

The Lamp Post
River Oaks Condominium Association
News Letter March 2016

The President's Gavel

We have made it through January and the biggest snow storm in our history, a 30" deep event that actually exceeded the back-to-back mega storm of 2010 which totaled nearly 27 inches. What we learned during that storm was implemented this time and things went much smoother

The dollars spent during the most recent storm have not yet been totaled. Needless to say, we have gone over the snow budget that was increased for this year. It does not mean we will have to raise it again next year; we should not have 30" snows every year. The bill will come in close to \$35,000.00 or so. This is less than we spent on the 2010 storm.

Our Newsletter is out again and hopefully will be a regular item. We are looking to print it on light green so that our residents will get to recognize it and not toss it away thinking it is a junk flyer from some random vendor. We will mail it, post it on our web and deliver it. We hope you will take the time to read it.

We have had a report of vandalism to one of our neighbors along Millhaven Drive. The doorbell was rung and the perpetrator(s) threw some fruit at the home.

I understand that this episode took place later in the evening. It was reported that it was believed to be children from Tilden Way. I am happy to report those children were inside and not running the streets at that time of night. If you do see children out and about after dark call the AA County police non-emergency number 410-222-8610 and report it. Those kids most

probably are not from our community. Police will come out and talk with the juveniles. In most cases, that will be enough to dissuade the kids from any further action. Our Park is posted as being closed from "Dusk 'til Dawn", so if people are in the park, call and report it. The level of police patrols is based on need. Millhaven Drive is a conduit for trespassers jumping our fence behind Braxton and heading across Mayo Road, past the elementary school.

Right now our fields are torn up from the snow damage. Some of the children are too small to go to the park by themselves. We will see them playing in the streets. Slow down and be observant of them. Speed limit in the ROCA is 15 mph.

At the same time, neighbors should not have to worry about footballs and soccer balls slamming into their cars. Still the children need to get outside, away from the electronic toys. We must strive to reach a happy medium. Respect our neighbor's yards, do not run through them. Parents, teach the young ones to care for other people's belongings. Neighbors, remember, (if you aren't too old) what it was like when you were a child. Do not say that you were taught better, and never ever ran across someone's yard. You did too! Now, as an adult, you must react with understanding. If you are such a curmudgeon, that you feel compelled to call the police to report a small child who crosses your plat line, you have a very sad existence. Living in a Townhouse style Community requires give and take. Some people are not built for living really close to neighbors, while others seek out human interaction, maintenance of property values, and security.

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President's Gavel (Continued from Page 1):

Most important, be a parent. There is no good reason for your child to be running the streets after dark. Bring them in and give them some school work to do. It might help bring up their grade a letter or two. If you are not sure if it is your child, go around your house and find them, see what they are doing, and with whom they are texting. Get to know them a little better. Seeing them in school is better than seeing them in jail.

FROM the TREASURER'S VAULT

You may view the Treasurer's Report each month on the community web site www.riveroakscondos.webs.com along with the BOD meeting minutes.

You may review your own account balance by going to www.victorymgt.com and signing in.

Instructions are:

- a. Select "Our Communities".
- b. Go down the list to "River Oaks Condominium" and click on it. The login area is on the left.
- c. You will see "My Account Information" and click on it. This will show you your account balance. If you still have questions or you disagree, you may email Shannon Irizarry with any questions you have regarding your balance at shannoni@victorymgt.com. The folks at VMI are ready to help you. Be nice, not argumentative, it just works better everywhere especially when you want others to help you.

Our Auditors have just completed the 2016 audit of our finances, and one of their strong recommendations was that we work very hard to reduce the Account Receivable figure of \$66,000.00. The Board has been looking for ways to encourage our fellow unit owners to look over their account balances and to bring their accounts current.

Prior to the audit, Shannon Irizarry, our Management Agent was requested by the Board to develop a study of the breakdown of the A/R dollars. She presented that study to the BOD at the February meeting.

The Account Receivable breakdown is as follows:

Assessments (unpaid dues): \$10,599.59

Late Fees outstanding: 5,399.62

Owner Fines total: 22,548.23

Total these categories: 38,547.44

There are other categories that bring the total up to the \$66,000, a figure as reported on the Monthly Treasurer's Report. Some of those monies are amounts owed from bankruptcies; foreclosures, deaths and pending write-offs to name a few.

What can be done to recover these outstanding monies?

According to our By-Laws, the Board has the right to several remedies.

1. Impose an interest rate of 18% per annum (1.5% per month) on all outstanding balances.

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From the Treasurer's Vault (cont'd from page 2):

2. Accelerate the assessments. Our annual assessment is normally broken out into twelve (12) equal payments. Our documents state that we may require that the entire annual fee of \$1,500.00 be made due and payable immediately if the account balance is not current.
3. Place a lien on the property, and turn the unit owner over to the Collection Attorney. As those who have been turned over in the past will attest, this action gets very expensive, very quickly.

The lawyer has to conduct a Title search, a credit search and apply administrative fees for setting up a new file, etc. They then have to go to the Courthouse and file the lien. All of this adds over a thousand dollars of extra cost onto the outstanding amount due. It also precludes any further unit owner interaction with Victory Management relevant to money from that point forward until the entire debt is settled. The last added expense is that the unit owner must pay to have the Court release the lien.

VMI cannot help you once you have been turned over to the Collection Agency, and you must contact Neall and Associates. Neall and Associates can be reached by calling 410-757-9454, or via email at michaelneall@verizon.net

Before the Board is forced to implement any of these more severe methods, please take a look at your individual account to be sure that there are no outstanding balances.

Future Projects Under Review

Our streets were scheduled to be re-sealed again two years ago, based on the recommendation of the Reserve Study that was conducted at that time. It is suggested to be an every 5 year event. This keeps our roadways from having to be dug up and rebuilt; a much more expensive project.

The Board has conducted the walk through process and bids have been received.

Results of the walkthrough are as follows:

1. Degradation of the roadway in quite a few areas. Low spots are developing and allowing standing water in areas. Some of this is caused by natural ground settlement through the years. The black top surface has begun to "alligator" which means that the surface has begun to crack, allowing surface water to penetrate the top surface and therefore degrade the layers below.
2. Speed bumps have lost their respective edges and are causing bikes and scooters to spill the children face first onto the street.
3. The center seams were not sealed correctly the last time we did this project, and this is causing more separation.
4. Our yellow curbs have mostly worn off.
5. The Painted parking space lines and the numbers affixed thereon are in need of repair.

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Future Projects Under Review (cont'd from p3):

We all may not remember the last time we endured this project, but those that do will recall the splitting of the ROCA into three or four segments, and finding other places to park in the surrounding areas. The repairs and sealing take a minimum of one day to cure before we can walk or drive across them. It was for this reason that we started on Millhaven Court, went next to Tilden along with half of Braxton, and finally the other half of Braxton. We are not ready to commence this project right now, but we are preparing now for later, most likely for Fall, 2016 or by next Spring, the 2017 fiscal year.

Another endeavor that must be looked into now and is somewhat connected to the Re-sealing of the streets is the signing and designating of various parking spaces throughout the community as "Snow Emergency-No Parking Zones".

We must prepare so the snow pushing company will have areas to pile the snow as they are clearing our streets.

The Board has had experts come into our community to look over availabilities for snow piling, looking at the direction the snow is being pushed, the turns on our streets etc. What has been decided is we have about six or so places we can designate as Snow Emergency No Parking areas.

Millhaven Court: the snow gets pushed straight out across Millhaven Drive and piled in front of the gate leading to our sediment pond.

Millhaven Drive: utilize the two car space cutouts on the west side of the street where the mailboxes used to be.

Tilden Way:

1. Use the open space between 164 Tilden and behind the east side of Millhaven Drive (2145-2149). This would mean designating the parking spaces alongside the mailbox as "Snow Emergency No Parking".
2. Use the area in front of the entry door at 241 would also be marked.
3. Use the first two Visitor spaces on the left as you come in off the circle. These would be used to stage the Bobcats and for snow piling.

Braxton: the areas at both the east and west ends would be marked. These areas will take care of the normal snows. Should another Snow-Magedon occur, we may need to look at taking away some of the spaces on Cromarty and Braxton to allow for access to the park.

In all of these areas, parking would be allowed in clear weather, but if we are projected to have a snowfall of 3 inches or more, those spaces will need to be emptied or be subject to a tow.

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Help Wanted

Part Time Positions on the

Board of Directors

No Experience Necessary

OJT is available.

There are several openings on the Board which need to be filled. What are the requirements? An interest in making River Oaks Condominium the best place to live in Edgewater.

Restrictions/Requirements:

1. You must be a Unit Owner.
2. You cannot serve if you have an outstanding balance due to the community.
3. You do not need to have prior experience. Those of us who serve are not professional Property Managers. We have Victory Management for that purpose.
4. If you have some financial background, like keeping your check book balanced, that helps. You could be the Treasurer.
5. Time investment is, on average, 2 hours once a month for our Board of Directors meeting. These are held at the Library on Stepneys Lane. Rarely, we have an extra meeting to decide priorities. This type of meeting is usually held in one of our homes for a couple of hours. We banter about pending proposed projects or projects that someone suggests needs to be done. Most of

our work is done through emails and not a whole lot of those.

6. The tour of duty will be for the remainder of 2016. The new elections are to be held in November, so this will allow you the opportunity to determine if you really like being on the Board.

We normally have five (5) Directors. We had one member resign, another was re-assigned to Afghanistan by our government and he had to resign. Currently we have three. During the November regular Board meeting two people stepped forward to fill the vacancies. Immediately following the regular meeting the Board with the two new members went into "Executive Session". The two members resigned when it was determined that the existing Board members were not willing to remove the President. The minutes for the November meeting reflect that the positions were filled but did not take into account the immediate. We thought we had those positions filled, the Board voted them on, but the two people resigned the very night they were appointed.. Step up and pitch in. We need folks who are interested in helping the community in which they live.

WATER REMEDIATION PROJECT

A quick update on the Water Remediation project scheduled for 2016. The Board has set aside a very large sum of money to get this project finally off the ground. In 2015, monies were spent developing the plan. The Board hired the firm, D S Thaler & Associates, Inc. (DST). They were

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commissioned to do a topographical survey, and an evaluation of current conditions/needs to finally correct the water drainage issues within the River Oaks Condominium Association (ROCA) grounds.

We refer to the GCE and the LCE areas. GCE stands for General Common Element and the LCE is the Limited Common Element. The LCE can be easily identified as your back yard. While you have exclusive use of it, that piece of land is actually still owned in joint with every other Unit Owner in the community. What this means is that if something needs to be done, such as this water project, the community can come in and do it, also the community can regulate how it is maintained and what is kept in view within it. The area can be regulated as to fire hazards etc.

The GCE is all the open land beyond the boundaries of our plat lines which define where our individual property lines begin and end.

The design of the Project Plan was developed by the engineers from DST and submitted at a hearing held last year at the Stepneys Lane Library. A lot of questions and suggestions were presented. Following the review of the comments made, the Board has approved the plan which has now been submitted for bids from various contractors.

DST has been hired to review the bids to ascertain adherence to the requirements set forth in their design, and to consult the Board who will be following the work

progress. DST will not be overseeing the actual work.

The work will begin on the East side of Tilden from 190 down through 238. The unit owners will be notified when the work is scheduled to begin. You can start now by clearing out some of the accumulation of stuff from your yards. If you have individual concerns and want to speak to someone, feel free to let Shannon Irizarry at VMI know and she will get someone from the BOD to come out and listen to your concerns. Your concerns will be made known to the contractor if needed.

Segments of the various unit owners' fences will have to be removed, and when the work is done on the new drain field they will be put back in place. The ground will be dug out to install a French Drain with a 10" capacity pipe. There will be T's placed in the drain for each unit's downspouts so they may be connected directly into the new drain.

The cost of the connection from your downspouts to the main drain is the unit owner's responsibility. We will be working with the selected contractors to develop those cost factors, and will forward those as soon as available.

Because the workers will already be on site and can dig the necessary trenches to bury the pipes below ground, the cost should be reasonably low. The unit owner will certainly have the right to do the digging themselves, and/or supply the material to connect at their own expense. Material and digging must be completed at the time of the French Drain installation. An ACA submission and approval of methods being used must be

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made. Connection will be mandatory. Following the development of the French Drain, the area dug inside the yards will be covered and seeded with a shade blend of seed or, if preferred, with mulch.

After completing the 190-238 Tilden line, the project will continue across the GCE between the Millhaven Court units 2 - 34 and Tilden Way behind units 240 – 254. This digging will not require the removal of any fencing. The French Drain will be run through the GCE open space. Again, if the individual unit owners have already connected their downspouts and run them to the outside of their plat lines, then the workers will connect them into the system. If not, the unit owner, as stated above, will retain that responsibility to connect their downspouts into the direct drain system being installed.

Our community was built on a very heavy clay soil. Good news, it is pretty solid stuff. The bad news is that the rain water will not percolate through the clay therefor, during a rain storm the water runs off rapidly, causing issues in yards and in the GCE.

New construction in the County now requires the builder to connect all downspouts directly to sediment ponds via storm runoff systems. This was not required when the ROCA was developed 15 years ago.

We need to get connected to reduce insurance claims from water damaging our units, to reduce the soggy areas which retain even more humidity, and development of pools of water from sitting

stagnant giving mosquitos more places to breed,.

Relief is coming. Now, let's get started by preparing our back yard areas, getting organized, ready for the workmen to make the connections, and make our back yards accessible when the construction time arrives.

PLAYGROUND AREA UPDATE

During 2015 the ACL Committee started looking into getting the Tot Lot repaired and updated. The swing set was replaced and moved. The green coloring was kept to allow for better blending with the existing equipment. We updated the mulch base of the Tot Lot with County approved Playground surface material. The tree roots that were presenting tripping hazards were dug out.

The project was paused due to the pending cost of the Water Remediation Project. This year the community hopes to see the balance of the Tot Lot renovation project completed.

As part of the engineering study done by DST for the Water Remediation Project, the asphalt pathway surrounding the Tot Lot playground area was reviewed. At 15 years old, the pathway there have begun to sink in areas, crack and break apart in others. One area has developed a 10 foot long section of standing water that freezes, causing liability issues. This 10 foot area will be addressed with required repairs to the sub surfaces. The balance of the pathway system will get a 3 inch topping of asphalt throughout the rest of the Tot Lot. The concept is to have the asphalt higher than

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the turf, thus discouraging the water from running across and degrading the pathway. This will be bid out during the Water Remediation Project (WRP) process.

The existing benches will be replaced. The new benches will be safety designed, built to last 20 or more years. Placement will be slightly different. Three will be on the shady side and one on the sunny side.

New play pieces will be added for the smaller children to enjoy, and some existing pieces will be updated to make the park an even more attractive asset to the ROCA.

To address the shade issue at the park, Tyler Balderson, of Bartlett Tree, recommended that a Japanese Elm should be added. This type of tree grows more quickly, and will eventually offer added shade in the afternoon. He suggested placement be in the open space to the southwest side of the Gazebo. True, it will take a few years for it to grow large enough to actually produce the shade the parents watching over the tykes seek, but short of enclosing the playground with a big bubble-like structure, there is no other solution.

Resident Request!

One of our residents has reported a concern, and has asked that a note be put out to the community regarding the fact that some pet owners are forgetting to leash their pets. All pets, cats included, are required to be leashed. They are not allowed to be running loose. Also children waking pets must be of a size to control the animal.

Upcoming Events:

Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Saturday March 26, 2016 starting at 10 AM so bring the children and have some fun meet some neighbors. Dana Springer our Vice President will be developing this event.

The Community Yard Sale will be scheduled for Saturday April 9, 2016: Please let Dana Springer know if you will be participating. Dana will be getting out additional info regarding this event as time grows nearer.

Next Board Meeting March 22, 2016 at 7 PM: All meetings will be held at the Anne Arundel County Library on Stepneys Lane. Meetings must close by 8:45 PM.

April Board Meeting will be April 26, 2016: All Board meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at the Library on Stepneys Lane, Edgewater.

Annual Inspections will be scheduled for late May: Let's get looking at our own homes and yards now so that we are ready for the review. Keep in mind that these inspections are to point out things you may be overlooking. We all walk in and out every day without a very critical look at our own units. We have a beautiful community, and our property values have retained throughout the years. That is why most of us bought inside a neighborhood with strong covenants; one that keeps itself looking good, vibrant and inviting.

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The Board Meeting regularly scheduled for April 26 has been cancelled due to the Primary election scheduled for that date. The Board will meet in an executive session with the Engineer from D S Thaler to discuss the bids and to clarify what differing understandings exist concerning the future phases of the project.

The Yard Sale is now scheduled for Saturday April 23, 2016. Contact Dana Springer, Danapspringer@gmail.com, for more information and to make sure that the signs being placed about lead the buyers to your location. Hopefully the Weatherman will cooperate a little better this time. Here is wishing you all great sales and a fun time. Remember to keep children supervised. There will be a lot of new people and vehicles driving around; they may not know our living and playing patterns.

On the subject of **Cars and Parking** in the community, a resident approached the Board asking that we publish some suggestions about where we may and should not park. We have a fairly definitive set of Parking Rules and Regulations. Those are posted on our Web site <http://riveroaksedgewater.com/>. But what I think we should highlight today is a more common sense approach to the concern. Some of us are blessed to have a garage or two. Others might argue that they are blessed with a fourth bedroom, these are decisions we made when we bought our particular units. We are a

community of 228 homes, sixty two of which are non-garage units. On Millhaven Court, the builder made sure there were plenty of spaces because the model home was there. However, on Tilden Way there are 32 townhouses without garages and 64 perpendicular spaces. The math says that there are two per unit; however that would never allow for anyone to come and visit. Realizing that there would be need for open space availability, past Boards of Directors opted to not designate two spaces to each unit. Some units only have one occupant, and yes they are entitled to use the open undesignated spaces.. Space is a premium, first come first served works.

Obviously, this requires that those with garages to cooperate a bit. If you know you will be having a guest, consider asking them to park across the front of your driveway. Please, do not allow them to park on the sidewalk as that could cause you to have the embarrassment of having their vehicle towed and that is quite expensive, and aggravating. Naturally, if it is your mother-in-law's car, it is optional to inform her about how to park. You might want the car towed. Keep in mind it might also prolong the stay, just sayin'.

Spring generally brings out our individual desires for improving our residences. Part of living in a Townhouse Community is that there are rules and regulations that govern your ability to spontaneously go out and change things. Simply put, if you want to change the exterior appearance of your unit, an

Architectural Change Application (ACA) must be submitted prior to commencing

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the work. You must first secure approval to do any changes. Kind of bites on the spontaneity of seeing that gorgeous plant and buying it. On the flip side, there is more stability in the appearance of the community. So before you get carried away, submit your plans to Victory Management shannoni@victorymgt.com and the request will be properly, expeditiously and judiciously processed.

Early Spring means our **Grounds**

Maintenance company, CS Lawn is out and about cleaning up fallen branches, freshening up the mulch beds and giving our fresh and quickly growing greenery a cut. If you have any concerns/suggestions regarding our General Common Elements (GCE) or simply want more information, please contact Shannon at Victory Management. We are always seeking resident input.

Coming to a neighbor near you (and to you as well), will be our **Annual Maintenance Inspection**. This will be our 16th such examination. Really, it has been 16 years since the community was created. All winter long we have been going to work, most often before the sun rises, and coming home in the dark. On the weekends, the last thing we want to do is go outside and look for ways to spend time and money on the house. We do not look up to see if that pesky fascia board needs a new coat of paint. Has Algae taken up residence on the siding? Brick front homes are nice, but they have lintels over the windows and doors. They

are there to keep the brick from falling off. Lintels need to be painted or they will rust out causing a more costly repair. Each year in May, Victory Management comes out and does an inspection that helps us recognize the things we have not paid attention to all year. They are not being mean, just helping to bring attention to the things that we need to accomplish in order to keep our community looking its best. So instead of getting all grumpy and fussy just say thanks for the reminder. If you need more time to complete the items noted by Victory Management, send them an email explaining your situation and let them know when you will be able to get this work done. You will be granted an extension by the Board as long as the request is reasonable. You will be held to that time frame.

The Bids have been coming in from the three contractors for the **Water Remediation Project**. The bids are under review by the engineering firm D S Thaler. The engineers have raised some questions which were sent back out to the three contractors for their clarification. Once we have that information, the Board will meet with DST to discuss and to select the contractor for Phase I.

We will be scheduling a meeting with the unit owners from 202 through 238 Tilden Way. We will be discussing how the project will be staged and what will be needed to be done in each yard. There are some back yards that will need to be changed somewhat as to the grading of the yards, and in some cases to the patios themselves. We will keep everyone advised as to when and where that will take place.

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The **Egg Hunt at the Tot Lot** was a terrific success. Over three dozen little ones along with parents and some grandparents showed up. Dana Springer, our Vice President, headed up the organization and MD's the event. She had a lot of help from her Husband Jeff and her two boys Will and Luke in setting things up and in the cleanup.



Everyone had a great time, enjoying the hunt and the candy found in the eggs. There were prizes awarded and a “guess the number of jelly beans in the jar” won by Mandy, a new resident on Tilden, who was also a great help with the little ones. Thank you everyone for showing up and a very special thanks to Dana. Things like this make the community a great place to live. Here are more pictures of those enjoying the beautiful day at the park



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Pet owners please take special care when enjoying your pets outdoors. While to each of us, our pets represent the most lovable and gentle creature God has put upon this earth. *(If you work for the ACLU please ignore the last six words of the previous sentence, lol.)* Your pet may very well be the embodiment of cuddly and lovable, but there are folks that do not share your belief.

Our family has had dogs throughout our entire existence. Be that as it may, I can tell you that I do not trust anyone else's dogs or cats. I have been bitten and attacked from childhood into adulthood. Unfamiliar pets sense my trepidation. I was bitten in the face as a four year old, and will not forget the experience.

The right of folks to have pets is to be respected. It is expected of them to abide by the laws of Anne Arundel County, and the Rules and Regulations of our Condo Association.

Pets taken outside **must be on a leash** (cats, dogs whatever) **and controlled** by a responsible person. That is the law in Anne Arundel County. A seven to ten year old may be able to control a Papillion or a Yorkie, but may not be able to handle a Lab with a squirrel in its sights. I watched a little girl being walked by her dog around to the back of her unit. She was not in control of that animal, try as hard as she could, the young dog had to go and was not going to be held back from its appointed round!

If you are walking your pet, be mindful of where you allow the pet to relieve itself. Be respectful of all the work your neighbors put into

their lawn. That bleached out circle on their lawn is not from grubs in the soil, it is from someone's pet peeing on it. Be courteous and if you cannot control your dog from going up onto someone's yard, walk it in the street. Never, ever allow your pet to deposit waste on their lawn without picking it up

Lastly, if you own a pet and walk it to one of the community's parks, or to a GCE area near you, pick up after it. No one wants to be considered a low life disrespectful jerk for leaving their pet's business for someone else to step in or for a child to fall into while playing at the park. The pet owners, who do not pick up, know who they are. And soon we will as well. The Board has the authority to fine and so does Anne Arundel County. AA County is much more expensive than we are; they fine \$50.00 first offense \$100.00 for the second and \$150.00 after that.

It is time to grow up and be an adult. You took on the responsibility when you decided to have a pet. The community pays thousands of dollars a year buying you doggie bags and emptying the cans provided for you to dispose of it. This is done for you. It is to help you keep your own back yard clean and smelling nicer. Bend over and pick it up. Pick it or Ticket: make your choice.

Important Notice:

Water Remediation Project Phase One, meeting will be held on June 28th at the Landing Club House during our regular Board Meeting starting 7 PM.. Phase One will cover units 206 through 230 Tilden Way only. Question and Answer session pertaining to this Phase One section only will follow a presentation by the Engineering firm and the selected Construction company. C S Lawn was selected by the Board after reviewing the various bids with the assistance of the engineer Brian Childs of D S Thaler.

Annual Inspections: The Victory Management Company has performed the annual inspections. The letters have all been sent. Please keep in mind that the letters they send out ***are not picking on you individually***. They are pointing out what others see, what they saw, and what you may have been overlooking. The community presents a very favorable image to visitors and prospective buyers. Let's keep it that way.

If you need more time to complete whatever item they cited, simply send them a note requesting the added time you will need. Victory will bring those requests to the Board. Almost always the extra time is granted. However, that if the extended time is granted, you will be held firmly to that time. If there are extenuating circumstances, you may wish to present those with your request, though it is not required. Without explanation, the request will be adjudicated based on difficulty of the tasks, expense, and normalcy of the work to be done. In other words if you were requested to clean up the mounds of trash in your back or front yard, you will most likely be held to the original time frame stated in the VMI letter to you. If the deck needs to be re-stained, and you need an extra 30 days to get bids in and the work done most likely your request will be granted. If the repair is not completed *and VMI notified of the completion*, fines will be assessed and no extra time will be granted.

A Letter to the Editor of the ROCA Newsletter:

I would like the Board to consider alerting the community to the importance of taking simple steps to limit the mosquito population in the neighborhood.

In April when the Governor declared a Zika awareness week, the Departments of Health and of Agriculture held a town hall meeting at the AA Community College. There are over 60 native mosquito varieties in Maryland, and they are the dusk-to-dawn feeders. However, we also have 2 invasive species that feed all day long . . . and that can carry viruses we need to do our best to avoid. They don't fly more than about 200 yards from where they hatch, so if you have mosquitoes plaguing you, there is probably standing water close by. Even a bottle cap of water that stands for 4 days is enough to produce a new round of mosquitoes. It needs to be dumped about twice a week (think flower pot saucers, bird baths, etc.) and scrubbed since the eggs are laid just above the waterline and stay behind after you dump. They remain viable for weeks. Having a fish pond or living near water with fish apparently isn't a problem, since fish are said to gobble up the larvae very effectively.

Ribbed flexible tubing (used to move water away from our downspouts) collects water and should have screening (or just a knee-high stocking) cover the opening at the downhill end. One owner screened the "corrugated" tubing at her house and was swarmed by mosquitoes coming right out of the tube once she stepped close to it. An effective illustration of the need for us all to take this simple step SOON!

The [AA County Webpage](#) has information for homeowners. It doesn't get specific about remedying those corrugated tubes, but those tubes were second only to auto tires as common breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The information on that link is as follows:

What measures can a homeowner take to reduce the number of mosquitoes in a community?

The most important thing a homeowner or community can do to reduce the number of mosquitoes in a given area is to eliminate potential breeding sites on a property. Outdoor containers that are capable of holding rainwater are considered breeding sites for mosquitoes and mosquito larvae. Homeowners are encouraged to inspect their property and eliminate any outdoor containers capable of holding water during the spring, summer and fall. Outdoor containers that are capable of holding rainwater that should be eliminated from a property include:

- flower or garden pots*
- buckets
- gallon containers
- plastic bags
- birdbaths*
- kiddie pools

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- bottles
- cans
- trash can lids
- trash cans (w/out lids)
- non-circulated ponds and swimming pools
- boats
- wheelbarrows
- tarps
- clogged or poorly drained gutters
- rain barrels
- corrugated piping
- tires

*Water in birdbaths, and flower and garden pots should be replaced every 3 days to eliminate mosquito larvae from maturing into adult mosquitoes.

Many homeowners have installed ornamental ponds in their yards. It is important to keep these ponds populated with fish to eat the mosquito larvae. These ponds are breeding grounds for mosquitoes, and the fish will control the population. If you cannot keep fish in the pond, placing larvicide dunks or circulating the pond is necessary.

How do I file a complaint about the mosquito population in my community?

MDA responds to service requests from County residents or communities participating in the mosquito-spraying program. MDA will assess a property for outdoor container complaints to determine if mosquitoes can breed or develop on the property. MDA will also respond to service requests from participating communities where mosquito populations appear to be in excess of the action threshold.

Contact Information:

Maryland Department of Agriculture
Mosquito Control Program
50 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-5870

Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-5870

I hope you will consider sending a message out to the community about this.

Thanks —
Peggy Donald
Unit Owner

Editor's note: Thank you very much Peggy. Great info. If anyone has information that you feel might be of value or interest to the rest of the community please forward it to the Shannon Conrad [s.conrad@victorymgt.com] as Peggy did.

Although the following may not be as important, please read the following,:

While walking the dog everyone in the family wanted, but me, I noticed a white Scion parked illegally at the corner of Millhaven and Braxton Way. There are white lines designating parking spaces, and yellow curbs indicating "No Parking" areas. If the car is on any of the yellow, that is not good. The towing patrols have been minimized for the past several years, and it has been witnessed that cars are again parking on sidewalks, on yellow marked curbs etc. This makes no sense. As a community we have spent nearly one hundred thousand dollars over the past several years putting in new sidewalks. Big family celebrations and lack of parking spaces is not an excuse for poor parking habits. We live in a townhouse community and spaces are at a premium. Park properly or you will be towed. If you are uncertain as to what is or is not allowed? Visit our new and improved web site and read the Parking Rules and Regulations. The towing company has been given a copy and if they roll through and see a violation, they are authorized to act. Trust me; it is expensive when you find your vehicle is not where you left it or when you see it on the south side of the tow truck heading north.

Unlike the parking slabs and the apron leading out onto the street, which is laid thicker, the sidewalks are not designed to carry the weight of a vehicle. Please be more observant as to how our vehicles are parked and by our guests for that matter. I recently saw a contractor working on Millhaven power washing a home. I asked him to be kind enough to park his truck on the street and he did. You should look to see how people visiting you are parking and ask them to correct it. The Board has not encouraged the towing of cars for a while. But, we must protect the monies we have invested.

While walking our dog down the middle of Millhaven Drive, I came across a neighbor who had parked his car over a block away from his home. He has offered a solution to our community parking problems. He suggested a valet parking system. Shows some promise?

While walking my daughter's dog, (same dog) I was stopped and asked why we were allowing the Solar Panels in the community. That individual, a longtime unit owner, obviously was not a fan. An attempt was made to explain that the Maryland Legislators, in their infinite

wisdom, basically mandated that Solar Panels were to be allowed everywhere whether the community was for or against them. They restricted the impact that Home Owner Associations can implement on the placement of these devices. Fortunately for the ROCA (River Oaks Condominium Association) we have been given only slightly more leeway because we are a

Condominium Association. We may, in small ways, protect our aesthetics as we perceive them as opposed to how the government sees our community. We can, and are now requiring that all utility boxes associated with the panels be placed within the existing designated utility area established by the builder. We all love Mother Nature. However, looking down the road, the next time the Legislature gets a bug in their sitting area, and wants to placate the extremists in their midst with the next latest and greatest method to save Mother Earth from the ravages of the human species, we may not have anywhere to put the darn equipment. Then what?

It appears that if you buy your own panels outright and have them put on your roof, you can garner good savings. Nevertheless, there is still some question as to the efficacy of the panels to produce the big savings when you are leasing your roof to a third party.

While walking through the community, and being dragged by the dog, a Martian Landing vehicle was discovered resting in the rear of Millhaven Drive. That is being investigated by the VMIA group, the Virtual Migrating Interspace Alien group. A picture is worth what? Take a look: I am happy to report that this r ULV* has taken off for parts unknown.



*ULV = Ugly Landing Vehicle

The Community Yard Sale suddenly became a Garage sale, as everyone hovered inside theirs every time the rains came down. Despite the weather, the vehicle traffic indicated a decent showing. The big Church on RT 214 west of RT 2 was also having a very large outdoor Yard sale at the same time. Not sure if that helped or hindered our efforts. Thanks Dana for spear-heading this project.

We need some additional folks to step up and to join the Board. One of our existing three Board members is moving out of state. Dana, her husband Jeff, and their two boys, Will and Luke, have been wonderful neighbors. We will miss them. But, Jeff was offered a position to teach at Central Michigan University, and he is taking his family with him. The daily commute was just going to be too much of a drive. Best of everything to this beautiful family! Dana, we want to thank you very much for offering up your precious free time to the River Oaks community. You have been busy working as an insurance agent while also singing every week at Sunday Mass, at Funerals and Weddings; teaching music to many students, and raising a terrific pair of young boys. And, you still found time to serve on the Board of the community. And folks say it can't be done, eh? Good luck to all of you.

We will be down to two able bodies as soon as Dana moves, so come on folks lend a hand. No experience necessary just a willingness to help your community. Do you really want decisions to be made by two people?

Let's all be good neighbors. While walking around the community, it is obvious that there are several particular areas where cigarette butts are accumulating. Everyone who has ever smoked realizes the addictiveness of the product. When you are finished smoking, field strip** it and put the residue in your own pocket. The butts lying on the ground for someone else to pick up is just wrong, unhealthy, and speaks to the maturity of the smoker. If you have to smoke (and most smokers do), then please be courteous to those around you who want to keep the area clean. It is against the law to litter and throwing your butts with your DNA on the ground is littering.

****Field Strip:** verb (used with object), **field-stripped** or (*Rare*) **field-stript, field-stripping**. *Military.* 1. to take apart (a weapon) for cleaning, lubrication, and repair or for inspection. 2. to roll up the paper and scatter the tobacco of (a cigarette butt).

Water Remediation Project

July 14th or closely thereto, the Water Remediation Project will commence. The contract was awarded to C S Lawn Services. CSL will be staging their equipment and materials between 226 and 224 Tilden Way. Please make sure that all children are kept away from the area while the project is ongoing.

Work will start in the rear of 230 Tilden, progressing through 228 and 226, before moving up the street toward 204 Tilden Way. All these units will have their downspouts connected directly in the newly laid 10 inch drain system. All water collected will empty into the storm water drainage system. The ROCA owns our storm water pipes. It is part of that \$300.00 check we write each January.

The Sediment Pond

Our Sediment Pond (which belongs to the County) is our responsibility to keep under control, clear and clean. It is located behind the white rail fence on the right side of Millhaven Drive as you enter our community. Several years ago the vegetation was allowed to gain the upper hand, developing a very





large overgrown mass. A heavy, floating mat of roots and dirt etc. had developed. As that decayed, it produced a very interesting fragrance, easily noticed. At times, it even was competing with the sewer pumping station across Mayo Road. Last year the ACA committee, headed by Lance Baird, arranged to have [Aquatic Environment Consultants, Inc.](#) from Chambersburg, PA come in and clean out those massive amounts of material. They waded out into the pond, at times walking on top of the “floating islands”, slashing away at the vegetation.





[Aquatic Environment Consultants, Inc.](#) stacked the material and [CS Lawn and Landscape](#) was called in to remove it. This year, AEC will return on July 28, 2016 to treat any new growth. Then, in September/October, they will return to cut out more of the problem material. The Board is looking to find a company that is qualified to dredge the pond bottom to clear the mats, bikes and carriages that are in the bottom. Once that is finished, we will be able to place a fountain type system in the pond which will keep it aerated.



The picture above was taken this spring. There are some fish swimming in there, most likely contributed by unit owners who no longer wanted their water feature, or did not know what to do with their winnings from the ping pong ball toss at the Knights of Columbus Carnival. However they arrived, the fish have found a home there along with a myriad of frogs and birds. This is a very pretty site, tucked away behind our white fence along Millhaven Drive.

School is out Watch for Children Playing

Summer Fun is evident in the ROCA if you drive on Tilden Way and throughout the Condominium. We ask that special attention be given to our children that are home for the summer. There are usually 20 or more of the youngsters out running and playing such great games as Capture the Flag or Breakout. This is a game where 10 or so members of Team A chase and capture the Team B's players, putting them in "jail". There is always the chance that they can be set free, if one of their team mates can get to the "Jail" without being captured. Yesterday, the girls were really whooping the boys. Or were the boys just letting themselves get caught? Hmmmmmm.

The kids dart in and out from behind trees, cars or other forms of concealment, at this young age they are carefree and typically do not pay close attention to what is going on around their play area. We driving adults need to be *extra CAREFUL*. The children's moms have been asked to re-enforce to the children not to run through the yards of their neighbors, to be respectful, and pick up their candy and ice cream wrappers etc. It is far better to have them outside and being social than inside playing Minecraft or some other computer game.

Parking Concerns

Commercial vehicles are not allowed in the ROCA unless they are actually servicing one of the units in their professional manner. A white truck has been spotted on Millhaven Court and the owner has been notified. Getting towed away is expensive and irritating to the owner.

Having a hot looking car is something to be proud of, whether it be a red Camaro or a vintage Ford from the Cretaceous period (like when I grew up), but we must be vigilant of children and respectful of our neighbors. No one wants to see or hear spinning wheels, fishtailing and screeching around the Circle. If the shoe fits, grow up and be an adult; or the car will be banned and/or towed out of the community. The River Oaks Condominium Association owns our streets. The County owns from the Circle to Mayo Road. Be courteous. Be Safe.

If you see some activity that is not safe, or is of concern to you, you are encouraged to contact our Management Agent Shannon Conrad at Victory Management. Tell her the situation and she will take it from there. Example: If a car has been sitting without moving for what seems to be many days, take a picture and email it to s.conrad@victorymgt.com. Our Parking Rules and Regulations can be found on our Website. The Parking R&Rs state that a vehicle cannot be parked in the same spot without moving for more than 14 days. That clock starts ticking when the vehicle is tagged, not when you first saw it.

New Neighbors

We have had a lot of great neighbors move out, and we will miss them. We have a lot of good new neighbors moving in. Welcome to the new folks. Any questions you have can be directed to our Management Agent s.conrad@victorymgt.com, or if you want to be added to our community email group, contact Bev Wright at bev.wright@verizon.net, or use the Submit Contact Info form on the River Oaks website at www.riveroaksdewater.com. On the website is also a link to our Facebook page. You may also email the President of the ROCA at kolbjoe@verizon.net. Our meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of every month at our neighboring community's Club House, courtesy of The Landings. They have been very gracious to allow us that opportunity and we thank them for the privilege.

Playground Tot Lot

The Playground area, Tot Lot, and Parks will be getting repairs. It has been 15 years since we have attended to the walkway around the Tot Lot. The pathway has begun to sink, in at least one area, and is degraded in many other places. GMC Corporation, in Stevensville, MD, will be re-working the sunken area behind units 8 through 12 Millhaven Court. As part of this project, the entire pathway will be re-done and brought back to safety standards. This will begin sometime around July 26, 2016.

During this same time, Sports Systems Inc. out of Frederick, MD will be completing the updating of the Tot Lot equipment. This is a project that was started last year with the new swings. There will be new pieces added for the littles, and a couple new pieces for the older children to climb and enjoy. Yeah, it is

the Board's goal to get this new generation outside, out of the virtual world, and back into the real one. For the Moms, Dads and caretakers, there will be new park benches to rest on while keeping an eye on the young players. Remember the Parks are only open from Dawn to Dusk. The AA County Police have been instructed to remove anyone in the park not abiding these rules.

Dog Station Improvements and Other Repairs That May Impact Parking

Dog Stations will have improvements. GMC will put down concrete slabs in front of each station except those in the middle of the field behind 2108- 2110 Millhaven Drive, and the one at the end of Braxton. Those two will remain au natural. Hopefully with solid footing, our pet owners will find and use the provided bags. Next step is to get the pet owners to put the bags into the provided cans so they do not have to carry the dog refuse bags home with them or leave them on the ground.

The storm drain Grate that is sinking alongside 2130 Millhaven Drive (in the two slot parking area) will also be addressed at this time, along with the playground pathway asphalt project. When that commencement date is established, we will ask that the two slot area be left empty for a few days.

The Board is looking into adding a short stretch of sidewalk on Braxton Way along the park. For whatever reason, the original sidewalk around the park stops at either end of the vertical parking spaces facing the park. This requires pedestrians and children to walk out into the street behind the parked cars that may not see them while backing up.

Finally the peninsulas/bull noses along Tilden and Millhaven Court and other areas around the community where trash cans are set out for collection will be cemented. Currently these are grassy areas. The Trash cans leak various chemical compounds and kills the grass. Trying to keep amending those areas has been difficult. By cementing these areas, we will provide the residents a non-muddy place for their trash and recycle cans. Also, those unit owners will be able to hose those areas off from time to time, keeping a nice clean appearance.

Future Projects

During the September to October period, we will again be doing the "find a place to park shuffle" as we re-do the sealing of the black top roadways. Be thinking of where you will park your vehicles. We will be blocking off entire street areas for 24 to 48 hours as the coating cures. More will be defined in future newsletters.

August Newsletter 2016

Yard Sale: 9/10/2016

We have agreed to conduct a yard sale with our neighbors to the west, the Landings at River Oaks. The Date will be September 10, 2016, with a rain date of September 11, 2016.

Water Remediation update:

Phase I is almost completed. The houses throughout that section are now connected directly to the sediment pond located in the front of River Oaks. Back yards now will be much drier, and the water will not be lapping against the homes along that stretch. There is still some finishing work to be done.

Water from another Front:

We had a flooding event in one of the units on the odd numbered side of Tilden Way. This was caused by a washing machine hose that was defective. It broke free while the unit owner was on vacation. The water was spotted running out of the home, and VMI was called. The Fire and Police departments were called. The latter were able to gain access to the originating home involved and the water shut off. The Fire department also went inside the neighbor's home. The flood was confined to the original unit with only minor wetness next door. The HO-6 policy of the originating unit should cover their damage and the Master Policy should have no major impact. ***Note to self, when going away on vacation, turn off the water to the washer, to the toilets and to the dishwasher. But, don't turn off the sprinklers.***

Parking Rules and Regulations explanations for general living:

Commercial Vehicles are not allowed to be parked within the Association's parking spaces. They may be parked inside the closed garage, if the person resides in a home with a garage. A commercial vehicle is extensively defined within the Parking R&R's and discretion is given to the BOD in the By-Laws to determine if a vehicle is primarily used in commercial ventures, e.g. work truck white vans with no windows or seating throughout the van other than driver and passenger. If commercial vehicles are spotted overnight, please contact VMI with specifics such as a photo, and address if known and a license number.



This type of van is considered a Commercial vehicle, and is not allowed in the community unless it is actively working on one of our units. Not parked overnight.



This type of van with or without writing is considered a commercial vehicle. It has ladder racks with pipe holders. It has commercial lettering.

We live in a townhome community which translates to "it takes a large amount of give and take". There are some things that should not happen. If you or a guest happens to hit another parked car, Maryland law requires that you attempt to locate the parked car's owner. You are to leave a note rendering your contact information. Otherwise, call the police and report the situation. We had a similar situation at the end of July and the driver simply re-adjusted his car's position in the parking space and exited the vehicle. He then joined a friend who lives in our community and they left in her car. The witnesses to the incident notified the owner of the vehicle struck, and he called the police. The police officer titled it a hit and run.

This same vehicle was later reported to have parked across the driveway of yet another unit owner's driveway. In this case, the unit owner has the right to call Victory Management and ask that they call North County Relocation to have the offending car removed. The offended unit owner will have to demonstrate that they

live at the address. If this happens on the weekend when VMI is not normally open (though their emergency contact is operable 24/7), the unit owner may call the towing company directly. It is always best to call VMI first. For obvious reasons, individual unit owner requests are handled much more cautiously than a call from the management company.

Cautionary note to the unit owner who is a friend of the driver of the white Cadillac: she needs to inform her guest to drive and park better or his vehicle will be towed out and he will be forbidden to park in our community again. People heard the collision half a block away, certainly the driver had to know he hit something.

New Board Member:

We proudly announce the addition of Sean Segretti to the Board of Directors of River Oaks. A graduate of the University of Maryland, Sean received his Master's Degree from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. Sean will assume the duties of Treasurer, and serve out the remainder of this year. As you all know, this is the time of year when we begin the work of building our new budget for the 2017 fiscal year. The new budget will be presented to the Community via letter one month before the General Meeting.

It is also that time when we hold our elections. We will have a couple of openings on the BOD that need to be filled. Three BOD members are better than two, and five is ideal. Think about pitching in and being a part of the solutions.

Playground news:

There is good news and there is some not so good news. The good news is that those cute cherubs, we have been marveling over through the years, have grown into pre-teens and young teens. Most of us remember those years. We were given added freedom with some less direct supervision. Some decisions we made were not well thought out.

What should we as parents be doing? First and foremost, the Board must make the disclaimer that we do not have all of those answers. Some generalities would include talking with your young ones, and knowing the friends they are with. What are they doing and where? Maybe, an unannounced arrival at the play areas might be in order. Even if they see you coming, it will put that spectre of doubt in their mind.

We have had reports recently (some in video format) of kids doing things that their moms might not be proud of hearing or seeing. Maybe, a review by the parents as to what deportment they expect their children to exhibit. The equipment is truly designed for children under 14. We have recent video of two 13 to 15 year old boys standing on the spring bouncer designed for toddlers and jumping up and down. Talk to your teens before the police do. No one wants that to happen.

A reminder is in order, the community parks are closed after Dusk and do not re-open until Dawn. Going back to our Driving Lesson Days, Dusk is one half hour before sundown and Dawn is one half hour after sunrise. Most children do not get into trouble in daylight.

New Playground equipment



There are some new pieces of equipment for the toddlers and some for the older children as well and replacements of others that were old and damaged. Loose connections were tightened and all that is left to do is the addition of more mulch to bring us up to code.





The white benches are gone, and new, safer brown ones have replaced them.



There are new benches which replace the white PVC boards that gave way when children as young as 11 years old sat on them. They also had dangerous bolts sticking out the back and sharp edges all around.

The new brown ones blend in nicely, are safer and far more comfortable. Two have been placed in the shade and two in the sun, the choice is yours.

More on the Playground area:

The Lamppost has been asked to report on some suggestions proposed by a couple of unit owners living near the playground. An idea has been suggested that the Board look into the possibility of erecting a fence around the Tot Lot. While this idea has surfaced from time to time, perhaps now is a good time to broach the subject again.

The unit owners are proposing that a gate locking system be put into place that will allow only River Oaks Condominium Association residents and unit owner's to enter the Tot Lot. The BOD would appreciate your input. This is not a project that would be implemented this year, but perhaps sometime in the future. Our

project “plate” is full for this year and most of 2017.

What type of fence? Should it be board on board like our own yards have? A Stockade fence with pointed tops made of wood? Our By-Laws prohibit the use of chain-link fencing. Our fencing at the front of the community is split rail PVC material, but that would not restrain anyone from entering.

What color should it be? Should it be white like our split rail? Is it Natural wood? Cedar or Pressure Treated un-stained? Stained? Again, we ask what color.

What system of access would/could be implemented, and who would control it? Should it be a universal access code given to unit owners and residents? Would we have to change that code every time someone moves in or out of the ROCA? Should it be individually assigned? That way should someone move, we could remove their code from the system? What if it is a renter who moves to the Landings, or Woodland Beach directly behind us? If the landlord fails to advise us of their departure, they could continue to access the park. What about the grandparents living in our community who have visiting grand children? What about the grandparents living in the Landings, who have grand children living in our community? How long would this system, however designed, last if Johnny, coming home from school, gives his family’s code to classmates Bobby and Sofia so they can meet him at the park to play?

What would the Management Company charge us to administer this type of program? How

much are we willing to pay for this fence and access program?

Would we be better off erecting poles with motion sensing lights directed down onto the Tot Lot? Perhaps putting cameras up to watch over the parks? The cameras could be used to also capture images of dog walkers not picking up after their pets. I mentioned only dog walkers, because in the 15 years I have lived here, and contrary to Anne Arundel County law, I have never seen a person walking their cats on a leash. I have seen cats out running loose, but never on a leash.

Changes to the Exterior of our Units:

Architectural Control Applications must be submitted and approved **before** any work is **started**. The Board has enforced the By-Laws, whenever the Board is made aware of work being done without an approved ACA. The work done without an approved ACA will have to be removed, and no replacement will be allowed until all approval processes have been fulfilled, and written approval to proceed had been received by the unit owner.

Please read through the R&R completely before commencing your change. Any **Exterior** change must be approved in writing prior to beginning the work. Yes, there are some exceptions:

1. If you are planting annuals or perennials, you do not need approval. Shrubs and Trees must be submitted for approval by filing an ACA.
2. If you are repairing damage to your unit e.g. a broken window, a broken screen etc. These replacements must be “in kind” or, in other words, an exact

replacement. If you need to replace the lamp light, (it may no longer be replaced with the original Brass unit) it must be replaced by one of two approved lights. Examples of these are on the community web site. Check out www.riveroaksedgewater.com

Schools to Re-open in August:

Back to school is coming, so be watchful of children as we go to work each morning. High schoolers will catch the bus near the Millhaven Drive Circle around 6:45 AM, the Middle School children catch their bus about one half hour later. Edgewater Elementary students are all walkers. They can dart quickly in and out between cars. Be very careful, we do not want them hurt.

Official exact times for buses or opening times haven't yet been made. AA County Schools, <http://www.aacps.org/aacps/boe/schol/calendar.asp> has produced the following information:

August school schedule according to AACPS web site

- 22** Schools open grades **1-5** and **6** and **9** only
- 23** Schools open for students in grades **1 through 12.**
- 22-23** Conferences for Kindergarten and Full-day Pre-K students.

- 23-24** Conferences for Half-day Pre-K & ECI students.*

- 24-26** Staggered entrance for **Kindergarten** and **Full-day Pre-kindergarten**

- 25** First day of school for **ECI students**

- 25, 26, 29** Staggered entrance for **Half-Day Pre-Kindergarten***

- 29** First day for **all Kindergarten** and **Full-day Prekindergarten***

- 30** First day for **all Half-day Pre-Kindergarten***

October Newsletter 2016

Elections:

At the November Annual General Meeting which will be held this year at the Landings Pool House, we will be electing our new members of the Board. There are three open slots. Sean Segretti has agreed to run after giving of his time filling out the year following Dana Spring's resignation and move to Michigan. Sean has survived donating some of his time to his community and is running now for a full term. And, you could too. If you have ever had that thought "Why is the Board doing this?" Or, "Why have they not thought of _____ (fill in the blank here), then please let Mirga know you might be interested.

A letter was recently sent out with a form to fill out. If you still have that send it to Mirga. If not simply send her an email to express your interest.

Budget:

The new budget has been reviewed, tinkered with, squeezed, mushed and pushed. As a result, the Board is proposing a \$3.00 increase per month this year. Basically, this is based on the minute rise of COLA (Cost of Living Increase). This will ensure that our fund values retain replacement cost levels. Keep in mind, any monies not spent, will be rolled into the Operating Reserves and the Regular Reserve Funds for the following year(s).

We are hoping that we have a very warm November and December. We have overspent the Snow Pushing budget this year and there are still the last two and a half months to get through. Admittedly we do not get snows the size of the one earlier this year, and the extra funds in our Operating Reserve will see us through should that happen.

We have increased the levels for the newsletter and for the Website. The latter has been a continual work in progress and Beverly Wright has done a lot with a small grant of one hundred dollars a year.

Legal services continue to climb each year. It would help dramatically if anyone with an outstanding balance would develop a plan to get caught up.

Insurance premiums have steadied to a cost of living increase level. This has been accomplished by the decision to self-insure to the level of \$25,000.00 deductible. What this means is that the individual unit owner must insure their unit(s) for an assessment level of \$5,000.00 per unit and that cover the State mandated deductible level. If you have a claim incident in your unit, you are responsible for the first 5k. This your insurance company picks up after you have met your individual policies deductible. Claims over 5k are then picked up by River Oaks up to our deductible of 25k. After that the Master Policy kicks in to cover catastrophic events. Our use of this procedure has reduced our insurance fees by over \$10,000.00 per year over the past several years.

The Lamppost Newsletter
The River Oaks Condominium Association, Inc.
October, 2016

The electric fees are for our street lamps. If you see one not working you may call BG&E and report it. The Phone number is 1-800-685-0123. If you can see the 4 digit number at the top of the pole that helps them to identify the one needing repair. Otherwise give them the address closest to the pole.

River Oaks Condominium, Inc.							
	Description	2016 Budget	2016 Actual	2016 Remaining	2016 Projected	2017 Budget (\$3.00/mnth)	Comments
Operating Accounts							
Income Accounts							
Income							
	Association Fees	\$342,000.00	\$228,383.42	\$114,000.00	\$342,383.42	\$350,208.00	.023% increase*
	Interest Income	\$25.00	\$80.99	\$8.36	\$89.35	\$25.00	
	Late Fee Income	\$2,500.00	\$2,573.32	\$833.36	\$3,406.68	\$2,500.00	
	Misc Income	\$0.00	\$7,092.40	\$0.00	\$7,092.40	\$0.00	
New							
Income Accounts Total		\$344,525.00	\$238,130.13	\$114,841.72	\$352,971.85	\$352,733.00	
Expense Accounts							
Administration							
	Audit	\$1,325.00	\$1,325.00	\$0.00	\$1,325.00	\$1,375.00	
	File Storage	\$1,500.00	\$1,541.00	\$500.00	\$2,041.00	\$1,600.00	
	Management Services	\$36,177.00	\$24,118.00	\$12,059.00	\$36,177.00	\$36,177.00	No Incr Request
	Stenographer	\$2,500.00	\$879.25	\$833.36	\$1,712.61	\$2,500.00	
	Copies, Postage & Newsletter	\$5,955.00	\$5,550.65	\$1,985.00	\$7,535.65	\$7,500.00	
	Newsletter Expense	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	Included in C&P
	Website Expense	\$0.00	\$264.09	\$0.00	\$264.09	\$1,000.00	
	Legal Services	\$9,000.00	\$8,961.54	\$3,000.00	\$11,961.54	\$9,214.00	
	Insurance Deductible	\$25,000.00	\$2,801.43	\$8,333.36	\$11,134.79	\$25,000.00	
	Insurance Premiums	\$81,000.00	\$54,851.00	\$27,000.00	\$81,851.00	\$85,000.00	Est 3% Increase
Grounds							
	Landscape Contract	\$43,068.00	\$28,709.36	\$14,356.00	\$43,065.36	\$45,000.00	.044% increase
	Landscape Improvements	\$20,000.00	\$7,022.50	\$6,666.64	\$13,689.14	\$20,000.00	
	Snow Removal	\$25,000.00	\$28,652.00	\$0.00	\$28,652.00	\$25,000.00	
	Tree Care	\$5,000.00	\$7,084.00	\$1,666.64	\$8,750.64	\$8,000.00	
	Pet Waste Serv/ Stations	\$9,000.00	\$5,490.00	\$3,000.00	\$8,490.00	\$9,000.00	
	Grounds Repairs	\$11,000.00	\$2,113.12	\$3,666.64	\$5,779.76	\$10,000.00	
Utilities							
	Electric	\$14,000.00	\$6,622.12	\$4,666.64	\$11,288.76	\$12,000.00	
Other							
	Misc. Expenses	\$3,500.00	\$6,150.12	\$1,166.64	\$7,316.76	\$3,000.00	Engr for WRP Proj
	Reserve Contribution	\$50,000.00	\$33,333.36	\$16,666.64	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	WRP Replen Reser
New							
Expense Accounts Total		\$344,525.00	\$225,468.54	\$106,066.56	\$331,535.10	\$352,733.00	
Operating Accounts Net		\$0.00	\$12,661.59	\$8,775.16	\$21,436.75	\$0.00	

- the \$3 increase is in line with the average rate of inflation over the past few years of the US dollar, roughly 2% per year.

Trash Day Collection Alert:

Since several owners have asked, Bev Wright sent the following note to the Board:

“For us, there is no change in collection days this year until Christmas Day, which is observed on Monday 12/26, so our collection will be on Wednesday, 12/28, followed by a change after New Year’s Day observed on 1/2/2017, so pickup will be on Wed 1/4/2017.

The calendar on our website (left column of every page) has been updated for all the holidays so you can rely on that until mid-2017. Also, on our [Trash Guidelines](#) page is the attached schedule.”

Bev Wright

Website and Email Group Administrator
River Oaks Condo Association, Inc.
www.riveroaksedgewater.com

Holiday Schedule

2016 - 2017

Labor Day	MON, SEP 5	Closed Monday collections occur Tuesday Tuesday collections occur Wednesday
Election Day	TUE, NOV 8	Closed No collection changes
Veterans Day	FRI, NOV 11	Closed No collection changes
Thanksgiving Day	THU, NOV 24	Closed Thursday collections occur Friday
Thanksgiving Friday	FRI, NOV 25	Closed Friday collections occur Saturday
Christmas <small>observed on</small>	MON, DEC 26	Closed Monday collections occur Tuesday Tuesday collections occur Wednesday

2017

New Year’s Day <small>observed</small>	MON, JAN 2	Closed Tuesday collections occur Wednesday
MLK Birthday	MON, JAN 16	Closed No collection changes
Washington’s Birthday	MON, FEB 20	Closed No collection changes
Good Friday	FRI, APR 14	Closed No collection changes
Memorial Day	MON, MAY 29	Closed Tuesday collections occur Wednesday
Independence Day	TUE, JULY 4	Closed Tuesday collections occur Wednesday

Note: this may be cut and magnetically attached to your Refrigerator

Pond Work:

Our sediment pond at the front of the community has again been cleaned of invasive flora. This is a process that has been ongoing. Past issues of the Lamppost carried photos of the before and after. Last year an enormous amount of plant material was treated and removed. This year there was some but not nearly as much. We are now almost completely clear.

What is needed to be accomplished is the extraction of the floating bogs or islands that give birth to new vegetation each spring. The Board has attempted to engage a service provider to take these floating bogs out, but thus far we have not had any luck. If anyone has contact or suggestions please contact Victory Management, Inc. know. You can email Mirga Dulys, Mirga@victorymgt.com

Changes to the Exterior of our Units:

Architectural Control Applications must be submitted and approved **before** any work is **started**. Please read through the R&R completely before commencing your change. Any **Exterior** change must be approved in writing prior to beginning the work.

Parking:

We are still getting reports of folks allowing their guests, and service providers to park on our sidewalks. The BOD has attempted to withhold having these vehicles towed, as that is very upsetting to the Guest and the workmen. They are not the folks that will have to pay to have the sidewalks re-

done. Please take a minute to observe how they are parked and ask them to move the vehicle off the sidewalk.

Classified Ads

New Board Members needed:

We are looking to fill two or more positions. Requires the ability to breathe, stand up when preparing to move in any particular direction (as there are not health benefits connected to these positions), There are opportunities for healthful walks as well as mind expanding exercises. You need a willingness to walk around the community at a time agreeable to you, an ability to read and render your opinions on potential projects or actions. Seriously there is not a lot of time commitment and absolutely no prior experience is needed. The only requirement that I have ever found in the By-Laws is that you must be current with your assessments. The BOD meets once a month at the Pool House in The Landings. Most meetings last about one hour rarely do we go longer. So if you have an interest in your investment in your home, and in your community, think about joining the Board. We really do need your help and participation.

Have we mentioned that there are openings on the BOD? Recently sent messages to the editorial staff (?) of the Lamppost recently included this one: **“Having to listen to the same three voices each month gets old. We need two new voices to join the trio.”** It was signed Mirga, VMI and Kim the Stenographer. Just kidding.. ... I made that up. But I bet they were thinking it.

HO, HO, HO! The Holiday Season is here.



Your Board of Directors would like to wish everyone the very warmest wishes during this season of Joy and Peace. Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah, and Happy Kwanzaa! How ever you and your family celebrate this special time of year, our wishes go out to all.

Thanks for your help, suggestions, observations and, most importantly, your timely assessment payments. All of these help us to make the ROCA the best place to live. Introduce yourselves to your neighbors and to us as you find us out and about. From all of us, Happy New Year 2017!

Joe Kolb, Jyl Dupont and Sean Segretti

Caution!

The kiddos will be out and about as they start their Christmas break, please be careful when driving throughout our streets. It probably will be good counsel for driving everywhere. The Malls are particularly crazy this time of year. It used to be only in the summer months that we had young residents running about after dark. Now, that has become a daily occurrence. The old Mother's admonition of "Nothing good happens to kids out after dark" seems to have taken on a different meaning. To those parents who feel their children are "ok" out there in the dark, please understand that the youthful mind finds some of the strangest activities to amuse their thought patterns.

There has been an uptick in prankish events. Trash from in front of one home was carried down to the school bus stop. It was an artificial tree and a vacuum cleaner. My guess is that they were missing the green leaves of the real trees there, and wanted to use the vacuum to tidy up the bus stop at the circle. Gotta love the ingenuity.

Letters to the Community:

Every once in a while, a unit owner requests that a letter be sent to the community to inform of upcoming events, to make others aware of rulings made by our government that will impact our living values or our property values. What follows is one such letter. This is the opinion of the writer and not necessarily that of the Board. We do find that the subject matter is of importance to everyone who lives or owns a unit in the River Oaks Condominium Association, Inc. (Aka the ROCA) While we could not get this letter into the November edition (there was none), we are posting it now so that residents who feel strongly about this issue may write directly to Mr. Schuh, or to their Council members, legislators or to the Board of Ed. All of these addresses are available on the internet or you may contact Sara Little.

October 25, 2016

Dear River Oaks Residents:

I write to you today to make you aware of local events directly affecting our community and our property values so that you may be more informed on local elections when going into the voting booth on Tuesday, November 8.

As you may know, Edgewater Elementary School was built in 1959. According to a study commissioned by the County on school construction priorities (the MGT Study), Edgewater was found to be in the worst physical condition in the County.

Earlier this year, County Executive Steve Schuh released a budget proposal that contained money for boat ramps and tennis courts, but no funding for construction of a new Edgewater. His budget would have delayed construction on Edgewater Elementary to 2021 and beyond.

A group of concerned parents and teachers at Edgewater got together and with the help of County Councilmen Jerry Walker and Chris Trumbauer, we found the money in the budget and a new Edgewater Elementary will be built by 2021.

Since then, a feasibility committee met to determine the best design for a new Edgewater. There were several options presented, but the committee ultimately chose the "replacement" option. This option would allow the students to remain in the current building while a new school was built on the back of the property. This option had the most advantages for all involved.

Unfortunately, the Superintendent selected the "revitalization" option. This means that the students will remain in the building while it is renovated. Edgewater students who are already attending school in the worst school building in the County will also have to contend with a construction zone as well. This is no place to learn.

You should be asking yourselves if the school in the worst condition in the county can't be fully replaced instead of renovated, just how bad does a school have to be to be replaced.

On October 19, the Board of Education met to have the final say on which option to choose for a new Edgewater. At the meeting, County Executive Steve Schuh sent his "Education Advisor" Amalie Brandenburg to testify AGAINST Edgewater families calling for a replacement.

While several Edgewater parents gave very moving and powerful speeches against the revitalization option, it was not enough. With the Superintendent against us and with the County Executive signaling to the Board of Education that he would not support or fund a full replacement, the Board of Education members voted 6-2 in favor of revitalization instead of replacement. See vote record [here](http://www.aacps.org/admin/articlefiles/boardvotesfy2017.pdf). (<http://www.aacps.org/admin/articlefiles/boardvotesfy2017.pdf>)

Five Board of Education members are up for retention this year in the general election on Nov. 8. Please consider voting against retaining these school board members who voted against Edgewater Elementary and enhancing communities like ours:

Thomas Frank
Julie Hummer
Maria Delores Sasso
Eric Grannon (was not present)

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at sarahrosslittle@gmail.com This letter comes solely from me and is not intended to represent the views of the River Oaks Board.

Thanks,

Sarah Little

Edgewater parent and River Oaks resident

Trash Day Collection Alert:

Since several owners have asked, Bev Wright sent the following note to the Board:

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Bev Wright
Website and Email Group Administrator
River Oaks Condo Association, Inc.
www.riveroaksedgewater.com

Holiday Schedule

2017

Christmas	observed on	MON, DEC 26	Closed Monday collections occur Tuesday Tuesday collections occur Wednesday
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2017

New Year's Day	observed	MON, JAN 2	Closed Tuesday collections occur Wednesday
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NEW Budget Approved: Rate will be \$128.00 per month

We held the Annual General Meeting in November, but did not have enough ballots or proxies cast to allow for us to move forward with that meeting. Our elections will be completed during our regular Board of Directors meeting in January per the requirements of our founding documents. According to our By-Laws, we needed a total of 57 proxies and unit owners present in order to conduct the Annual General Meeting. That meeting was closed.

We did conduct the regular monthly meeting of the Board. There were unit owners who live as far away as Virginia and Pennsylvania attending the meeting. It was good to see Jules and Brenda taking the time and interest to drive here and participate. The BOD thanks them.

We had a nice turnout of concerned unit owners and we had one letter from a unit owner who wanted to state his concerns about the budget and various other concerns. He offered his viewpoint relevant to the Budget. Our VMI Property Manager, Mirga, read his letter in its entirety to those in attendance.

The Budget was mailed earlier by Victory Management. The BOD reviewed Budget and it was put to a vote. The new budget will be enacted beginning with our **January 1, 2017** assessment. The increase is linked to the rate of increase in the cost of living. The new rate will be \$128.00 per month. Please make the adjustment on your payment schedule. This represents a three dollar increase from the 2016 rate of \$125.00. Those in attendance expressed their opinion. They felt that the 2% rate increase was ok.

Portable Window Air Conditioners and Changes to the Exterior of our Units:

Each of our homes was built with Central Air Conditioning. These are the only allowed types of air conditioners that are allowed. Window fans are not allowed either. You may have fans inside your unit, but they may not be visible from the outside of your unit.



If your AC unit is not functioning properly, get it fixed and make sure that it is the size capacity that your unit needs. Perhaps adjusting the baffles on the conditioned air supply side of the air handler will help. When the seasons change, and your own AC/Heating unit's annual maintenance inspection is done by your favorite HVAC tech, ask them to explain how to adjust the baffles.

Screens need to be in place throughout the unit or taken off of every window completely. If you choose to remove the screens for winter, they must be stored inside the unit, garage or public storage unit, not stacked up behind the house in the yard. If you need to replace the window screening, make sure it is with the correct color to match

the existing. Some folks from time to time opt for the black screening only to be advised that they needed to remove the black and replace with the grey.

Architectural Control Applications (ACA) must be submitted and approved **before** any work is **started**. Please read through the R&R completely before commencing your change. Any **Exterior** change must be approved in writing prior to beginning the work. ACA forms are available on the Victory Management website and on our Website, www.Riveroaksedgewater.com page. Check both out.

Pets Running Loose



Most residents understand **that Dogs Must Be Leashed!** What others do not understand, is the fact that this rule also applies to **CATS**. This is an AA County Law. Cats must be maintained either in the home or inside the yard. There are specially designed cat restraints that are placed on the inside of fences inhibiting the cat from climbing out into the GCE. Please restrain your cat or keep it inside. In the past, the Boards have authorized the placement of AA County supplied Cat Traps. This has worked. Several felines were captured and turned over to Animal Control. This Board has not taken that step yet.

There are folks that are allergic to cats. Kids can be scratched by cats and cats like to mark their territory. If anyone has ever experienced a cat marking the inside of their garage, they will know that scent. Do all of the neighbors a favor and restrain your pets. No one would want the family pet Boa Constrictor to wander loose, eh?

Wind Storm Damages Units

There was a wind storm that impacted the siding on a couple of units. One on Millhaven Drive and one on Millhaven Court. Contact Victory Management whenever damage occurs. Our Management Agent Mirga Dulys will give you information on how to proceed. Periodically, go outside and walk around looking up at the siding the rake board and the windows to see if anything needs attending. When repairing the siding, the color must match. Weathering tends to bleach the color over time. The installer might want to take a piece from an obscure place on the unit to match. Or, simply replace the entire side with as near a color match as possible to the adjoining side. This type event is rare. The securing nails, over time, work themselves loose.



Pending Work On Our Roadways Starting About December 12, 2016

GMC Corp will begin doing repairs throughout the River Oaks General Common Elements (GCE) and in certain places on the Roadways.

This work will include fixing some areas near 174 Tilden Way including repairing the speed bump and the gradation of the parking space near there. They will be cementing the area where the trash cans for 180 to 190 are placed.

The peninsulas going down Tilden will also be transformed by adding cement. These sections have been a problem because the residual liquids drain out of the cans onto the dirt, killing the grass and preventing anything from growing. Multiple attempts to re-seed have failed. With cement the area can be occasionally power washed.

The dog station between 200 and 202 will be addressed and a cement walk-up installed. There will be walk-ups installed at the dog stations on the Circle, on the Corners of Millhaven and Braxton as well as Cromarty and Braxton.

Braxton Park will have the sidewalk that currently stops on each side of the vertical parking spaces connected with a new sidewalk. This will eliminate the children and walkers from having to enter the street into the pathway of cars driving by or the cars backing out of the existing guest/open parking spaces on Braxton Way.

Millhaven Court will see the peninsulas cemented as is being done on Tilden Way. These areas are in front of Units #8, #32, #48 and #58. In front of units 64 through 70, new sidewalk will lead to a new cemented peninsula area for placement of the plethora of cans that are currently being stacked on the corner in front of unit #70. This will move the collection of cans further into the Court reducing the appearance of "trash can central" on that corner.

On Millhaven Drive, the storm drain collection point that has begun sinking between 2128 and 2130 will be corrected. This is the two (2) space parking area that used to lead to the mailbox that was placed there. There will be several speed bumps corrected. The area near the corner of Millhaven and Tilden has a draining issue will be repaired.

The Park pathway, after 15 years of wear and weather, will be attended to as well this month. There is an area directly behind units #4 through #12 that has sunk and is causing a pooling of water that freezes. This area is a potential serious liability issue and will be remedied immediately. It will be regraded per the design of D S Thaler Engineering. Originally part of the Phase II project, it was moved to be done now.

At this time we will not be doing re-sealing of the streets nor re-striping and numbering of the parking spaces. That work will be held off until early spring of 2017. The Board committed to that work now because it protected our pricing and puts us in line to begin the work as soon as the weather breaks in 2017.

If you see your favorite parking space blocked out in the coming weeks, park somewhere else. We do not want to have to call a towing company to remove your vehicle. That money should be spent on your favorite Board member. Just kidding! Our pleasure and payment is derived by seeing quizzical faces on those bewildered by the things we do that make no sense to any normal thinking individual.

Parking By Registered Permit Only?

During the November meeting, a non-garage unit owner raised a question as to the feasibility of issuing each unit owner 2 to 3 permits which would be numbered and recorded by Victory Management.

While this has been looked into in past years by prior Boards, starting with the Board of 2001-2002, there has never been any action moved forward. The main reasons were and still are:

1. That should each unit be given two permits (totaling 556 cars), there would still not be enough parking spaces to accommodate that many vehicles.
2. The cost of administering such an endeavor would be prohibitive. VMI would have to do this.
3. Who would police it? Someone, or group of folks, would have to be willing to divide up the 61,320 hours per year needed to walk the entire community looking for violators.
4. How would we address guests? Giving each unit owner one (1) pass would add yet another 228 potential spaces needed to accommodate guests.
5. What do we do with children of driving age?

We live in a townhome community. This requires a lot of give and take. Somewhat like living in an apartment complex, except here we have given the non-garage units at least one designated parking space. In 2006, we were not allowed to park perpendicular to our own driveways. There was no parking in the two space parking area in front of the old mailbox area on Millhaven Drive. There were no spaces alongside 2145 Millhaven, 181 Tilden Way, 241 Tilden, or between 251 and 253 Tilden. There was no parking on either side of Millhaven from 2152 to the corner with Braxton. There was no parking on Braxton, other than the vertical slots across from 237 and 241. There was no parking at either end of Braxton, nor, any on Cromarty. Correction of these issues provided additional parking for 209 cars; 162 driveways and 47 additional open spaces. Yet we still have no parking availability. Sometimes, we have to find a spot and walk in to our home. Everyone pays for the open spaces and is entitled their use.

Board Opening

We will still have one open position of the new Board and anticipate your stepping forward to express your interest in filling the post. Please confirm your interest to Mirga Dulys at Victory Management. You can email Mirga Dulys, Mirga@victorymgt.com