

# The Acorn



*The Newsletter of the Springfield Oaks Homeowners Association*  
<http://www.springfielddoaks.org>

## **President's Corner**

by Ken McCreless

As many of you are aware, the Springfield Oaks Homeowners Association annual meeting was held on October 25<sup>th</sup>. At that meeting two new Board members were elected. Congratulations to Ron Manning and Nick Firth on their election, and sincere appreciation and thanks to out-going Association President Dave Adkins and at large member Mike Gropman. Both have given unselfishly of their time and energy to make our community a good place to live in Northern Virginia.

At the first monthly meeting after the annual meeting the Board elects new officers for the coming year. At the November 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, I was elected President, Ron Manning was elected Vice President, Carlos Almodovar was elected Treasurer, and Vivian Drake was elected Secretary. I look forward to working with these new officers, the entire board, our committees, and all residents to build upon the legacy of the solid financial condition and renewed resident participation left to us by the previous board.

Our community has made significant progress in the last year. The most significant achievement has been increased resident participation. Interest in serving on

community committees had decreased over the last few years until some committees no longer functioned or were staffed by a single member. Today our resident volunteers have worked hard to increase the livability and curb appeal of our community. These achievements have been made because your neighbors have chosen to contribute their time, talent, and energy. However, more community improvements are needed. We have plans to continue our progress, including a comprehensive tree trimming program to increase our neighborhood's aesthetic appeal as well as remove potentially hazardous trees. There is an ongoing project to replace aging playground equipment, and possibly relocate one play area to a more suitable location. In addition, we are getting proposals to install pavers around our mailboxes, and install community message boards for enhanced resident communications. Two members of the Board with information technology experience are exploring ways to enhance our association website. Your neighbors, your committees, your board, and your community need YOU to help with these projects.

One of the great privileges that we all enjoy by living in a democracy is the ability to participate in our government. This is true at the national, state, municipal, and at the community level. YOUR community needs

your involvement and participation. Please join your neighbors on the following committees: Neighborhood Watch, Landscaping and Grounds, Streets and Parking, Architectural Review, and External Affairs. In addition, there are opportunities to serve by working on the association newsletter, the Acorn, or by handing out flyers. Participation is easy. You can contact the chairperson of any committee through their information listed in the Acorn, or you can contact the Board directly by using the "Send a Message to the Board" feature at the association website, [www.springfieldoaks.org](http://www.springfieldoaks.org).

Finally, educate yourself about community issues, attend meetings of the Board, and express your opinions to the Board. We want to represent the entire community, but we will only be successful with your input. I have lived in Springfield Oaks since 1981, and am an original owner. Like all of you, I have many competing demands on my time. Because of job required travel, I did not take an active role in community affairs until last year, so I understand that it may be difficult to find time for community involvement. I was elected to the Board in 2004, and have had the privilege of serving as your Board Vice President this last year. Working with the Board in solving the issues facing our community has been very rewarding for me, and I am sure that you will feel the same way if you find that you are able to participate. As President of the Board, I look forward to working together with each of you in making Springfield Oaks a premier community in Northern Virginia.



## **Greetings from the Architectural Review Committee!**

By: Ann-Marie Wilson/Diane McCreless

The Architectural Review Committee (ARC) would like to thank all of our neighbors who made changes due to the ARC requests. We really appreciate you taking the time and making the repairs, cleaning up your yard, and completing other such tasks, to make your house beautiful and in compliance with the Architectural Standards (AS). If you have not had a chance to make those changes please do so at your earliest convenience. If you have questions please e-mail ARC (see below).

In order to maintain and improve the aesthetic appeal of our community, the ARC will be performing a neighborhood-wide home exterior checkup again in March. By the way, if you would like to volunteer for the community and think you might enjoy being on ARC, please send an e-mail to ARC. We could certainly use your help in keeping our community beautiful.

Armstrong Management sent a letter to all residents on December 2<sup>nd</sup> addressing the 2006 budget, monthly assessments, holiday trash and recycling schedules, and winterizing hose bibs and water shut-off valves. To reiterate the ARC items from that letter, please remember that trash receptacles and recycle bins should not be placed on the curb until the evening before the scheduled pick-up day. In addition, no items may be stored in front or side yards, unless stored out of sight.

### **Changes**

The ARC, with the board's approval, has made a few changes to the AS. We have taken this action due to the fact that construction and paint materials have changed drastically from when the standards

were first written 20 years ago. Below are these changes, which we ask you to keep a copy of with your Architectural Standards.

### **Decks**

The first change is on page 5 of the Standards, section D. The bullet point stating “Upper and lower decks must be constructed with pressure treated lumber” has been changed to “Upper and lower decks may be constructed with pressure treated lumber, Treks, and other materials with approval from the ARC.” Please remember to submit an Architectural Control Form to ARC for any changes to your deck. Also, please note you must get a Fairfax County permit. Make sure to check with the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services before commencing work. You can reach them at 703-222-0801 or [www.co.fairfax.va.us/dpwes/](http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/dpwes/).

### **Exterior Painting**

Second, on page 7, section H, the standards read that an application is not required to repaint the exterior of your house with the same color. The ARC is now requesting that all homeowners submit an application with a paint chip for all exterior painting, even if it's the same as the existing color. Due to paint changes over the past 20 years, you may buy the same paint name but it may not look the same once you've painted your home. With the paint chip we can check to make sure the color is compatible with color combinations of neighboring properties.

### **Storm Doors**

Lastly, when we receive applications from our neighbors the ARC members occasionally walk to the house to make sure the change is in compliance and is compatible with their neighbors. On these walks we've noticed that some of our neighbors' storm doors are not in compliance with the standards. On page 13,

section R, you will notice that storm doors need to be 70% glass, made of metal or wood, and free of any grille work. Please make sure you are in compliance.

The ARC Standards and Architectural Control Forms can be found on the Springfield Oaks website at [www.springfieldoaks.org](http://www.springfieldoaks.org). On the top right of the homepage, click on Architectural Review. We suggest that, if you have not looked at the ARC Standards before, please take a few moments to review the document. You might find it very interesting and helpful. If you have any questions please e-mail the ARC Chairperson, Diane McCreless, at [ssagent71@msn.com](mailto:ssagent71@msn.com).

Please remember to check the Standards before making any changes to the exterior of your home.

Thank you and Happy Holidays from ARC!

## **VA Automobile Registration Enforcement Information**

As part of our enforcement efforts, keep in mind that Springfield Oaks rules also require that all automobiles display proper registration/inspection/tax stickers. As part of its website, Fairfax County has a neat on-line reporting tool for autos that do not display current tax stickers, which we encourage residents to use. The form, which does not ask for your contact information, can be found at the following website. Or contact the Parking Committee and we have those vehicles towed out of the development.

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dta/taxevaders/>



## Newsletter Information

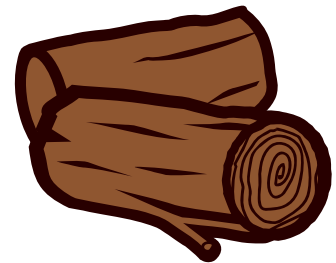
By Elena Psarakis

If you have any information you would like to share with the community, please send your articles for submission to [communications@armstrong.net](mailto:communications@armstrong.net) to be included in the newsletter. Please put Springfield Oaks newsletter in the heading. I would like to thank the volunteers who delivered the fall newsletter Vivian Drake, Mike Gropman, Gary Gajewski and Carlos Almodovar. Their help was greatly appreciated. If you wish to help out in delivering the newsletter, let us know. The next newsletter will be published in March. The newsletter staff would like to wish everyone a Happy Holiday!!!



Season (age) your wood before using it. The best time to establish a woodpile is at least one year prior to burning. Stack your pile away from your house. Use a metal wood rack, to allow for air circulation and to keep termites away. Use a tarp to cover your pile. Remember, all stacks of wood must be within the fence lines.

Use a metal cap on your chimney. This keeps out animals and helps to trap sparks that would otherwise be a hazard to nearby trees.



In order to prevent a fire caused by a spark from your fire, please insure that trees are cut back from your chimney. Residents are able to cut back common area trees that encroach into a private lot, provided that such cutting does not harm the tree any more than necessary. Residents should consider using a professional tree crew for such work.

Last, please keep fire extinguishers within easy reach of each fireplace.

Have a happy holiday season!

## **Advertise in *The Acorn!***

### **Pricing information below:**

- \$10 for 1/8 page each issue**
- \$20 for 1/4 page each issue**
- \$40 for 1/2 page each issue**
- \$80 for Full page each issue**

## Fire Safety and Trees

By David Adkins

Residents of the neighborhood, it's that time again. The temperatures are dropping and many of us are starting to think about using the fireplaces which many of our homes have. However, a once pleasing fire can turn dangerous in a matter of minutes. Here are some safety tips to keep your holidays safe:

Before each season, get your fireplace professionally swept and inspected. This will cut down on the amount of creosote that builds up in your chimney. Creosote is a residue left over from previous fires, especially ones that did not burn at a hot temperature or ones which used unseasoned (new) wood. Creosote can cause a chimney fire, thereby putting your home at risk.

## Neiman Marcus \$250 cookie Recipe

Title: Neiman Marcus \$250 Cookie

Yield: 30 servings

- 2 c Butter or margarine
- 2 c Granulated sugar
- 2 c Brown sugar
- 4 ea Eggs
- 2 ts Vanilla
- 4 c Flour
- 3 c Ground oatmeal (fine powder)
- 1 ts Salt
- 2 ts Baking powder
- 2 ts Baking soda
- 24 oz Chocolate chips
- 1 ea 8 oz hershey bar, grated
- 3 c Chopped nuts

Cream butter with white and brown sugar. Add eggs and vanilla. Blend together with flour, oatmeal, salt, baking powder and baking soda. Add chocolate chips, candy and nuts. Roll into balls and place 2 inches apart on cookie sheet. Bake for 6 minutes in 375 degree oven. Recipe can be halved. Makes 100-150 cookies. Note: Supposedly, Neiman Marcus charges \$250 for this recipe.

### **TIPS FOR THE COMMUNITY:**

*The winter season is coming up upon us. Please clean your sidewalk in front of your house when it snows. Throw salt out so you and your neighbors don't slip and slide.*

*Keep unused salt in a plastic pail so it does not destroy your sidewalks and lawn.*

*Hopefully the snow will be around so we can view snowmen around the neighborhood.*

## WETLANDS AREA NEAR HOMES DISCUSSED WITH STATE AND COUNTY

by Greg Budnik, P.E., External Affairs Chair

If you've walked the trail system through the southeastern side of the community and through the County Parkland that borders our community, you've no doubt seen the large wetlands area that's located in the land between Interstate 95 and Southern Oak and Canyon Oak Drives. Due to a number of complaints by homeowners over the years as well as past Boards of Directors, the County Park Authority (through efforts by Supervisor Gerry Hyland's office) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) have looked into the history of the wetlands area as well as anything that can be done to reduce its size or eliminate it. An aerial photo showing this area from a few years ago is shown on the page 7.

If you're not a long time owner in Springfield Oaks, you may not be aware that the wetlands area we refer to didn't exist 15 years ago. The area now inundated used to be a forest area and continues now, as it was then to be largely owned by the County Park Authority as well as a portion by VDOT. Even your HOA has a small area behind Southern Oaks that is inundated by these wetlands now from time to time. According to VDOT, their widening of Interstate 95 in the early 1990's blocked off a section of channel that drained this area to the reaches of Accotink Creek south of I-95. Once blocked, the trapped drainage encouraged beavers, finding the area highly suitable to lodge building, to commence building dams and lodges; exacerbating the situation with natural dams they built near Accotink Creek, further increasing the flooding levels in the forest. At one point a few years ago, the

flooding was close to inundating the trail system and dangerously deep, forcing the County and State to remove the beavers and drain the flooded area down to the levels you see today.

Recently, the EAC (External Affairs Committee), acting on direction received from the Board a few years ago, continued to coordinate management of this area by requesting a meeting with the County and State to discuss the long term management and disposition of this area of parkland and state road right-of-way. Concerned about the danger to the community's children and liability from inundation of actual HOA-owned land, the EAC requested action by the state and County to drain the area at a meeting held last month at the site. During this meeting, VDOT, acknowledging that a design and construction error of theirs had caused the wetlands to form in the first place, declined to fully drain the area, considering it under the jurisdiction of the federal government at this point. The County Park Authority did, however, offer to work with VDOT to keep beavers and

other debris from further blocking the sole point of drainage relief in the state right-of-way near the creek and to manage the level of the wetlands to a less dangerous depth to address Association concerns.

Though Springfield Oaks has lost a sizable tree stand in the parkland below our community, it is felt by the Park Authority that management of the water depth should alleviate the HOA's concerns of safety and liability and that the wetlands would be a benefit to the biological process of the park area. Your HOA's External Affairs Committee requests that you contact the Board of Directors if you have any opinion on this matter or the conditions of the parkland adjacent to our community. Currently, the present Board of Directors has not formed an opinion on the County's or State's plans for this area and would like to hear from the community at-large prior to making decisions, if any, relative to the current jurisdictional positions. And if you haven't taken "a turn" around the community's trail system recently, give it a walk!



Dear Springfield Oaks Residents:

I Michael Gropman an independent associate with Capital Choice Financial Services, am here to provide the level of service you expect and deserve. Please feel free to call me anytime. My phone number is (703)569-0799.

Capital Choice is a full service agency, providing financial solutions for you and your family at all stages of life. I welcome the opportunity to serve the members of our community. Please feel free to contact me at the number listed above or via e-mail [mgropman@cox.net](mailto:mgropman@cox.net)

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gropman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Michael Gropman

CAPITAL Choice Financial Services, Inc. is a network of independent business men and women, representing various life and health insurance companies.



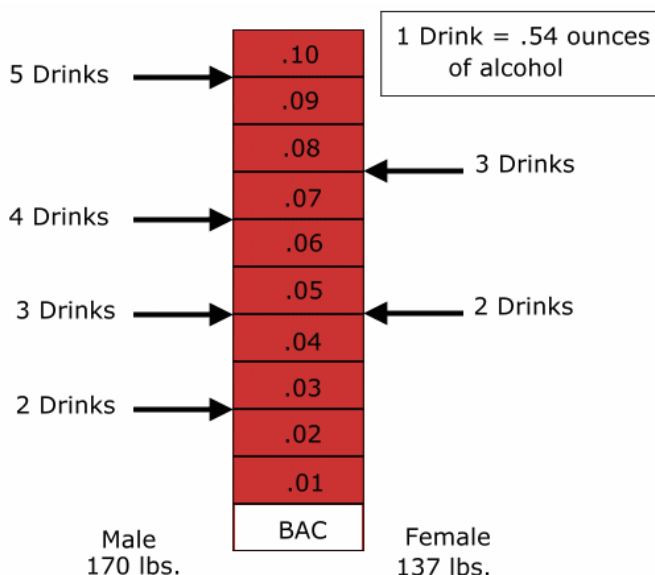
## Drinking responsibly during the Holidays

By Anthony Conte

The Holiday Season has begun and we all attend a variety of holiday parties. Here are some facts to keep you and your families safe:

- 1) On average, one out of 10 vehicles on the road is a drunk driver. During the holidays, this number increases.
- 2) The legal blood alcohol content (BAC) is 0.08 in Virginia, Maryland as well as the District of Columbia.
- 3) Research shows that impairment begins at 0.02.
- 4) Due to the increased numbers of drunk drivers during the holidays, law enforcement step up the amount of driving under the influence (DUI) checkpoints.
- 5) If convicted of DUI individuals lose their license for a period of one year and pay significant fines.

Alcohol affects everybody differently, some of the factors are weight, gender, consumption of food, and the rate of alcohol consumed per hour.



## Number of Drinks and BAC in One Hour of Drinking

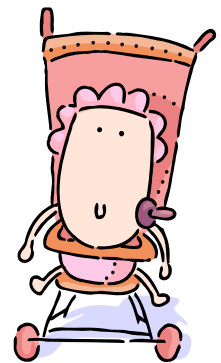
Lowering your BAC by drinking coffee or eating food after having consumed alcohol are myths. The only way to reduce your BAC is time, on average 0.02 per hour.

However, the best and safest plan of action is to always have a designated driver. During the holiday season, WRAP (Washington Regional Alcohol Program) offers complimentary taxi rides home between 8:00pm and 4:00am, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005 and January 1, 2006. WRAP's SoberRides can be ordered at 1-800-200-TAXI or visit their website at [www.soberride.com](http://www.soberride.com).

## Mommy's Corner

By Debra Gross

This column will be coming soon. I am a working mom and I want to start a network in our community for moms and kids. Please email me with issues you want to see addressed in the column. My email address is [debragross@hotmail.com](mailto:debragross@hotmail.com). Hope to see you on my walks through the neighborhood with Krista. We can start planning events in the Spring



## **Parking/Streets Committee**

by Elena Psarakis

As the holidays are upon us and there will be many guests visiting our neighborhood, now is a good time to refresh what the basic rules are for visitors' parking. We would like to avoid any unfortunate situation. Before your guests arrive, please make sure they are aware of the parking rules

- Vehicles will be ticketed if parked in any visitors' parking space over two consecutive days during the week or three days in case of a weekend. Consecutive days means days used not hours.
- Repeat violators will be towed in lieu of a second ticket. If your vehicle is towed, and you do not pick it up within three days, a \$300.00 fine will be added on the storage fee as per Virginia law.
- If a vehicle is double parked or parked in a fire lane, it will be towed immediately without notice as per the Fairfax County Fire Department. We have to have easy access in and out of the development.
- Vehicles parked in non-parking area will be towed immediately without notice.
- Residents may have unauthorized vehicles towed from their numbered reserved parking spaces. Please make sure to tell your guests where to park to avoid their being towed. Remind your visitors to not park in numbered spaces unless you have prior approval from your neighbor.
- A resident may park their vehicle in a visitors' parking space to accommodate their guest with their assigned parking space or if they are visiting someone elsewhere in the community. However,

this is not for parking a third or fourth vehicle of a resident.

- Vehicles without a current county sticker or vehicle tag will be towed immediately. Residents must register vehicles with Virginia and Fairfax County within 60 days of move in.
- If there are any extenuating circumstances with guests using visitor parking beyond these restrictions, it should be brought before the Parking Committee prior any parking and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The Parking Committee can be contacted via Armstrong Management.
- Anyone wishing to appeal a Notice of Violation or towing of a vehicle may make a written appeal to the Board of Directors. The appeal must be postmarked within ten calendar days of the postmark date of the notification letter or the date of the adverse action and may be considered at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Board will review each case on an individual basis.
- Remember the speed limit in the community is 15 mph.



Please let the Streets and Parking Committee know if you have any concerns about paving, parking, street cleaning, sidewalks, lighting, etc. so it can be

addressed. If you have any questions, or feel that a vehicle is in violation of the visitors' parking guidelines and has not been addressed, please bring it to this Committee's attention. We are looking for volunteers to serve on this Committee. Have a safe and joyous holiday.

## Springfield Oaks Directory/Information

### Board of Directors

Ken McCreless
Carlos Almodovar
Greg Budnik
Shawn Davison
Nick Firth
Doug Wilson
Ron Manning

### Officers of the Association

Ken McCreless	President
Ron Manning	Vice President
Carlos Almodovar	Treasurer
Vivian Drake	Secretary

### Committees

Please contact management for meeting schedule for meetings.

Committee	Name
<a href="#">Architectural Review</a>	Diane McCreless
<a href="#">Budget</a>	Coreen Harney
<a href="#">External Affairs</a>	Greg Budnik, acting--looking for a new chair!
<a href="#">Landscaping &amp; Grounds</a>	Carlos Almodovar, acting--looking for a new chair!
<a href="#">Streets &amp; Parking</a>	Elena Psarakis
<a href="#">Neighborhood Watch</a>	Anthony Conte
<a href="#">Newsletter</a>	Elena Psarakis
<a href="#">Social</a>	Coreen Harney

### Management Firm

E-mail [communications@armstrong.net](mailto:communications@armstrong.net)

**Include the name of the community; i.e., Springfield Oaks, in the message**

Armstrong Management Customer Service	3949 Pender Drive, Suite 205 Fairfax, VA 22030	Work 703-385-1133 Fax 703-591-5785
--	--	---------------------------------------

### Miscellaneous

Fairfax County Police non-emergency	703-691-2131
Dominion Towing	703-978-0092
AAA Rainbow Trash	703-818-8222
Trash pickup	Monday and Thursday and by appointment. Call to schedule a day for free large trash item pickup.
Recycling pickup	Friday