



# The Oak Leaf

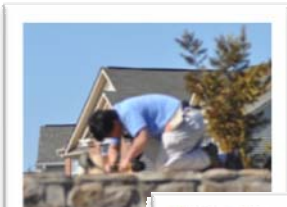
Newsletter of Broad Run Oaks



## Let There Be Light

Due to resident concerns about the solar-powered carriage lights not giving off bright enough light and not lasting through all hours of darkness, efforts are underway to improve the lighting at both the Sterling Point and Sierra Sunset entrances. The concern among residents was heightened following the vandalism that occurred in the Fall of 2008. Based on these concerns, the Board voted to improve the lighting at both entrances last year by installing hard-wired lighting to increase visibility, enhance the visual impact of the entrances, and decrease the opportunity for vandals.

Hardwiring the entrance lights means having the Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative (NOVEC) install permanent power at each entrance. This, of course, entails approvals and permits—a lengthy process on a good day. The actual work to install the new lights was set to begin in early February, however the 'snowpocalypse' put a damper on that plan. Despite the delays, the process has begun and the carriage lights atop the columns have been changed out. NOVEC also marked the area for installation of permanent power on March 18<sup>th</sup> and a sub-contractor is ready to complete installation of electrical sub-panels within the next few weeks. Following the sub-panel installation, new flood lights will be installed and the unsightly solar panels will be removed.



A secondary benefit to having permanent power at each entrance is that the sprinkler system will no longer be on battery power. This will ensure that the sprinklers runs more reliably and efficiently. In addition, the power will allow us to enhance the entrances using holiday lighting, if desired.

The end result of the overall project will be well-lit entrances that welcome guests and discourage criminals, despite the time of day.



## Irresponsible Pet Owners Continue to be a Nuisance

Residents continue to voice concerns to the Board of Directors about neighbors who are not being responsible pet owners. As a reminder, pet owners are required by law to ensure their pets are contained and not being a disturbance to others, as well as being required to clean up after their pets. Animal feces has been proven to cause disease spread. Allowing animals to knowingly defecate and failing to pick it up is a punishable offense per Prince William County law Section 4-11 and 4-26. Please remember to be courteous to your fellow neighbors and practice good pet etiquette. It is not only responsible, it is also hygienic and required by law!

## Is Your Yard Ready?

Last year marked the beginning of what the Board hopes will continue to be a successful program—The Broad Run Oaks Yard of the Month. The program runs from May through September with five yards recognized each year.

If you think one of your neighbors has what it takes to be a Yard of the Month winner, nominate them by sending an email to [hoa@broadrunoaks.com](mailto:hoa@broadrunoaks.com). Nominations are due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month and winners are selected by majority vote of current Broad Run Oaks committee members. Winning yards can not have any current citations for architectural guidelines violations or any pending payments for homeowners' dues or violations. For complete details and program rules visit the website ([www.broadrunoaks.com](http://www.broadrunoaks.com)).

*What's Happening?*

- ❖ Neighborhood Watch meeting\* – April 15<sup>th</sup>
- ❖ **Broad Run Oaks Community Yard Sale – May 22<sup>nd</sup> from 7 a.m. until 2 p.m.**
- ❖ Homeowners Association meeting\* – May 19<sup>th</sup>

*\*Date tentative, check website for specific details*

## Tips to Improve Your Neighborhood

The following 12 tips are brought to you courtesy of the Prince William County neighborhood watch program.

1. Report crime promptly – police cannot act without first hearing about the problem from citizens.
2. Report nuisances/other non-criminal problems promptly.
3. Take away the opportunity for crime.
4. Meet the youth who live near you and greet them by name.
5. Make a list of the names/phone numbers of your neighbors.
6. Know the landlords in your area.
7. Turn your porch light on.
8. Walk around the block.
9. Drive slowly on neighborhood streets.
10. Pick up litter near your home, even if you didn't put it there.
11. Stay where you are – stable neighborhoods are built on the commitment of long-term residents.
12. Help your neighborhood association or similar groups – if leadership isn't your desire, at least make sure someone in your household attends local neighborhood association meetings. You'll be kept better informed of the issues facing the neighborhood and how you can help and, perhaps more importantly, you'll have the chance to shape, guide, and participate in the future of your neighborhood.



**Architectural Review Committee**

by *Michael O'Loughlin, Chair*

WOW, what a winter we just had! I think I can speak for everyone when I say I am glad it is finally over and the snow has finally melted and gone away. I thought the snow in my back yard was going to stick around until next winter. But seriously, this is a good opportunity to look back and see what we could have done better. Many homeowners made valiant efforts to shovel the snow off their sidewalks but most homeowners did not. The two 20" plus storms were an exception but we all really have to try and do a better job so we do not have any accidents (e.g., people slipping on sidewalks or getting hit by a car because they are forced to walk in the street). The other big reminders are to make sure you shovel an access path to your mailbox so mail can be delivered and do the same for the fire hydrants if one is near your home. Another proposed solution to a problem is for parents to get together and clear an area out of the road for kids to be able to safely wait for their school buses.

Monthly inspections begin again this month through September so you will see your ARB members coming around to check the neighborhood and make sure all is in order. Please take time to say hello and let us know if there are things you see that need to be taken care of. This is our community and we want to keep it beautiful. The hard winter will likely have had some impact on our homes too so take a close look at your home to see what may need a little paint or repair, particularly the front door and garage door frames which seem to always show the most wear and tear. Yard care through the spring and summer continue to be paramount, and yard maintenance tends to be the most prevalent reason violation notices are sent. Please mow your yard regularly and do not forget to edge your sidewalks and utilize a weed-eater to trim around your house and landscape.

As a reminder, mailbox covers are authorized, but house numbers must be visible either on the mailbox or the post. Basketball hoops should be stored in the upright position in the driveway area. Also, please keep trash receptacles out of sight on non-pickup days and replace burned out lights in your lamp posts. Since Broad Run Oaks does not have many street lights, we must rely on the home lights to keep yards and roads visible. Remember, the Architectural Guidelines are available on our community website ([www.broadrunoaks.com](http://www.broadrunoaks.com))—just click on Association Documents. If you have any questions, would like to propose amendments or updates to the Guidelines, or want to request a copy of the updated Guidelines please contact us at [arb@broadrunoaks.com](mailto:arb@broadrunoaks.com).

Over the last summer and fall, the ARC approved two dozen applications for exterior alterations. However, a review of the neighborhood indicates there are nearly that many alterations done where homeowners did not submit an application ahead of time. Documenting alterations is very important, especially when it comes time to try and sell your home. It also informs your neighbors and the HOA that you plan to do something. Please be sure to get exterior modifications authorized and done correctly so you are not required to spend extra money

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**Open Space Committee**

by *Miriam McBride, Chair*

Welcome Spring! After a long, hard winter, I know we are all looking forward to some spring color around here! Community Landscape Service will be starting our Spring clean up soon. Once the temperature is consistently above freezing, we will have our warm weather annuals planted at both entrances. Please notify the Open Space Committee for any problems with any of the common areas throughout the community. We really need EVERYONE to take notice of areas that are missed in mowing, have litter, or any other concerns. As always, please report these findings to the Open Space committee at [openspace@broadrunoaks.com](mailto:openspace@broadrunoaks.com).

Although these issues do not pertain to common areas, please be sure to pick up any litter in or around your property as it often makes its way into a common area when the wind blows. Also, many bushes and small trees on your property may have been damaged with the weight of the heavy snow, please take some time this spring to prune as needed or replace your landscaping. Take pride in your property!

As of writing this note for the newsletter, we have MANY houses that STILL have their winter holiday wreaths on their home and lights up. It is now March, please think of your neighbor's property value if you don't take pride in your own!

***Interested in joining a Committee?***

Check out the website ([www.broadrunoaks.com](http://www.broadrunoaks.com)) for details on all the Committees within Broad Run Oaks

**A Lesson Learned from a Boy Named Angelo**

by *Karen Decker, Chair Helping Hands Committee*

Recently my co-worker brought her eight year old son into work on a Saturday, and since then I wanted to share the most memorable message in life given to me during that particular day with everyone in Broad Run Oaks. Angelo spent the day watching movies while his mother worked. He told me that one of the movies he was watching, *Indiana Jones*, was his favorite but the characters used some bad words in it. I suggested that when he watched it, he should cover his ears when they said those bad words. As the day wore on and Angelo became more comfortable with me, he shared that sometimes he hears grown-ups saying bad words. I suggested that he collect a dollar from the grown-ups around him every time they used a bad word. He was delighted with this idea, and by the end of the work day, he had already collected \$5.00.

Then the message dawned on me how the true richness in life doesn't necessarily come from a monetary value but the innocence of a child's words. As adults, it is our responsibility to teach children how to live and how to behave to best get along with others, or maybe they are the ones who teach us most. We provide children with rules and guidelines to live by, and children like to have rules—they help them understand and navigate in their little worlds. However, as adults, we sometimes adopt a different view of rules. Perhaps we bend them a bit, or we use them only when it suits us or when someone else is watching. But maybe if we take a step

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## Resolve to Get Involved

Paula MacDonald, Communications Chair

Let me begin by saying this is an opinion piece. You may have noticed there was not a winter edition of *The Oak Leaf*. There were several factors that weighed into that, but the main one was that I was feeling a little bitter about the lack of community involvement within Broad Run Oaks. My bitterness began due to the fact that we have been trying, albeit unsuccessfully, to illicit volunteers for the social and communications committees for almost three years now. But the proverbial straw, you know the one that broke the camel's back, occurred on the night of our Annual Meeting. We did not have a quorum to begin the meeting, so a few of us went door-to-door to obtain signatures. The signatures simply noted that residents were aware of the meeting and legally gave us the appropriate numbers necessary to proceed with the meeting. Apparently, I knocked on the wrong door.

Instead of gratitude for the volunteer hours we put in trying to improve the community, I got an earful about how useless the HOA is because our community only has a tennis court. Now I must make the point that the HOA has nothing to do with the amenities that were originally planned for the community—those decisions were made by the development company prior to any of us moving in. That said, the HOA can improve the amenities we currently have and could even vote to add new ones, but both of these actions require community involvement.

In these hard economic times when our housing values are so depressed we wonder if we will ever have equity again, it is more important than ever to ensure we have a welcoming community. Many of us have found the time to volunteer within the community despite our full time jobs, children, etc.—some going above and beyond the scope of what most would consider reasonable. So, for all of you residents who feel the HOA is not doing a good job, I challenge you to get involved. The HOA is a volunteer organization, we can only be as good as our participation. When we can not even get 10% of our residents to attend the annual meeting, how good can we possibly be? Now do not misunderstand me, this article is not meant as a slight toward anyone who volunteers in the community—I think those of us who volunteer are doing a superb job! This is a call to action for those who do not currently volunteer. **If you don't like it, please help us fix it!**



### Community Contacts

#### Board of Directors

Paul MacDonald.....President  
Melissa Jaramillo.....Vice President  
Debby Riplinger.....Secretary  
Brian Tower.....Treasurer  
Jim Decker.....Member-At-Large

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

## Lesson Learned (continued from page 2)

back and consider their purpose—to help us be better individuals and a better society—we would follow them with a better attitude and more often.

Children can teach us so much. My time with Angelo reminded me that getting along with others, even in stressful work environments like a hospital, means following the simple rules we learned a long time ago when we were children. Always remember these lines from Robert Fulghum's book, All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten:

*Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody...Live a balanced life—learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some...When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together.*

Angelo, thank you for the valuable lesson you have taught me through the innocence of your eyes and heart, and for the rest of us, how much will you owe Angelo “all in a day's work”?

On a personal note, thank you Sean for your duty to our country. Be safe with your tour in Iraq. You are in my thoughts and prayers and I am very proud of you.

*We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today—Stacia Taushcer*

## Salon Nordine & Day Spa Cut-a-Thon

Please join the salon in supporting Team Boobala's fight to end breast cancer. The team will walk in the AVON Walk for Breast Cancer being held in May. The cut-a-thon will take place **Sunday, April 18<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.** In appreciation for support the salon will offer **\$15 off hair cutting services**. In addition, a raffle for theme baskets and salon services will take place during the event with drawings held hourly (participants will not need to be present to win). Call 703-753-6971 for an appointment or for more detail.

## Architectural Review Committee (continued from page 2)

removing or fixing something you had done improperly and without authorization.

The ARC thanks all residents for their efforts to keep Broad Run Oaks one of Gainesville's best and most beautiful communities.

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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:** The next edition of *The Oak Leaf* will be Summer 2010. Article topics and suggestions will be accepted until June 12<sup>th</sup>. Submit ideas and/or inputs to Paula MacDonald, *The Oak Leaf* editor and Communications Committee Chair at:

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

**From the President:**

Fellow Residents,

Welcome to another spring season! Although generally a happy time of growth and new development with warm weather and beautiful surroundings, spring does bring with it some required clean up following the winter months. Since this was such a harsh winter, some of the plants in your yard may need additional tender loving care and some home maintenance activities may need immediate attention. The Board asks all residents to get involved in keeping Broad Run Oaks looking clean and neat throughout the year. If you see a piece of trash on the street or in a common area adjacent to your home, please take the time to pick it up. If your neighbor is having difficulty maintaining their yard or they do not understand how to maintain their yard, it only takes a few moments to help them—in the end helping them will enhance your own yard. Working together we can make Broad Run Oaks a desirable location that entices other people to want to join our community.

Spring also means people are out walking, often with their pets, and kids are out playing. Take the opportunity to meet and greet one another while you are out and about—getting to know your neighbors is a good way to improve the safety within our community. Also, please remember to pay attention for children when driving through the neighborhood. Remember it is important to follow all street and speed limit signs and to not block sidewalks with your vehicles. Broad Run Oaks did have an accident involving a child on a bike getting hit by a car last year, let us all be vigilant to ensure this does not happen again. In addition, please be a courteous pet owner and clean up after your animals. This is not only good manners, not picking up after your pets violates a Prince William County ordinance and is also very unsanitary.

The Board wishes everyone a terrific spring and summer. We hope to see you at the next Homeowner's Association meeting.

Sincerely,

Paul MacDonald  
President, Broad Run Oaks HOA

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



*The Oak Leaf*  
Spring 2010

The next meeting of the  
Broad Run Oaks Homeowners  
Association will be in May.  
Please join us!