

# The Oak Leaf

Newsletter of Broad Run Oaks



## Welcome New Board Members!

The Annual Meeting of the Broad Run Oaks (BRO) Homeowner's Association (HOA) took place on November 5<sup>th</sup>. A quorum of HOA members elected three new people to serve on the Board of Directors—Mr. Nasser Alikhani, Mr. Paul MacDonald and Ms. Debby Riplinger. See page 3 for an introduction of the new members. Thanks to the residents who attended the Annual Meeting—it takes the entire neighborhood to make a community. Please feel free to join us at upcoming meetings.

### Have you checked your lamplight lately?

Remember the outdoor lamplights in BRO serve as the streetlights within our community ... Please make sure yours is working properly.



## Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow

*Oh, the weather outside is frightful ...* or it soon could be. Are you prepared to handle the aftermath of a snowstorm?

Shoveling snow can be hard on your body, especially if you are not in good physical shape. Research has shown that shoveling snow may cause a quick increase in heart rate and blood pressure. Cold air and difficult weather conditions enhance the strain on your body by making it even harder to work and breathe. Another risk is hypothermia, a decrease in body temperature. The following tips will help you be heart healthy and back friendly this winter:

- If you are inactive and have a history of heart trouble, talk to your doctor prior to shoveling snow.
- Avoid caffeine or nicotine before beginning.
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
- Warm up and stretch your muscles prior to shoveling.
- Choose the right shovel—a smaller blade will put less strain on your body.
- Begin shoveling slowly and then pace yourself. Take breaks as needed.
- Proper positioning for shoveling begins with your feet approximately hip distance apart. The shovel should be kept close to your body. Bend from the knees (not the back) and tighten your stomach muscles as you lift the snow. Avoid twisting movements. If you need to move the snow to one side reposition your feet to face the direction the snow will be going.

Be sure to listen to your own body and stop immediately if you feel pain, that way you can continue to enjoy the *Winter Wonderland!*

## Tips for a Safe Holiday Season

Fires during the holiday season generally injure 2,600 individuals and cause over \$930 million in damage. Residents are reminded to decorate with safety in mind. The following are simple life-saving tips from the U.S. Fire Administration to help ensure a safe and happy holiday:

### Christmas Tree Safety

- Select a freshly cut tree—needles should be green and hard to pull back from the branches and should not break easily, and the trunk should be sticky to the touch. Trees that lose large amounts of needles when bounced on the ground have likely been cut too long, are probably dried out, and represent a fire hazard.
- Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent.
- Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks.
- Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.
- When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly—the best method is to take it to a recycling center or have it hauled away by a community pick-up service.
- Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or woodburning stove.

### Light Safety

- Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory.
- Do not overload electrical outlets—ensure no more than three strands of lights are linked together, unless the directions indicate it is safe to do so.
- Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet.
- Periodically check light wires—they should not be warm to the touch.
- Do not leave holiday lights on unattended.

### Decoration Safety

- Ensure decorations and artificial trees are nonflammable and/or flame-retardant
- Keep decorations away from heat vents and fireplaces

### Candle Safety

- Ensure candles are in stable holders and in a location where they cannot be easily knocked down
- Never leave the house with candles burning
- Never put lit candles on a tree



As a final tip, ensure your smoke detectors are clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Have a safe and happy holiday season.



Visit the  
BRO website  
([www.broadrunoaks.com](http://www.broadrunoaks.com))  
for a slide  
show of the  
event



### 2007 Halloween Parade / Party

The Social Committee, chaired by Maria Duffus, hosted the annual Halloween Parade and Party on October 28th. Ghouls, ghosts, and goblins of all shapes and sizes came out to enjoy the festivities. Activities included a pumpkin patch, haystack hunt, bean bag toss, duck pull, and tattoo station. Refreshments were also served. Fun was had by all who participated.

Committees are never full ... Email the board ([hoa@broadrunoaks.com](mailto:hoa@broadrunoaks.com)) to get more information on joining one of the BRO Committees (ARB, Bond Release, Communications, Helping Hands, Open Space, Social, Survey).



### Committee News

#### Open Space

The Open Space Committee, chaired by Miriam McBride, continues to work with TruGreen, our lawn care company, to ensure that all common areas within the community are being maintained. As of early November, the necessary fall care of the grounds was completed and tri-colored pansies were planted to ensure cold weather color. The Open Space Committee looks forward to the Sterling Point entrance receiving a landscape design and irrigation. Work will begin on that project once VDOT has made the necessary repairs to the damage in the area, which was caused by the recent roadwork.

As always, please contact the Open Space Committee at [openspace@broadrunoaks.com](mailto:openspace@broadrunoaks.com) if you notice a common area that is not being maintained properly or if you wish to become a member. Needless to say, volunteers are always welcome to the Open Space Committee. Have a safe and wonderful holiday season.

#### Small Gestures Often Mean The Most

Many of us equate the holiday season with gift giving. We devote an abundance of time looking for the 'perfect' gift. It can often be hectic and it is hard not to get caught up in the commercial aspects of it all. However, it is precisely at times such as the holidays that it is important to remember that small discreet acts of kindness embody the spirit of holiday giving every bit as much as those that seem more grand and showy. Mother Teresa said it well, *We can do no great things, only small things with great love.*

Stories of anonymous donors and caring volunteers helping those less fortunate fill the news and demonstrate the joy that can be bought for very little time or money. If you have wished you could do more for others, but family and financial obligations seem to stand in your way, consider this simple idea to touch another life this holiday season—When addressing your holiday cards this year, include one for We support you during your recovery! c/o American Red Cross, P.O. Box 419, Savage, MD 20763-0419. Although a small gesture, it will be greatly appreciated by its deserving recipient. Let's not forget that *(continued on page 3)*

#### Architectural Review Board

The ARB, chaired by Dave Sanchez, continues to perform inspections to keep the neighborhood looking its best. Trash is the topic of discussion for this edition of the newsletter.

*Tightly closing trash containers provided by the trash company, shall be used at all times. Pursuant to Article VI, Section 9 of the Covenants, trash and recycling containers...should only be placed on the curbside or street on days of collection...Trash cans shall be collected promptly after trash pickup...and stored out of view at all other times. Trash cans may not be stored on Association property.*

The intent of this guideline is to ensure that trash within our community is disposed of and stored properly. Residents should keep their yards free of debris and store their trash can in an area concealed from the street. As winter approaches, residents are reminded that they are also responsible for keeping the sidewalk in front of their home free from snow.

If you need further clarity on this guideline or have any other questions contact [arb@broadrunoaks.com](mailto:arb@broadrunoaks.com).

#### The ARB has three openings for new members.

If interested in serving your community in this capacity please contact the board via email ([hoa@broadrunoaks.com](mailto:hoa@broadrunoaks.com)).

#### Neighborhood Watch at Work

The BRO Neighborhood Watch, which is coordinated by Karen Decker, held a second informational meeting on November 19th. Officer Alex Dominguez from the Prince William County (PWC) Police Department provided literature and stressed the importance of forming a neighborhood watch program for a safer community. At the conclusion of the meeting, several residents joined the watch and some even volunteered to become block captains.

Block captains are necessary to channel pertinent information of criminal activity throughout the neighborhood and vicinity, making residents aware of suspicious activity and creating a safer community via well-informed neighbors. In fact, block captains are key for a successful watch *(continued on page 3)*

## Meet Your New Board Members

**Nasser Alikhani**, 12146 Paper Birch Lane

Nasser has lived in BRO for over 2 years.

In his own words: *It is obvious that our house is not only a place for us to enjoy and relax, but also one of the major investments of our lives. I believe every homeowner needs to be actively involved in protecting this investment, which is only possible by protecting our neighborhood as a whole. I am serving on the board to better protect our investments, address the homeowners concerns, enhance the environment of our community and prevent adverse impacts on our neighborhood. I strongly urge other members of our community to get actively involved in the committees of our HOA. Thanks to the sincere efforts of board and committee members, our community is improving constantly. We can only build a more valuable and better community together.*

**Paul MacDonald**, 12160 Maiden Hair Drive

Paul has lived in BRO for just over 4 years. Prior to being selected as a member of the board he served as a member of the Architectural Review Board. Paul is also a member of the Helping Hands Committee and participates in the BRO Neighborhood Watch.

In his own words: *I have been attending board meetings for the last three years and have watched the community grow and improve. However, I feel that having new people with fresh ideas on the board will allow that improvement to continue and I look forward to being a part of it.*

**Debby Riplinger**, 12146 Maiden Hair Drive

Debby has lived in BRO for over 4 years. She is chairwoman of the Survey Committee, a member of the Helping Hands Committee, and also participates in the Neighborhood Watch program.

In her own words: *I very much enjoy living in BRO and joined the board of directors to further improve our community. To be a good board member I believe that you need to strongly support the right of all people to speak their minds and that it should be the duty of the board to listen and consider what everyone has to say.*

*I believe we need to take care of the community, the people, and do it smartly.*



## Neighborhood Watch *(continued from page 2)*

program. Block captains are still needed for several streets within the community including 8100 and 8200 Tenbrook Drive, Crackling Cedar Lane, Crimson Crossing Way, Scarlet Maple Drive, Sour Gum Court, Sterling Point Way, Narrow Branch Court, Big Leaf Maple Drive, Sierra Sunset Drive, Double Eagle Street, Rainy Day Way, and Prickly Ash Court. If you live on one of the above streets and would like to volunteer to be a block captain, or if you just want to help make BRO a safer community by becoming a watch member, then contact [neighborhoodwatch@broadrunoaks.com](mailto:neighborhoodwatch@broadrunoaks.com)

Even though there has been minimal criminal activity within our community, Officer Dominguez's message about the importance of a neighborhood watch is well founded. Since the inception of the BRO Neighborhood Watch, two incidents have occurred in which tips from BRO watch members have assisted the PWC Police in the apprehension and subsequent arrest of individuals involved in two attempted burglaries—many thanks go out to these members for their watchful eyes.

Additionally, thanks go out to all those residents who have joined the BRO Neighborhood Watch. With a special thank you to those who have volunteered to be block captains. On behalf of the BRO Neighborhood Watch, have a safe and happy holiday season.

## Small Gestures *(continued from page 2)*

while we are enjoying the holiday festivities surrounded by friends and family, thousands of service men and women are recovering from injuries sustained during their service in Iraq and Afghanistan and thousands more are still serving. Throughout our country's history, men and women of our armed forces have sacrificed their own freedoms to insure that the rest of us can continue to enjoy basic freedoms that we have come to take for granted—including our celebration of the holidays. Consider the holiday cheer you can spread by simply taking a few minutes to honor the selfless contribution of these heroes. If you have children, consider getting them involved. A holiday card, handmade and signed by a child, is always a treasure to its recipient. Even if you do not celebrate the holidays, a short note of thanks can mean a lot. Let these brave men and women know that their sacrifices have not gone unnoticed, and that you appreciate their selflessness.

The Helping Hands committee wishes all residents a safe and joyous holiday season. See you in 2008!

## Community Contacts

### Board of Directors

Chuck Robinson.....President  
Nasser Alikhani.....Vice President  
Debby Riplinger.....Secretary  
Melissa Jaramillo.....Treasurer  
Paul MacDonald.....Member-At-Large

[hoa@broadrunoaks.com](mailto:hoa@broadrunoaks.com)

### Management Company

Armstrong Management Services, Inc.  
3949 Pender Drive, #205  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
telephone: 703-385-1133  
fax: 703-591-5785

[customerservice@armstrong.net](mailto:customerservice@armstrong.net)

This newsletter is an official publication of the Broad Run Oaks Homeowners Association. Publication in this newsletter of resolutions, rules, regulations and meetings duly adopted or called by the Board of Directors serves as official notice to the membership and residents of the meetings or the adoption and implementation of these enactments of rules for the purpose of enforcement

**Newsletter Articles:** If you have topics or articles you would like to see addressed in the newsletter, please contact Paula MacDonald, *The Oak Leaf* editor and Communications Committee Chair at:

[communications@broadrunoaks.com](mailto:communications@broadrunoaks.com).

All suggestions are welcome!

## **From the President:**

Dear Fellow Residents;

Let me begin by welcoming our new board members, I look forward to working with each of you on improving the quality of life of our residents.

The Board of Directors will be busy in the next year, as we have several large contracts that are up for renewal. The largest being our trash service, which currently consumes a large amount of our operating revenue. Over the next several months, the Board will be reviewing bids for our trash service, in hopes that we can cut the overall cost without cutting the amount of service our current contractor is providing. In addition, the newly formed Management Company Search Committee will be requesting bids for a new property management company, and forwarding their recommendations to the Board for selection.

During the November 27, 2007 board meeting, the Board of Directors approved the 2008 budget, which each of you will receive in the coming days. Along with the budget approval, came some difficult decisions, the most difficult being the approval to increase our annual dues by ten percent, \$60.00 per year to \$165.00 per quarter, or \$660.00 per year. This was a difficult decision for the Board to make, as none of us want to pay more in HOA fees; however, due to the lack of increases in the past, and the additional expenses incurred to refurbish the Sierra Sunset entrance, the Board was left with little choice but to increase the dues. Residents are reminded that this is only the second increase in the four year history of the BRO HOA, and is only half the amount of the previous increase. The increase will allow us to operate with a positive cash flow and to replenish funds that have been used from our reserve fund, which is required by Virginia law. The reserve funds will likely be needed in the coming years, if not sooner, for replacement or repair of common areas throughout the community—for example, the fences around the dry ponds, some of which already need attention.

In closing, I would like to wish each and every one of you a Happy Holiday and a Happy New Year. If you are traveling during the holidays, please be safe and make sure you tell a neighbor that you will be out of town. You may also wish to contact our newly formed neighborhood watch for more information on how to protect your home while you are away.

Thank you and Happy Holidays,

Chuck Robinson, President  
Broad Run Oaks HOA

**Broad Run Oaks Homeowners Association**  
**c/o Armstrong Management Services, Inc.**  
**3949 Pender Drive, #205**  
**Fairfax, VA 22030**



**Join us in January 2008 for the next meeting  
of the Broad Run Oaks Homeowners  
Association—specific details will be posted  
on the website and on the community sign  
(located at the Sierra Sunset entrance)**