

The ak Leaf

Newsletter of Broad Run Oaks



A New Year's Resolution for Broad Run Oaks

Catherina Hurlburt, contributing writer

Rarely is there a day I drive into or out of our neighborhood and not see trash strewn in the common area near the second entrance: Red Bull cans, soda cups, beer bottles, and recently, a few days after the new year, the bag and entire contents of a fast food meal scattered across the landscaping and Sierra Sunset. Drive down any of our streets, and you see much of the same—from candy wrappers to school papers to beverage containers—carelessly tossed around our neighborhood.

Without witnessing the littering in progress, it is impossible to know who the perpetrators are: residents or visitors. It is hard to prevent the latter from trashing the community, but there is no excuse for the former to be dumping garbage around Broad Run Oaks.

We are certainly not alone. Keep America Beautiful notes that American citizens produce about of 236 million tons of trash every year. The Prince William Clean Community Council volunteers removed more than 212 tons of litter last year alone.

Who litters? Green Eco Services (www.greenecoservices.com) reports that there is no one “type” of litterbug, but:

- 75% of Americans admit to littering in the last 5 years.
- The most common offenders are males between 18-34 years.
- Litterers tend to be smokers.
- People who eat fast food at least two times a week are likely to litter.
- People who drive 50 miles a day are culpable.
- People who go out for entertainment at least once a week tend to litter.

That's a wide range that basically includes any of us in Broad Run Oaks. So simply put: it's a conscientious decision we have to make to save the trash for our garbage cans at home. That's not a hard decision to make.

Continued on page 3

Are You Ready for the 'S' Word?

Paula MacDonald, Communications Chair

Although the weather outside is not yet frightful, Old Man Winter is obviously taking his turn with the thermostat. Whether or not we get another ‘snowmageddon’ in 2011 or just our ‘typical’ snowfall is yet to be determined, but one thing is for certain—it is best to be prepared.

According to researchers, shoveling snow is comparable to an active round of singles tennis or speed walking at 5 m.p.h. Add this required energy output to the cold air and you have created a potentially dangerous mix that could result in back strain and muscle soreness up to hypothermia or a heart attack—none of which sound pleasant to me.

So, I've scoured the internet comparing tips and tricks for safe shoveling and provide the following for your consideration:

- Choose the right tool for the job – although a large shovel may seem like a good idea, snow isn't as light and fluffy as it appears. A curved handle will also alleviate some of the strain on your back.
- Warm up prior to starting. As with any exercise, warm-up and stretching are key to avoiding injuries.
- Dress appropriately – wear multiple layers that can be removed if you begin to overheat.
- Slow & steady wins the race – this wasn't only true for the tortoise. Set a steady pace and take frequent breaks.
- Stay hydrated – drink plenty of fluids. Avoid caffeinated and/or energy drinks as these speed up your heart.
- Lift properly – use your legs and avoid twisting your body to throw the snow. Space your hands far apart on the shovel for increased leverage.

Remember, not everyone is cut out for strenuous work. Seniors, smokers, and those at risk for heart attack (i.e., high blood pressure, high cholesterol, prior history of heart problems) should seriously consider hiring someone and/or investing in a snow blower. I hope everyone enjoys whatever winter wonderland we are given.



Annual Halloween Parade ‘Dresses Up’ as a Fall Festival

Attendees at this year's Halloween parade got more than they bargained for. The somewhat annual event was transformed by the Social Committee. The event still began with children, adults, and even some pets showing off their costumes on a parade through the community following a fire engine, but at the end of the parade there was more than the annual attendees were used to.

The biggest addition was a petting zoo. Everyone was impressed with the variety of animals it included from a llama and a miniature pony to ducks and rabbits. There was even a snake that some of the children were brave enough to pet and hold. The kids also got to enjoy several hours of jumping around in a bouncy house, not to mention all the games and prizes!

The Social Committee thanks all the volunteers who helped with set up, monitoring of game stations, and clean up. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year. Additional pictures from the event are posted on the Broad Run Oaks Facebook page (See page 2 for Facebook url).



Committee News



Architectural Review Committee

Mike O'Loughlin, Chair

Winter is officially upon us! Although we are not likely to see record breaking snow falls like we had last year we will definitely have to deal with some snow. Neither the state nor the county clears snow from public walkways (sidewalks), so residents should, as soon as feasible, clear snow off sidewalks in front of their property to help keep others safe and prevent them from having to walk in the street. The general rule is for snow to be removed within 24 hours once the snow stops falling when accumulations are less than 6 inches, and within 36 hours when 6 or more inches of snow accumulate. Please try to remove snow from the entire width of the sidewalk to accommodate wheelchairs, strollers, and adults with children in hand.

Just as important, residents are reminded to shovel access paths to mailboxes so mail can be safely delivered. If a fire hydrant is near your home, residents are asked to clear an area of at least one foot around the hydrant to help firefighters locate them in case of an emergency. This will also help prevent damage to hydrants by snow removal efforts.

Last year snow covering school bus stops forced children to wait in the street for their buses to arrive. This was a very dangerous situation. It recommended that parents get together and clear a safe area out of the road for children to safely wait for their school buses.

My last winter request is for homeowners to make sure their home lights, especially the lamplights that serve as our community street lights, are functioning properly. Remember, we rely on these lights to keep yards and roads visible.

Homeowners are reminded that the Architectural Review Committee is in place to monitor the neighborhood and ensure residents adhere to the Architectural Guidelines, which are available in the Association Documents portion of our website: www.broadrunoaks.com/BRO_Docs.htm.

As always, if you have questions about inspections and/or the exterior modification application process, email the committee at arb@broadrunoaks.com. Residents are also welcome to attend our monthly meetings—just check the website or use the email address to contact us for meeting information.

The Architectural Review Committee hopes everyone had a safe, enjoyable holiday season, and wishes all Broad Run Oaks residents a prosperous 2011.

Open Space

Ric Seaman, Chair

The Open Space Committee hopes everyone enjoyed the holiday lights and decorations at the front entrances. Special thanks go out to Ric Seaman and Jeff and Debby Riplinger for their efforts in putting them up for all to enjoy.

Speaking of decorations, as a friendly reminder, please have all holiday decorations removed and stored in a timely manner. Although some stores advertise 'Christmas in July,' most homeowners probably don't wish to see Santa around that long in the neighborhood. In addition, please take pride in your property—pick up stray litter and maintain the sidewalks following winter weather. As a reminder, homeowners are responsible for clearing the community sidewalk that passes through their property.

Open Space wishes everyone a terrific winter. Before you know it spring will be upon us, and we'll be picking the colors for annuals at the entrances. Remember to email openspace@broadrunoaks.com if you see a common area in the community that needs care.

Social Committee

Melanie Smallwood, Chair

The Social Committee hopes all residents had a happy holiday season. 2010 was, at least in our mind, a super year for the committee. We finally got a chair and were able to host two very successful events.

We are excited to inform you that we already have several fun events being planned for 2011. Please watch the entrance signs, newsletter, website, and our Broad Run Oaks Facebook page for additional details, dates, and times.

Looking for more Broad Run Oaks information or have something to share with the community?

Visit our website (www.broadrunoaks.com) or



(<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Broad-Run-Oaks/163709803643269>)

Helping Hands

Karen Decker, Chair

As the holiday season is meant for a time of giving, I take pride in seeing the wonderful smiles and joy when getting together with family and friends. This year the best gift of all for me was my nephew, Sean, who surprised us all by returning home for a break from his military tour in Iraq. The most special portion, at least in my eyes, was sitting back and watching the reactions—his father and mother in uncontrollable "happy tears," his brother and sister ecstatic, and his aunts, uncles and cousins with smiles so broad. I think our entire family could say that this was one of our best Christmases ever, and I am so thankful.

I'm sure you can all equate your own memorable, special gifts bestowed upon you during this holiday season. Giving comes in all shapes and sizes, and can cost a fortune or have no monetary price at all. Often gifts come when we least expect them. The good news is that giving doesn't have to be limited to the holidays, which is the one reason why I created the Helping Hands Committee. Please remember to contact us at helpinghands@broadrunoaks.com if you know of a person/family within Broad Run Oaks that could use some assistance. We will do our best to ensure the person/family is given the help needed.

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and don't forget to give the gift of love by just saying "I love you" to the special ones in your life.

You give but little when you give of your possessions...It is when you give of yourself that you truly give – Kahlil Gibran



Support the Bridlewaves Swim Team!

- **Mulch Sale:** 3 cubic ft. brown double-shredded hardwood \$4/bag, or black color-enhanced for \$5/bag. Delivered March 19, just in time for spring. Order by March 4th (Catherina, 571-278-5128).
- **Sponsorship Opportunity:** Sponsors get exposure to over 600 people each meet through signs, newsletters, meet programs, and the team website www.bwaves.org. Sponsors also receive an IRS tax deduction and a plaque for your place of business. Email sponsorship@bwaves.org. to become a sponsor or get more info.

Resolution

Continued from page 1

If aesthetics and environmental protection don't matter to you, maybe money does. According to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (www.deq.state.va.us):

- Every year the Virginia Department of Transportation spends \$7 million cleaning up litter. (You're tired of paying high taxes, right?)
- Litter also affects real estate value: property values drop by as much as 15%. (How attractive is a house in a trashed neighborhood to you?)
- And littering is a misdemeanor punishable by up to 12 months in jail and/or a fine up to \$2,500.

And for sake of space, if you need to know where to stick your butt (cigarettes don't disappear when you toss it out your car window), visit this page:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswcd/newsletter/buttlitter.htm>.

Let's encourage our kids not to toss trash on the ground, and our teens to exert positive peer pressure with their visiting friends not to litter in our neighborhood. And of course, let's restrain ourselves from trashing our community. In fact, the Great American Cleanup campaign runs March 1 to May 31. Perhaps we can conduct a Great Broad Run Oaks Cleanup here. The websites in this column offer some great ideas to get started. If you are interested in helping organize such an event or have additional questions, then let's work together. Contact communications@broadrunoaks.com to express your interest—

Let's resolve to make 2011 a clean year in Broad Run Oaks.

For More Information:

- www.pwcleancouncil.org
- www.kab.org
- www.greenecoservices.com/littering-facts-and-statistics/



Broad Run Oaks Neighborhood Watch

Ensuring Broad Run Oaks is crime free is not solely the responsibility of the Prince William County Police Department. The police can only be in so many places at once, so it is up to our residents to be vigilant and alert to stop crime in our community. This brings up the question, when should you call the police?

According to our PWC Neighborhood Watch coordinator, you should call the police whenever you observe suspicious activity. Do not rely on someone else to call, even though multiple people may have witnessed an incident. The police would prefer multiple calls about the same incident rather than no calls. People often fail to act because they wonder if what they are observing is worth reporting. A good rule of thumb is if it seems suspicious to you, it is worth a call to the PWC non-emergency number (703-792-6500).

So, what are suspicious activities? The following list includes occurrences that PWC deems appropriate to report (NOTE: this is not an all inclusive listing):

- A stranger around your neighbor's house or a strange truck or car parked at your neighbor's home while they are away.
- The sound of breaking glass.
- Anyone peering into vehicles or removing tags, gasoline, or auto parts.
- An improperly parked car, or parked car with someone in it that seems out of place.
- Someone carrying property such as TVs, stereos, construction tools, or burglary tools.
- Apparent business transactions conducted from a vehicle or on street corners.
- A constant flow of strangers to and from a particular house on a regular basis, especially at late hours.
- Persons involved in a fight or any loud explosions or screams.
- Door-to-door solicitors without a properly issued permit, or any stranger knocking at doors (burglars sometimes knock at the door first to see if anyone is at home).
- A vehicle driving slowly through the neighborhood.
- Persons standing around, possibly acting as a lookout.

The Neighborhood Watch and PWC Police encourage everyone to be aware of suspicious or unusual activity and vehicles. Remember to report all suspicious activity within Broad Run Oaks by calling:

9-1-1 for emergencies and

703-792-6500 for non-emergencies

Community Contacts

Board of Directors

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

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

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 Spring 2011. Article topics and suggestions will be accepted until March 25th. Submit ideas and/or inputs to Paula MacDonald, *The Oak Leaf* editor and Communications Committee Chair at:

communications@broadrunoaks.com

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

From the President:

Dear Fellow Residents,

I hope all of you had a wonderful holiday season, and wish you health and prosperity as we head into the new year.

I'm happy to report that the Board was able to reduce the first two quarterly assessments of homeowner's association dues for 2011. The reduction was due in part to savings negotiated on our trash contract renewal. Our goal is to try to continue this trend in the future.

We are still awaiting the results of the feasibility study that the community approved during the annual meeting. As a reminder, we are assessing our common areas to determine if additional community amenities, such as a club house and/or pool, can be added to Broad Run Oaks. In addition, we are looking at the expected costs for these improvements. The study results will be utilized to plan community enhancements over the next several years. We are hopeful the results will be what most homeowners desire and we will share them with the community via a homeowner's association meeting as soon as possible. Watch the community website, Facebook page, and entrance signs for information related to results and upcoming meetings.

I would like to thank the residents involved in decorating our entrances for the holiday. The lights, garland, and wreaths added a seasonal touch to our already attractive entrances. I also thank individual residents who took the time to decorate their own homes. As a whole, our community had a festive, holiday appeal that I think was appreciated by most who reside here.

Lastly, I would like to remind residents to give their heating systems and hose bibs one more check before the worst of the winter weather hits. I look forward to seeing you all at the next homeowner's association meeting or just out-and-about in the community.

Sincerely,

Paul MacDonald
President, Broad Run Oaks HOA

Page 4



Join us for the next Homeowners Association meeting — watch the website and the community entrance signs for more specific details