookup. This second part is taking a bit longer than anticipated and the recent storm surely didn't help. Needless to say we are hoping to have it all finished up and lit by the holidays.

2. Tot Lots - We are in the process of getting the gazebo and swing furniture on both tot lots sealed and cleaned. In addition, we will be replacing the toddler

seats with new hardware and conducting safety inspections of all play equipment. As we are sure you are aware the weeds turned out to be quite a problem this summer for the Peddicot tot lot. The Peddicot tot lot was weeded but with all the rain this summer it was hard to keep up. Please keep in mind we are always looking for support in keeping the tot lots weed-free. A few people and a couple of hours can make all the difference.

3. Offutt Ridge Gear - We have a limited supply of tee shirts and hats for sale to all interested. The hats and tee shirts are \$10. Anyone interested can call John Mackey at 410-496-2687.

4. Tennis Court - It is important that we continue to maintain the amenities that we have in the community. Accordingly, we recently had the side fencing on the tennis court raised from 4 feet to 10 feet to match the end fencing. It certainly will not help our personal game but it should lower the amount of balls we lose in the woods.



In The Garden

Hurricane Damage Can Be Reduced in Trees Pruned for Strength. Trees, especially the larger specimens, are frequently damaged in hurricanes. Entire trees may fall, or branches may be broken, often causing major damage to vehicles, structures and utilities. However, even though nature is unpredictable, this type of damage can be minimized with better tree selection and if trees are trained

for structural strength, starting when they are planted. If you surveyed our neighborhood after Isabel, you may have observed that some trees were more prone to damage than others. A number of factors can cause some trees to fall while others remain standing. Sometimes it is failure of branches; other times entire trees. If you noticed, most of the trees that fell were broadleaf deciduous species, commonly referred to as "hardwoods." These trees have broad spreading canopies and flat leaves which caught the force of the wind much more readily than the smaller canopies and aerodynamic needles of pine trees. Many hardwood trees also have shallow, spreading root systems, which increased their susceptibility to tip up, versus pines, which have the deep tap roots holding them upright. The Bradford Pears, Tulip Poplars, Silver and Norway Maples had the greatest liability in our development.



What caused some trees to topple rather than snap or break? An additional factor is the amount of water in the soil. Because there was a large volume of rain and snow in the months prior to the hurricane, the soil was saturated when the hurricane arrived. Tree root systems were easily separated from the soft soil, readily allowing the wind to knock the trees down. Notice the leaning Leyland Cypresses. These evergreens are fast growing but their root systems are shallow. The heavy wind caused many of these trees to uproot. Some of

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them may be saved but since the roots system has been compromised, they may be a hazard during another bad storm. There is something we can learn from Isabel, and from our neighbors further south that have had more experience with this type of weather event. When Hurricane Andrew hit Miami Dade County in August of 1992, the winds destroyed more than 1,000 mature trees located on public property through out the City of North Miami. An after-storm evaluation determined that many of those trees could have survived had they been pruned differently. The evaluation showed that the structural failure of trees was caused by the faults listed below, all of which could have been corrected by proper pruning.

1. Co-dominant leaders
2. Included bark.
3. Over-lifting
4. Limbs not spaced vertically
5. Crossing branches
6. In-growing branches
7. Overly dense canopies

As a result of the pruning effort carried out in Miami Dade County, in the 1993 and 1999 storms combined, only 35 trees were lost, compared to 1,000 for Andrew.

Here are some suggestions, for a stronger tree canopy.

1. Select trees with good structure.
2. Provide training and care during the first years. (This is critical.)
3. Prune all trees for strength.

4. Identify and prioritize problems with established trees.

5. Prune to correct flaws. Realize that large trees will require years of corrective pruning so don't try to correct all the faults in one pruning.

Have a certified arborist evaluate any damaged trees on your property to determine if they can be salvaged. Also, if you want information on proper pruning, call the **University of Maryland's Home and Garden Information Center at 1-800-342-2507**

(Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.) to request Bulletin #150: *Pruning Ornamental Trees and Shrubs.*



There is nothing we can do to stop bad weather, but we can better prepare for it. With better tree selection and using proper pruning techniques, you can produce stronger, more durable trees, resulting in a canopy which will mostly survive, and still be there after the next storm. **P.S.** Don't forget to lay in a good supply of flashlights and batteries.

HOA General Meeting



Please remember to mark your calendar for November 20, 2003, the date of the HOA General Meeting. We will be electing the Board of Directors for the next calendar year, approving the operating budget, and most likely reviewing By-laws and/or

Covenants change recommendations.

As part of this process, we are soliciting from the community, nominations for the three Board of Director positions for the 2004 Calendar Year. If you are inclined to take out a few hours next year to help preserve and serve your community, please consider serving on the Board, as an Officer, or on a committee. You may submit nominations to rhbutler@comcast.net

Ode to Isabel

By J.D. Westmoreland

Our picnic was held, a day in the sun.

Rain was predicted, but there was none. I loaded the truck, headed to Nags Head that night.



Golf and swimming planned; a hurricane in sight. A few days with the family, full of laughter and cheer. Watching the weather channel as Isabel came near.

Tuesday men boarded the house like a fort.

Evacuation called, our vacation cut short.

Rapidly we cleaned and loaded our stuff.

Anticipating traffic, the drive would be tough.

Just as expected, many others did the same.

Vacations cut short and Isabel to blame.

Once I was home, it was time to prepare.

Supplies to obtain, though

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finding some was rare.
 Long lines and chaos did
 certainly exist.
 But, preserving cold foods was
 on top of the list.
 On Thursday it happened, Isabel
 came ashore.
 With wind and high surf, there
 was destruction galore.
 The Hokies would play football
 that very same night.
 A sold-out stadium, fans cheering
 with their might.
 We watched the whole game
 and my Hokies did win.
 A quick glance at the news and
 my wife and I turned in.
 The rain got heavier and wind
 began to shout.
 Sometime in the night, the
 power went out.
 No running water or power for
 days would get rough.
 But, our concerns were on saving
 refrigerated stuff.
 Thanks to dry ice and a very
 strong will;
 Only ice cream perished, the rest
 cooked on the grill.
 An extension cord ran from the
 house to my truck.
 My wife could finish a project,
 with a little luck.
 The computer and radio was all
 we would need.
 Undivided attention, the cats
 enjoyed indeed.
 The power restored and the
 lights came back on.
 Fears of spoiling food and no
 water were gone.
 We reflected on the adventure
 and thought we did well.
 We had survived Hurricane
 Isabel.

Quote for Today

Books are the quietest and most
 constant of friends; they are the most
 accessible and wisest of counselors, and
 the most patient of teachers.

-- Charles W. Eliot



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Your suggestions and/or comments
are appreciated