

OFFUTT RIDGE HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION

Woodstock, Maryland

Offutt Ridge Newsletter
Spring 2005

Mid Year General Meeting - May 19th

The President's Corner

Sheila Abrams-Jones

We need to hear from you. We are doing a bit of a spring community clean up to our HOA Declaration of Covenants. Inside this issue, you will find proposed amendments to the Covenants. These changes were recommended by the Bylaws Review Committee and agreed upon by the Board. For example, the Covenants currently state that you can not install an outside television aerial or radio antenna or satellite dish. In 1990, when the covenants were written, these items were large and obtrusive. With today's technology, satellite dishes are much smaller and are not necessarily an eyesore. We need the consent of at least two thirds of our membership to make changes to the Covenants. Please use the ballot provided in this newsletter to vote on the proposed amendments and return it to the Board by the date requested. You can find a copy of the complete Bylaws and Covenants on our website, www.offuttridgehoa.org. If you have any questions or need more information, feel free to contact any Board member or me.

We will also discuss these changes at our **Mid-Year General Meeting on Thursday, May 19**. Really hope to see you there. We will have dinner and then provide you with an update on the State of the HOA and current projects. We have also asked **Ken Oliver, Councilman for our District**, to attend and brief us on what is happening in our area of the County.

Speaking of spring clean up, you might still have some items that you no longer need or want in your house or storage shed. Mark your calendar. There are several dates/opportunities to get rid of stuff. **On May 14, we are planning to have a community yard sale.** We are looking for some residents experienced in the ways of yard sales to assist with advertising and anything else to make this event successful. **On May 21, back by popular demand, we are having another Dumpster Day;** what an opportunity to clean up and clear out clutter. As another reminder, on **April 16 from 8 am to noon, GPCA is having its annual community clean up** and I hope that Offutt Ridge will have a strong

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show of support for this effort. GPCA will also have dumpsters that you can use. Please contact Bill Heit, Community Liaison Committee, if you can spare a few hours. Make it a family affair. If we work together as a team, it should be fun.

Wrapping Wood Trim in Aluminum

John Mackey

Its that time of year again when spring brings the chore of replacing rotted wood or scraping and painting the wood trim on your house. As I'm sure most of us have already discovered, the Ryland Company did not use the best grade of wood on the homes in Offutt Ridge. Wood rot around the windows, garage door and front door are common to our community and unfortunately it only seems to get worse. I finally had enough and decided to correct this problem once and for all. I called Sears and asked them to provide me with an estimate to have all the wood trim on the house covered with painted aluminum trim. Others in the community have obtained the same service from Home Depot. Sears responded quickly and the pricing was reasonable. In addition, the replacement of all the rotten wood was included in the price. They custom wrap bay windows, the box trim under the windows, soffet, sills, doorframes to include the garage door and everything in between. I now have no exposed wood on the exterior of my house. Think of it none! I no longer have to get up on a ladder or hire professionals to paint what I cannot reach.

The entire job took only two days to complete. Several of your neighbors have taken this same approach and I have not spoken to anyone who is unsatisfied. If you are interested in additional information please give me a call.

Monument Lighting Update

John Mackey

Well progress is being made, even though it is slow going. When we contacted BG&E about the original contract, so much time had passed that they had to re-price the job. We received a revised contract from BG&E and the good news is there was a small price reduction due to some modifications to the original design. In addition, we are hiring Kolb Electric to complete the installation of the 100AMP panel on the back on the monument and to make all necessary final connections. BG&E needs to install a new transformer on the property of 3200 Peddiccoat Ct. That will step down the power and that feed will go directly into the 100 amp electric panel and electric meter which will be located directly behind the center of the back of the monument. Obviously, we are soliciting comments and input from the new owners of 3200 Peddiccoat Ct. Once all the details are worked out we will proceed with the signing of the contract with BG&E to begin installation.

Trash Reminder

Pat Traylor

According to the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions, "Trash and garbage shall not be permitted

2005 HOA Representatives

Mailing Address

Offutt Ridge HOA
P.O. Box 512
Randallstown, Md. 21133

Board of Directors

John Mackey
William (Bill) Heit
Rosanne Connelly

Officers

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Sheila Abrams-Jones

Vice President
Pat Traylor

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Rodney Butler
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Web Site

Rich Jackson

Community Liaisons

Bill Heit
Joan Heit

By-Laws Review

Jackie Brown
Rodney Butler

to remain in public view, except on designated trash pick-up days. Almost every week, after trash has been collected, trash containers and sometimes non-trash items, which have been refused as regular trash, have remained in public view for several days and even, in some cases, weeks.

In order to maintain a pleasant and enjoyable environment for our community, please ensure that your trash containers are removed from public view within a reasonable period of time and non-trash items are disposed of in a proper manner.

Residential Electronics Recycling Drop-Off Event

Sheila Abrams-Jones

Date: Saturday, April 30, 2005
Time: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. / rain or shine

Location: Carver Center for Arts & Technology
938 York Road in Towson (at York & Fairmount) - 1/2 mile south of beltway exit 26.

This free event is for Baltimore County residents only. Please bring I.D. with current address.

Types of Items Accepted:

- * Computers
- * Scanners
- * Printers
- * Monitors
- * Stereos
- * TVs and VCRs
- * Digital phones
- * Other Home Electronics

What's Not Accepted:

- * Home appliances (such as microwave ovens, vacuum cleaners, blenders)

* Commercial or institutional material
Information: 410-887-2000

Down at the Farm

Brenda Creighton

Well, it has finally snowed long enough to keep me inside so I can sit and think ahead to the summer. It is hard to remember, or imagine, those hot humid days when we are just limp from the heat, sitting on the back porch with Popsicles dripping into laps. Those days will come again. But in the meantime, we will start our lesson season in April, welcoming new and returning riders back into after school or weekend lessons. Our riding lesson season begins, as the weather warms and the footing dries out some. Then on into summer, we offer condensed programs for kids in the mornings.

What are we going to do this summer at the farm? We are going to imagine what it is like to have a horse of your own. We are going to do some problem solving with training and handling horses. How do you plan your chores, how to move horses from here to there and what do you do first? We will again explore "Stall Science" and talk about horse health. We will either be working with a young horse, or working with a horse as if it were young. How does a horse learn to be ridden?

And of course, the wildflowers. We will learn more names and do at least one flower-related craft. And while every week will be the same, no two weeks are ever alike around here.

So come be with us, at the farm, and imagine what it is like

to have "A Horse of Your Own."

And if you are ready to actually take on having a horse of your own, we are considering taking in a few boarders this year. If you would like help in finding a horse, or have a friend who is looking for a place to keep theirs, contact me down at the farm. Brenda 410 922 1302, or farmgirl57@email.com.

In the Garden

With Sheila Abrams-Jones

In Praise of Ornamental Grasses

When we think about grasses, most of us think about turf grass. But there are ornamental grasses that can enhance your garden with less effort. If you don't have any of these grasses, consider adding them to your landscape. They have many positive qualities to commend them. Number one (at least for me) is that the deer don't seem to like them for food. Second, most ornamental grasses are easy-care, growing well in ordinary soil, rarely needing added fertilizer. Once established, ornamental grasses are drought tolerant. Pest and disease problems are uncommon. And, ornamental grasses are considered four season plants, giving wonderful year-round interest in the garden.

And, just consider the possibilities. The grass family, Gramineae, is immense; more than 1,400 species occur naturally in the United States alone. Within this family, color, size and shape vary enormously, giving grasses great decorative potential. Whether it is Pampas Grass,

Purple Fountain Grass, Maiden Grass, Zebra Grass or Blue Fescue. Due to this diversity, ornamental grasses can fit into the planting scheme of almost any landscape, such as Japanese and rock gardens, cutting gardens and can even compliment shade loving areas. When grasslike plants such as bamboos, sedges, and rushes are added to the equation, even more combinations are possible.

ORNAMENTAL GRASSES: COOL OR WARM SEASON?

Ornamental grasses can be grouped into cool- or warm-season types, depending on when they do most of their growing. Knowing which group a particular grass falls into is helpful. In cold winter areas, it's best to plant warm-season grasses in the spring, not the fall.

You'll have the best chance of success, if you plant most ornamental grasses in the spring. Like all plants, they need watering for a few weeks after planting, especially in a dry spring.

To allow for movement and for their distinctive forms to stand out, space ornamental grasses about as far apart as they get tall. For example, fountain grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln'), grows about two feet wide and is best planted two feet apart.

Some grasses may need dividing when they die out at the center. Digging up and dividing a large-size mature grass plant is not for the faint of heart: you'll need a strong back as well as a sturdy spade and an axe to get the clumps apart. Fortunately, division is generally not needed for many

seasons, but it's a good way to propagate new plants, as grasses tend to be expensive. Divide warm-season grasses in early spring, as they begin growth, and cool-season grasses in early spring or fall. Be sure to water newly planted divisions until they are well established.

CUTTING DOWN ORNAMENTAL GRASSES: WHEN AND HOW

Give ornamental grasses an **annual haircut early in spring**, cutting them back to within a few inches of the ground. Some grasses start to grow very early in spring. **With the cool-season grasses, it's important to remove the previous year's growth as soon as the snow melts.**

Leaving this job too long can result in plants with chopped-off leaf tips. When cutting cool-season grasses down, leave about one-third of previous year's growth in place. The new growth will quickly hide the old plant material. **You can cut warm-season grasses right down to the ground if you like**, but if you are doing the job late, be sure not to cut into the new growing tips. I like to cut these grasses down a little later because I find that the previous season's buff-colored foliage looks good in with the spring-flowering bulbs.

Sometimes the most efficient way to cut back the grasses in large beds is to use gas-powered hedge shears. Wear gloves - some species have very sharp edges. **Cut the plants down in layers.** This ensures that the dead plant material is nicely chopped up into mulch that can be left on the beds.

FOR EASY MAINTENANCE, CHOOSE GRASSES CAREFULLY.

The best-behaved ornamental grasses are clump growers, but some are spreaders. **Be wary of vigorous spreaders**, such as ribbon grass (*Phalaris arundinacea* 'Picta'), which can take over. Unless you plan to use it as a ground cover, confine it by planting in a bottomless container about 36 inches deep, sunk into the ground, or plant into a space where spreading will be restricted, for example, between a building foundation and paved walkway.

Prefer to do your gardening in pots. You can also combine a number of ornamental grasses to make a container garden that's unique and low maintenance. Here's how:

1. Start with a 12-14 inch pot, and cover its drain hole with a broken pottery shard or a piece of plastic window screen.
2. Fill the pot halfway with good potting soil, and scatter a bit of slow release, balanced fertilizer such as 14-14-14 on top.
3. Break up the roots of a large potted grass with your fingers, and set it in the center of the container.
4. Add other grass varieties to the mix, balancing textures and colors and planting ivy to cascade over the front.

To learn more about gardening with ornamental grasses, check local garden stores and nurseries, the public library and the Internet. With the popularity of these

plants, you will have no trouble finding lots of information about them.

Computer Bytes

Rich Jackson

What is USB?

USB, or Universal Serial Bus, is a hardware bus standard that allows users to plug a peripheral device into a **USB port** and have it automatically configured and ready to use. It is one of the success stories of the personal computer. It not only works well, but also makes the life of the average computer user easier.

What's a Port?

A port is an interface (socket) for attaching external devices to a computer. The original IBM personal computers came with two ports, a serial port and a parallel port. Typically, devices such as modems were attached to the serial port and devices such as printers connected to the parallel port. Another type of port called the SCSI port became a mainstay in the Mac world but never caught on in a big way in the PC world.

A port not only connects an external device, but it also controls the transfer rate, the rate at which data can be transferred between the computer and the attached device. This is where the USB port excels. On the average, USB allows data to travel ten times the speed of the normal parallel port. It is also faster than a serial port. This means that a USB printer or scanner can operate faster than a printer or scanner that hooks up to the parallel port. The

average serial port transfer rate is 150 kbps; the parallel port is 1.2 mbps. The USB port transfers data is up to 12 mbps depending on the type of device that is connected.

Stackable

USB has other advantages as well. Although I can't imagine why anyone would want to, you can attach up to 127 devices to one USB port. USB ports are self-powered, so you can say goodbye to those big chunky power blocks. However, if you attach more than a few devices, you will need to add a self-powered hub, which is a small mechanism that provides extra power to the attached devices.

Does Your Computer have a USB Port?

Most computers that were manufactured after 1995 have USB ports. Windows 95 had only erratic support for USB, but all newer Windows operating systems have support for USB. iMacs and other Apple computers also support USB. If your computer doesn't have a USB port, you can add USB by buying an inexpensive adapter card that fits into a PCI slot in your computer. USB has three great features: speed, power, and ease of use.

Source: AARP Learning & Technology

Activities on a Rainy Day

Brenda Creighton

Well here it is, on toward the end of March. After all these recent pleasant but cold days that have been working to dry the mud, the farm looks like it is under water once again. With raindrops persistently slashing sideways, I consider what indoor activities I could undertake. Laundry! This

would be a good day to get a couple of loads up and down stairs.

As if a voice from the past speaks to me, I pause to consider the irony of doing laundry on a rainy day. Here I live in a hundred year old house that has seen many laundry days come and go. The cellar stairs lead to the side yard where laundry was once hung on a bright and breezy day or one with crisp and frigid air that froze the laundry stiff like cardboard shapes.

Technology changes the way we live. Lights keep us awake late into the night, giving us longer days, but tired bodies. If only we had the sense to use technology to our advantage and not let it encourage us into constant movement and over committment. Just because we can, doesn't mean we should. We spend hours of our lives in the car getting somewhere for 30 minutes. We import food from far away because development has moved farmland to the 'outback.' I hold my eyes open late into the night because I just can't seem to turn off the TV. But today, I'll use this advantage of modern living to my benefit and get laundry done. Going out to the barns and horses would not be so much fun. This frees my time for some other day, when nothing gets done inside the house because horseplay will be everything.

Not long from now, mowers will be running up and down yards and flowers (and weeds) will spring into action. Thankfully, modern technology has provided us with air

conditioning to offset that intense summer heat. I look at today's cold wet weather and say, 'soon, this will be over.' It is a last chance for me to get those 'in the house' things done before our focus shifts totally to the out of doors.

Something to Ponder
Willis Williams

A teacher while conducting a class said to her pupils: "Now we have fifteen minutes within which to do nothing else, so let's work some riddles and conundrums. I'll ask the first. Let's see who can guess the answer. 'If Washington crossed the Delaware, how old am I?' There was a blank stare on everyone's face, but for one little youngster in the back of the room who was busily scribbling on a piece of paper. Finally, he raised his hand and said:

"Teacher, I have the answer."
"What is it, Johnny," said she.
"Forty-eight," came back the answer.
"That's right, but how did you guess it?"
"Oh", said Johnny, "I didn't guess it, I worked it out by arithmetic; you see, we have a brother at home, his name is Tommy, he's twenty-four, and he's half nuts. Two times twenty-four is forty-eight."

Quote of the Day

Everyone is a prisoner of his own experiences. No one can eliminate prejudices - just recognize them.

--- Edward R. Murrow

Calendar of Events

April 2005
16th - GPCA Clean-up Come out and volunteer for an hour or two to help keep your community roads clean.
18th - Board Meeting

May 2005
14th - Community Yard Sale - Get ready to clean out that attic, garage, or shed and participate in our Community-Wide Yard Sale. Organizing volunteers needed.
16th - Board Meeting
19th - General Meeting
21st - Dumpster Day
30th - Newsletter Articles Due

June 2005
20th - Board Meeting

Additional events will be included during the year.

Stay Informed

Visit your HOA Web Site Today

www.offuttridgehoa.org

**Remember!
The Speed Limit
In Our Community Is
25 MPH**

Please Drive Responsibly!

◆

**Attend The Mid Year General Meeting
May 19th**

Dinner Will Be Served Before The Start Of The Meeting

Desktop Publishing by Rich Jackson
rkjacks@verizon.net

EXPENSE SUMMARY for 2005 as of 3/21/05

Marge Mackey, HOA Treasurer

Item	Projected Cost	Spent to Date	Balance Remaining In Line Item For 2005
Community Maintenance			
Monument Lights	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Tennis Court (new net)	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
Tree Replacement	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Weeding/mulch (Tot lots, tennis, monument)	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Subtotal	\$8,500.00	\$0.00	\$8,500.00
Community Activities			
Dumpster	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Summer block party	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
Fall activity	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
Plants for new homeowners	\$125.00	\$9.44	\$115.56
Yard sale advertisting	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
Subtotal	\$1,525.00	\$9.44	\$1,515.56
Business costs			
Accountant	\$150.00	\$125.00	\$25.00
Taxes	\$70.00	\$0.00	\$70.00
Web Site	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$250.00
Insurance	\$220.00	\$0.00	\$220.00
Lawyer	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
General Meeting Room & Food	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
Checking account fees	\$12.00	\$0.00	\$12.00
PO Box	\$76.00	\$76.00	\$0.00
Office Supplies	\$250.00	\$58.86	\$191.14
Subtotal	\$1,228.00	\$259.86	\$968.14
Grand Total	\$11,253.00	\$269.30	\$10,983.70
Checking account balance	\$9,739.84		
Savings account balance	\$1,641.13		
Total available now	\$11,380.97		
CD balance available in July	\$11,680.69		
Dues outstanding	\$576.00		
Grand Total	\$23,637.66		

Offutt Ridge Homeowners Association Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions

To: HOA Households
From: HOA Board
Re: Proposed Covenant Changes
Date: March 23, 2005

The HOA has begun the arduous task of updating our Declaration of Covenants. What follows below are four changes which have been submitted by committee and approved by the Board. We need every households vote either yes or no to **each** of the proposed changes. Please vote for each of the changes independently using ballot below.

PROPOSED CHANGE #1 - Article VII, Section 6(f)

Currently Reads

- No burning of any trash and no accumulation or storage of litter, lumber, scrap metal, refuse, bulk materials, waste, new or used building materials, or trash of any other kind shall be permitted on any Lot.

Proposed Revision

- No burning of any trash **without a County permit** and no accumulation or storage of litter, lumber, scrap metal, refuse, bulk materials, waste, new or used building materials, or trash of any other kind shall be permitted on any Lot. **If a permit is obtained from local authorities for the burning of trash, advanced notification to the Board shall be made by the member before such activity occurs along with a copy of any permits.**

PROPOSED CHANGE #2 - Article VII, Section 6(m)

Currently Reads

- No outside television aerial or radio antenna, satellite dish, or other aerial or antenna for receipt or transmission, shall be maintained upon the Property; provided, however, that roof-mounted antenna extending less than five (5) feet in any one dimension shall be permitted.

Proposed Revision

Outside television aerial or radio antenna, satellite dish, or other aerial or antenna for receipt or transmission, **may** be maintained upon the Property **upon approval of the Architectural Review Committee.**

PROPOSED CHANGE #3 - Article VII, Section 6(n)

Currently Reads

- No Member shall make any private or exclusive or proprietary use of any of the Recreational Areas except with the specific approval of the Architectural Review Committee and the Association, and then only on a temporary basis, and no Member shall engage or direct any

employee of the Association on any private business of the Member during the hours such employee is employed by the Association, nor shall any Member direct, supervise, or in any manner attempt to assert control over any employee of the Association.

Proposed Revision

No Member shall make any private or exclusive or proprietary use of any of the Recreational Areas except with the specific approval of the **Board of Directors** and the Association, and then only on a temporary basis, and no Member shall engage or direct any employee of the Association on any private business of the Member during the hours such employee is employed by the Association, nor shall any Member direct, supervise, or in any manner attempt to assert control over any employee of the Association.

PROPOSED CHANGE #4 - Article VII, Section 10

Currently Reads

Lease Agreements. All lease agreements shall be in writing and submitted to the Board of Directors for approval. The minimum term of all lease agreements shall be one (1) year, and shall state that the lease agreement shall be subject to this Declaration.

Proposed Revision

Lease Agreements. All lease agreements shall be in writing and submitted to the Board of Directors for **documentation**. The minimum term of all lease agreements shall be one (1) year, and shall state that the lease agreement shall be subject to this Declaration.

-----**End of Proposals**-----

Official Ballot

Revisions Ballot	Owner's Name - _____
Proposed Change #1 _____ - Yes _____ - No	Lot Owner's Signature - _____
Proposed Change #2 _____ - Yes _____ - No	Date - _____
Proposed Change #3 _____ - Yes _____ - No	Ballots may be submitted in the following manners:
Proposed Change #4 _____ - Yes _____ - No	1. Submit via mail to P.O. Box 512, Randallstown, Md 21133 2. Hand deliver to any Board Member or Officer 3. Submit at May's General Meeting.