

**OFFUTT RIDGE HOMEOWNER'S
ASSOCIATION**

Winter Newsletter

Next General Meeting will be April 22nd

The President's Corner

J.D. Westmoreland

Another year is well underway here in our community. We have quite a few new neighbors and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome each and every one of you to the neighborhood. This year also brings a few new faces (and some familiar ones too) to the HOA Board and Officers: John Mackey (Board), Jackie Brown (Board), Andy Grosko (Board), John (JD) Westmoreland (President), Sheila Abrams-Jones (Vice-President), Bill Heit (Treasurer) and Arik Brown (Secretary). I am looking forward to working with this group to continue to provide beneficial service to our community.

With that being said, I want to take a moment to discuss some challenges we are going to face this year as a community. Last year, we were able to accomplish a lot of goals and tasks in the community. Obviously, items such as the tennis court fence, came with a price tag. It is going to be our goal this year to limit our expenditures and work towards replenishing some of the reserve resources that have been tapped into over the years. We know that some time in the future, the tennis court will eventually need resurfacing and will require funds availability. Fortunately, research with some tennis court construction companies has indicated that the resurfacing effort may not be as large of an expenditure as originally thought. We do however have one major expense obstacle facing us right now. As I am sure most of you know, we recently had spotlights

installed in front of the community monument at the entrance of the development. The spotlights are connected to a timer box on the back of the monument. We had the fixtures installed while we were waiting for the estimate from BGE to connect the electricity. The estimate process took longer than we had hoped and what we received was not what we were expecting either. BGE has stated that they will need to tap a power source from a location on Offutt Road, requiring them to run lines under the road. As a result of the effort, their estimate was a little more than \$4,000. Obviously, in our discussions, the Board is not comfortable with spending this much money without consenting the community. We will be discussing this topic at our next General

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Meeting in April. In the meantime, if you have any thoughts or suggestions, please e-mail them to me at John.Westmoreland@comcast.net.

I want to take a moment to thank all of the residents who complied with my e-mail request regarding parking their vehicles at the base of their driveways, rather than in the road. I spoke to one of the snowplow operators this last time, and he was very pleased with the ability to effectively plow the roadways in our community. He was very appreciative and wished that other communities would do the same. Thank you. I know for me personally, I felt much more comfortable driving through the community on the icy days without the fear of potentially sliding into a parked car on the side of the road.

Our next General Meeting will be held on April 22, 2004 at 7:00 p.m.. at the Granite Presbyterian Church. Please mark you calendars now. Until then, as requested above, please e-mail me with any comments, suggestions, or ideas you have regarding our community.

In the Garden

with
Sheila Abrams-Jones

"The Cicadas are Coming!"

After living underground for 17 years, millions of periodical cicadas (Brood X) will emerge throughout the eastern United States in late spring 2004. "The emergence of the 17-year cicada is an extraordinary occurrence and I encourage Marylanders to be prepared so

that they can enjoy it," said Maryland Agriculture Secretary Lewis R. Riley in a recent press release. Few folks other than Secretary Riley (plus the one insect lover that I know) are looking forward to this experience. Those who experienced the last emergence in 1987 will remember large cicada populations disrupting outdoor events and sounding off with loud - almost deafening - mating calls. But who knows, if we learn more about cicadas and plan ahead, we might experience this spectacular event as a natural wonder and not as a calamity of biblical proportions. So here's some information that may help the rest of us get through this without being completely bugged out. Cicadas should not be confused with locusts: they are different species. Locusts are grasshoppers in the order Orthoptera. They have chewing mouthparts and a voracious appetite throughout their life. Cicadas are in the order Homoptera, and have sucking mouthparts (like little soda straws). Cicadas feed only as nymphs underground, on tree roots. They are in the same family as the familiar annual and dog-day cicadas whose songs characterize hot summer days. Other close relatives are aphids, leafhoppers and mealybugs.

These cicadas usually emerge by the end of May in Maryland. At that time, the nymphs crawl out of the soil after 17 years of feeding on small subterranean roots and climb up tree trunks or other vertical objects where they shed their nymphal skin and emerge as adults. Adults live about four to six weeks with the sole purpose to mate and lay eggs. Only the males produce sound - a loud mating call of

2004 HOA Representatives

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

Board of Directors

John Mackey
Jackie Brown
Andy Grosko

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J.D. Westmoreland
Vice President
Sheila Abrams-Jones
Treasurer
William (Bill) Heit
Secretary
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Maintenance
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Richard Jackson
Community Liaisons
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Arik Brown
By-Laws Review
Lynnette Fletcher



"song" - which can be heard from early morning to late evening as long as adults are present, usually until July. After mating, the female cicada cuts deep slits in small twigs where she lays her rows of 24-48 eggs. Adult cicadas die soon after they have mated and laid their eggs. After six weeks, the eggs hatch and the tiny nymphs fall to the ground where they burrow into the soil and spend the next 17 years below ground, starting the whole cycle again.

Cicadas will not significantly affect most large, healthy trees. Small trees, however, can be more seriously damaged by the female egg-laying which can cause browning, breakage, and scarring on affected branches. Property owners can reduce damage to smaller trees by pruning them lightly or not at all the season before emergence. Damaged twigs may be pruned out following cicada activity. Small shade and ornamental trees can be protected by covering them with cheesecloth or finely woven netting to prevent females from laying eggs in the twigs. To avoid potential damage, consider delaying this winter's pruning of landscape materials until after egg-laying stops in June. In heavily infested areas, delay planting new deciduous trees and shrubs until the fall or spring following cicada emergence.

Many millions of periodical cicadas are expected in Maryland from the end of May into July, 2004, though numbers will vary widely by location. In 1987, some wood lots held up to 100,000 per acres, while numbers in other areas were very light. Residents, can research their neighborhoods or the places where graduations,

weddings, family reunions or other outdoor events will occur to learn if there was a large cicada outbreak in 1987. Old newspapers and long-time residents are good starting points. **For more information and photos, go to: www.hgic.umd.edu/pubs/online/hg43.pdf**

The Farm Report

Brenda K. Creighton
Offutt Ridge Farm

Dear Neighbors,
I bet you are curious about what goes on down here at the farm. I've always meant to write for the newsletter, but I have been overwhelmed these past few years. We meant to move in, get the farm set up for horses and run a small lesson program. Then my friend needed a place to run her hippotherapy program, and she was here for a year and a half. During that second year, my lupus got the better of me and I had five different surgeries. My daughters ran the lessons then, as I seemed to be in a constant state of recovery.

Next, we had that terrible winter (last year). I was just recovering from my fifth surgery when something else went wrong. I was hospitalized for kidney failure and am still undergoing chemotherapy for lupus nephritis.

Now, that is probably more than you want to know about my personal health, but since I am the driving force behind the horses, (and they are the most interesting) my health and energy dictate just how much we can do. So, here it is, February 2004, and I am now recovering from hand surgery, another by product of the damage caused by lupus.

We currently have eight equine residents here at Offutt Ridge Farm. Three ponies; Dave, Sparky, and Langley. Five horses; Cody,

Danny, Topsy, Rosy, and Whisper. In the winter, the horses are out on the mudlot during the day and in their stalls overnight. If the precipitation is such that it creates hazardous footing, we leave the horses in. None of us likes this, but then who is enjoying this ongoing arctic landscape?

Once spring gets here, we have the horses in during the day and out overnight. And once spring gets here, we start our lesson season, usually the first weekend of April. Every season presents us with new scheduling parameters. We do weekday lessons with home schooled kids and adults that are free during the day, we do after school lessons Tuesdays through Fridays, and we do Saturday lessons a.m and p.m. Sunday afternoons seemed to be reserved for our special needs riders this past year, so we'll just have to see how things fall in the coming season. No, I don't rent my horses, but I can tell you some places to call.

This summer, we hope to do three or four weeks of riding camp, one week set aside for collaboration with an educational psychologist. I'd be interested in hosting an art or photography day camp since I think the farm is so beautiful. If there was someone out there that wanted to pull a program together. Also, in support of rescue organizations, we've thought of having an open barn day with friends from Horsenet Rescue in the spring and doing a fundraiser in the fall for Cat Rescue of MD.. Of course, all these things take energy and manpower and may get no further than just my thinking about it. Input is

welcome.

Well, that's it for plans. If you have questions about the horses, or want to visit the farm and see all the work John puts into it, feel free to call or leave a message or contact me through my e-mail:

farmgirl57@email.com

The HOA Web Site

Rich Jackson

For those of you that are not aware, the HOA web site is located at:

www.offuttridgehoa.org

Give it a try... There's lots of useful information included on the site. The **LINKS** page can connect you to a wide range of information on Government, Schools in the area (public and private), local libraries and research tools, news media sites (broadcast and newsprint), and many more interesting subjects. New links are added frequently.

Did you misplace the Fall Newsletter or just want to review an article! Just click on the **NEWSLETTER** tab to access it.

Hot news tips concerning the community are posted on the home page for quick access. If you have something to post, e-mail it to the Webmaster or an Officer or a Board member. E-mail addresses can be found by clicking the **E-mail Addresses** button on the home page.

The HOA web site is your community internet hub. I need input from you to make sure the site is serving your needs. Send me your suggestions/comments. My e-mail address is:

rkjacks@aol.com

Until next time, keep on surfing!

Community Spring Cleanup

J.D. Westmoreland

Fortunately, spring is rapidly approaching. With the changing of the seasons, comes the annual GPCS Community Spring Cleanup. For those who are not familiar with the event, local communities gather volunteers from within their neighborhoods to clean specified sections of our area. Last year, we were responsible for picking up trash on Offutt Road from Mardella Run, down to the sharp bend in the road to the right of our community entrance. We had around 10 volunteers and it took no time at all to complete the cleanup. When we were done, I think we had picked up 20+ bags of trash.

Cleanup for 2004 will be on April 24th at the St. Alphonsus Church parking lot on Old Court Road at Davis Avenue. There are usually large dumpsters there for bulk trash drop-off. As for our portion of the cleanup effort, a representative from our community will be responsible for going to this location and picking up trash bags and orange vests for those that volunteer. Please mark your calendars, talk to your friends and plan to help your neighbors clean the litter off our streets. This is a great way to get to know your neighbors.

We hope to have a great group of volunteers this year. More details will be provided later. I will send another request for volunteers via e-mail in the near future. Please take a moment to send me an e-mail at

John.Westmoreland@comcast.net

Quote for Today

Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.

-- **Henry Ford**

The HOA Newsletter

Rich Jackson

Based on the results of the 2003 survey, our community said the newsletter is one of the most popular HOA activities. For that reason, we desperately want to continue publishing it on a quarterly bases. In order to do that, we need articles. Those articles need to come from you, the community.

If you notice the bylines in this issue, most of the articles were written by Officers or Board members. What we need are your experiences. Perhaps you visited an exciting destination or ate in a fancy restaurant. Maybe you'd like to share a special recipe. If you have expertise in a particular area, put your thoughts in an article. We all like to learn new things. Anything of interest to the community will do.

The next newsletter should be out by summer. Help us make it a winner. Notify any HOA rep. that you have an article for the Newsletter. My e-mail address is:
rkjacks@aol.com

This Balto. County Bureau of Waste Management advertisement was provided by Rodney Butler

TELL YOUR COMMUNITY ABOUT THESE GREAT EVENTS !

<p style="text-align: center;">Saturday, April 3 Electronics Recycling Collection Event  10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. rain or shine</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Drop off for recycling your unwanted: computers, monitors, printers, keyboards, scanners, TVs, VCRs, and other home electronics</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>No Commercial Material Accepted Baltimore County Residents <u>Only</u> Free Event</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">CARVER CENTER for Arts & Technology 938 York Road - Towson (1/2 mile south of beltway exit 26 at York & Fairmount)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Saturday, April 17 Home Compost Bin Sale 9:00 a.m - 3:00 p.m. rain or shine</p> <p style="text-align: center;">In the parking lots of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carver Center Towson 2. IKEA White Marsh 3. Security Square Mall Woodlawn  <p style="text-align: center;">Buy a bin for only \$26.90 + tax <i>cash or checks only / while supplies last</i></p>
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Hosted by the Baltimore County Bureau of Solid Waste Management
Info: 410-887-2000 or www.baltimorecountyonline.info/recycling

Architectural Review Committee

J.D. Westmoreland

Are you thinking about building a deck or addition to your home? Are you like me and really want to install a swimming pool? With the hope of warmer weather on the horizon, its that time when people start thinking about the home improvement jobs they want to complete before Old Man Winter comes knocking at our door again.

Please keep in mind that our community By-Laws and Covenants require Architectural Committee approval of home modifications. This includes, but is not limited to, such items as: swimming pools, decks/patios, home additions, garages, and fences. If you have such an effort planned, please be sure to contact a member of the committee for direction and to determine what documentation they need to review and approve. The members of this committee include:

Charles Thomas (Chairperson): 4 Noah Court; **Harry Holt**: 3 Noah Court; and, **Andy Grosko**: 3213 Peddicoat Court.

Enjoy Your Community It's Special!