

Stoneleigh News

June 2010

STONELEIGH'S GARDEN TOUR Sunday, June 20

Join your neighbors on Sunday, June 20, from 2-4 p.m. and get a peek at a variety of backyard oases that our residents have created for themselves. Like last year, homes with balloons on their back gates welcome visitors. Our HOA President, Mitch Sacks, and his wife, Margaret, will be hosting a cocktail party at their home (7011 Alicent Place) following the garden tour at 4 p.m. All are welcome. If you are willing to be a stop on the garden tour, please contact Robin Crawford (703-734-1150 or crawfordr@ruderfinn.com) or Laura Coblentz (703-848-1885 or lacoblentz@gmail.com)

MCLEAN JULY 4TH CELEBRATION Sunday, July 4 Langley High School

- Grounds open at 6 p.m.
- Free Admission and Parking
- Free Shuttle Service Available (Starting at 7 p.m.)
- Rain Date: July 5

Shuttle Locations**

- McLean Community Center (1234 Ingleside Ave.)
- St. Johns Episcopal Church (6715 Georgetown Pike)

** Each site will have handicapped accessible buses

This year's special musical guests are the Carolina beach music band, "Chairmen of the Board" who are known for such hits as "Carolina Girl" and "Give Me Just a Little More Time." Great music for a fun family summer night under the stars!

Arrive early to enjoy the music and field games with the staff of Camp McLean! There will be funnel cakes, pizza, cotton candy, and all sorts of icy cold refreshments to enjoy! Receive an American flag from American Legion Post 270 and see Northern Virginia's best fireworks display to honor our nation's 234th birthday.

Please note: No alcohol, no smoking, no sparklers or fireworks, and sorry but NO pets on school grounds.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Stoneleigh Garden Tour
McLean July 4th Celebration
Upcoming Stoneleigh Events
Palladium Civic Place Green Events
- 2 Message From the President
- 3 We Asked – You Answered
- 4 Oh Rats!
Recycling
Board Opening
- 5 Solicitors In Stoneleigh
- 6 Landscaping Notes
Contacting Cardinal Management
Stay Up-To-Date
Restaurant Discount – McKeever's Pub

UPCOMING STONELEIGH EVENTS

- Stoneleigh July 4th Parade
- Neighborhood Picnic - September

PALLADIUM CIVIC PLACE GREEN EVENTS (next to the Firehouse)

Free Yoga on the Green – 8 - 9 a.m.

- June 12 & 26 and July 10 & 24

Free Concerts on the Green – 5 - 7 p.m.

- June 19 - Woven Green
- June 26 - Billy T's Time Machine
- July 3 - Marshall Maley
- July 10 - The Seekers



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Where Does The Money Go?

Recently, the association levied a Budget Adjustment to cover a shortfall in our budget due to costs associated with plowing and clearing the snow from this past winter's major storms. Last year, there was a special assessment to partially cover the costs for the drainage improvements to the property. There have been other special assessments during the time I've lived in Stoneleigh (both as a member of the board and as a resident). I know that many of you understand the reason for these, but there are always questions. I thought I'd use this article to present how the board spends our money.

First off, let's get some raw numbers out of the way. There are 134 townhomes in Stoneleigh, and our quarterly assessment is presently \$320; this works out to an income of \$171,520 annually. This year, our budgeted expenses totaled just under \$150,000, leaving us roughly \$22,000 to put towards replenishing our reserve fund. So, just where does the money go, how do we manage to spend \$150,000?

Here's a quick breakdown:

Expense	Budgeted Amount
Cardinal Management	\$21,000
Grounds Contract – Blade Runners	\$45,000
Grounds Maintenance (replacement of trees, shrubs, bushes, hardscaping, renewing neglected areas, planting new areas)	\$10,000
Tree Care – RTEC	\$17,500
Trash Removal – McLean Trash	\$23,000
Snow Contract – Blade Runners	\$10,000
Other Expenses (Electrical repairs, Property repairs, Extermination, Administrative expenses, Insurance coverage, Taxes, and other miscellaneous items)	\$23,500
Total	\$150,000

The income Stoneleigh receives from the quarterly assessments, only covers the costs to provide core services to the community, and only allows us to place money into our reserves if expenses don't exceed budgeted amounts.

But even in good years where we haven't had to levy a special assessment, we are only placing \$20,000-25,000 in our reserve fund. If in a given year we also perform capital improvements such as replacing sidewalks, or seal-coating and restriping our parking lots, the cost to complete this type of work comes out of our reserves, so in some years we end up not building up our reserves at all.

Back when our association was founded in the early 1970s, not a lot of thought was given to what it would cost to maintain the property 40 years later, so reserves were either not funded at all, or minimally funded. The reality is that our infrastructure is aging and when we need to do repairs or maintenance we often have to resort to a special assessment. I don't think this is a model that can sustain our community long term, and we need to think about what direction we as a community want to head in. We can continue to levy special assessments as needed to cover costs, but this has negative connotations. First off, no one likes to receive an unexpected bill; secondly these types of assessments can have a negative impact on our property values, since potential homeowners may not want to purchase a home in a community that often levies assessments. Alternatively, we can raise the quarterly dues, or switch to monthly dues. Our dues are presently in line with other HOAs in the area for similar properties, but older communities like ours are struggling with the same issues.

I'm not advocating that we change anything at the moment, in fact; our dues have remained unchanged for five years. However, I would very much like to hear from my fellow homeowners. Let me know if you think we should continue with our current HOA fees (levying special assessments as needed.), or if you think we should increase dues to eliminate having to levy special assessments in the future.

If you think we should increase dues, let me know what you think the dues should change to, and if we should continue with quarterly dues or switch to monthly. Send me an email at msacks@verizon.net and let me know your thoughts.

- Mitchell Sacks, Stoneleigh HOA President

WE ASKED, YOU ANSWERED STONELEIGH SURVEY RESULTS

Thank you to everyone who responded to the survey! We had a total of 61 households respond to the survey, which is 45%. The majority of those who responded have lived in the neighborhood for 3 or more years, with 14 of the households having lived here for more than 26 years!

- One of the issues we tackled in the survey was the issue of lighting in the community. As was discussed in the November Annual Meeting, our current infrastructure for lighting in the community is outdated and inefficient. Therefore, the board has been evaluating options for improving it. The results of the survey show that the community is split on the need for more lighting. 52% of respondents are happy with the current level of lighting while 48% think we need more lighting. Those who feel we need additional lighting responded that it is needed throughout the community including alleyways and parking areas. However, a majority of respondents (58%) are not willing to pay a special assessment in order to improve the lighting.
- Many good ideas were provided as solutions for our lighting problems. At this time, the board has made a decision to hold off on adding more lighting in the community. However, as was discussed at the board meeting in November, the current infrastructure for lighting our neighborhood is outdated and inefficient. We will work on developing alternative solutions and hopefully develop a plan that will be supported by the whole community. In the meantime, we would like to remind everyone to please turn on your front and rear porch lights at night to help provide additional lighting.
- The majority of respondents are satisfied with many of our HOA services including McLean Trash, RTEC, Blade Runners, and the Stoneleigh Board. There are, however, areas where we can improve. We will make every attempt to address these issues throughout the year.



- Areas for improvement include:
 - Snow Removal: While snow removal got the biggest approval rating (81% satisfaction), there were some valid issues raised from some homeowners. We will do our best to develop a plan that will improve snow removal in the years to come.
 - Board Communication: While the board got a 77% satisfaction rating, we realize there is a need for improving communication between the Board and community. We are addressing this issue by creating quarterly newsletters, updating the Stoneleigh website, updating the community directory, and creating an email group to announce community events (<http://groups.google.com/group/stoneleigh-hoa>). Please also read the section on page 6 regarding contacting Cardinal Management.
 - Landscaping: Blade Runners got an 80% satisfaction rating, and possibly the most comments out of any of the categories. We try to do our best to make the community a beautiful place to live and will try to incorporate as many of your ideas as possible. We have answered some of your concerns on page 6 of this newsletter (Landscaping Notes).
 - McLean Trash: They do a great job of servicing the community and got an 80% approval rating. There is a section on page 4 of the newsletter with additional information regarding our trash pickup.
- One of the last questions in the survey was regarding a community "Master Plan." Having a Master Plan will guide us and help us maintain this wonderful community for years to come. Survey respondents had many great comments. The areas that got the most comments included Landscaping, Parking Policy, Reserve Funds, Sidewalks, and Fences. We appreciate your comments and will work to incorporate them into the long term plan for the community. As we develop the Master Plan, we will make sure we communicate and get regular feedback from the community.
- A PowerPoint with more detailed analysis is available on the Stoneleigh Google Group under "Files."

OH, RATS!



Rats are attracted to the food in bird and squirrel feeders. A few residents have been complaining about the number of rats in the community. The best way to keep them away is to cut off their food supply. If you have a feeder, please pay attention to whether it is accessible to the rats or whether food gets spilled onto the ground. There may be better solutions available.

Also, please be sure that you are putting your trash out in sealed plastic bags inside sealed plastic containers. We have raccoons, too!

We contract with Suburban Pest Control to put rodent traps out in the community. They come out monthly to check and re-bait the traps. Here is a picture of the phonebook-sized black plastic traps you may have seen placed around the community.



RECYCLING

We try our best to be green and help the planet, but it can be pretty confusing. Here is a guide to help you decide where to toss your trash.

- Recyclables are picked up with the trash every Friday and should be empty and clean; no food or soiled materials (this attracts pests!). Please remember to bring your recycling bins back into your yard along with your trash can - fines apply for both.
- Great news! Fairfax County has moved to single-stream recycling, which means you no longer need to separate your paper, glass, and plastic. It can all go in the blue bin together!
- A copy of "Trash and Recycling Collection Guidelines for Fairfax County Sanitary Districts" can be found under "Files" on the Stoneleigh Google Group. Please bear in mind that while much of the information applies, Stoneleigh contracts with McLean Trash, so any questions or complaints should be directed to them at 703-442-7387.
- Have too much recycling? Call McLean Trash at 703-442-7387 to request an additional blue recycling bin.

WHAT TO RECYCLE (PUT IT IN THE BLUE BIN)

- Plastic Jugs and Bottles
- Metal Food Containers
- Glass Jars and Bottles
- Soda Bottles and Cans
- Yogurt and Dairy Tubs
- Pill Bottles
- Junk Mail, Mixed Paper, Newspapers, Magazines, and Catalogs
- Cereal, Cracker, and Other Food Container Boxes
- Phone Books
- Lids, Caps, and Bottle Tops
- Cardboard

DO NOT RECYCLE (THROW IT IN THE REGULAR TRASH)

- Pizza Boxes
- Plastic Bags
- Styrofoam Packaging and Containers
- Alkaline Batteries
- Plastic Food Boxes or Trays
- Light Bulbs
- Aluminum Foil and Tins
- Paper Plates and Napkins
- Ceramics
- Pots and Pans
- Prescription Vials
- Hard-back Books



BOARD OPENING

As Brenda Gordon moves to sunny Florida, she leaves an opening on the Stoneleigh HOA Board of Directors. If you are interested in completing her term, contact Mitch Sacks (703-748-5997, msacks@verizon.net) or Jonathan Sucher (703-565-5015, j.sucher@cmgmt.com).

SOLICITORS IN STONELEIGH

Stoneleigh has a No Solicitation policy. Here are some important notes about solicitors and your security from Don Sumihiro, Neighborhood Watch:

- Fairfax County requires that peddlers and solicitors be licensed before they solicit door-to-door.
- Solicitors are required to show you their license and may not solicit at a residence that posts a "No Peddlers or Solicitors" sign.
- The hours that solicitors may knock on your door are between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m.
- They must leave the premises immediately if you ask them to leave.
- Solicitors offer a wide variety of goods and services for sale. Solicitors may be selling or "setting appointments" for high-speed Internet, cable services, home improvements, home security alarms, magazine subscriptions, or lawn or tree services.
- No matter what goods or services are being offered, the solicitor is required to have a license.
- Legitimately licensed solicitors should always show their Fairfax County issued license when a prospective customer asks to see it.
- The Solicitor's License is an individual license, not a business license. If a solicitor tells you that their business has a license, the solicitor may not be properly licensed in Fairfax County.
- If the solicitor does not have a license, call Fairfax County Police immediately to report the violation at 703-691-2131.
- The bottom line is that if the solicitor (and we're not talking politicians or their representatives, the crew team, the boys/cub scouts, etc.) does not have a license from Fairfax County on them, they are illegal.

The police highly encourage you to call the non-emergency number, 703-691-2131, after they leave and the police will be happy to either ticket them and/or escort them out of Stoneleigh.

Solicitation is many times a cover for doing surveillance for future crime. Don't be bashful about calling if the solicitor doesn't have the license on them.

If they don't have a license the standard responses are, "My boss has it," "I'm new and I've just applied for the license," or "I didn't know we had to have one." The only correct/legal response is to show it to you with their picture and it should also indicate what they are licensed to solicit.

Note that just because they show you a license does not mean that it is genuine. Someone recently showed up at my door and I asked for their Fairfax County license, which they showed to me. When I said that I would call it in, they decided to take off. Also if the person gives a story that they do not have to show a license because they already have done work in Stoneleigh, they are WRONG!! Shut the door on them and call the police at the non-emergency number.

NEVER, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, LET ANY SOLICITOR INTO YOUR HOUSE!

2010 means it is Census time. Here are some tips from the Better Business Bureau should someone claiming to be a Census worker arrive on your doorstep.

If a U.S. Census worker knocks on your door, they will have a badge, a handheld device, a Census Bureau canvas bag, and a confidentiality notice.

Ask to see their identification and their badge before answering their questions. However, you should never invite anyone you don't know into your home. Census workers are currently only knocking on doors to verify address information.

Do not give your Social Security number, credit card or banking information to anyone, even if they claim they need it for the U.S. Census.

While the Census Bureau might ask for basic financial information, such as a salary range, it will not ask for Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers nor will employees solicit donations.



LANDSCAPING NOTES

Winnie Pizzano, Chair of the Stoneleigh Landscaping Committee has provided the following updates on the neighborhood's landscaping activities.

- Our landscape contractor, Blade Runners, mows the common areas and front lawns every seven to ten days throughout the summer - depending on the weather. Rainy weather causes delays. We do not want them to mow when the ground is wet, so they wait until the grass is dry. This delay sometimes causes us to have high grass for a few days. They edge the sidewalks every other visit. Grass in backyards is the responsibility of the homeowner and must be mowed. Every now and then we have to notify homeowners to mow. If we have to bring in Blade Runners, it can be an expensive charge back to the homeowner.
- We hope you have noticed the new trees and plants along Davidson Street. We are beginning a "back planting" program to replace over time the white pine trees which are beginning to show their age. We will continue to plant over the next few years.
- The winter storm took its toll on our trees. We have had to remove six trees as a result of the storm and are continuing to trim and or remove large foundation plants that were damaged.
- All new plantings including front yard tree replacement, back planting, and updating will occur in the early fall. Foundation plants should be taken care of by the homeowner.
- The late spring pruning is scheduled for June and should be underway about the same time as you get the newsletter.

Let me know if you have special issues or questions at pizzano@erols.com or 703-288-4728. Also, if anyone would like to help with the landscape committee please let me know.

- Winnie Pizzano, Landscaping Chair



CONTACTING CARDINAL MANAGEMENT

If you need to get in touch with Cardinal Management, please read on to determine how to reach the appropriate contacts at Cardinal Management.

- The primary contract officer is Jonathan Sucher who can be reached at 703-565-5015 (direct dial) or j.sucher@cmgmt.com.
- For routine issues that include architectural application processing or general questions, Administrative Assistant Miranda Siebeneck can assist you as well as guide you through the process for obtaining resale disclosure documents or refinance certifications. She can be reached at 703-569-5797 x5041 or m.siebeneck@cmgmt.com.
- The account representative assigned to Stoneleigh for payments is Ashley Fleck who can be reached at a.fleck@cmgmt.com or 703-569-5797.
- Cardinal Management's front desk receptionist, and Director of First Impressions, is Champella Brooks. She can always get you to an appropriate person to handle your issue.
- You can visit Cardinal Management's website at www.cmgmt.com for additional information. They also manage the Palladium Condominium down the street and have enclosed in the newsletter details for free activities offered at the Civic Place Green this summer.

STAY UP-TO-DATE

Keep up with the latest Stoneleigh news on the Google Group. We recently held a very successful playgroup that we scheduled through the Group. If you don't want to miss out on future activities, be sure to sign up! Join at <http://groups.google.com/group/stoneleigh-hoa>.

RESTAURANT DISCOUNT

McKeever's Pub (6625 Old Dominion Dr., McLean, VA Ph: 703-790-9453) is offering Stoneleigh residents a generous 25% off your bill for the following Wednesday evenings: June 23, July 21, and August 18. McKeever's Pub has great food and a very family friendly atmosphere, so add these dates to your calendar and come on out and enjoy the evening with other Stoneleigh residents!

Coupon must be presented to receive discount.

McKeever's Pub	McKeever's Pub	McKeever's Pub
Coupon #1 25% off bill for Stoneleigh Residents	Coupon #2 25% off bill for Stoneleigh Residents	Coupon #3 25% off bill for Stoneleigh Residents
June 23,2010	July 21,2010	August 18,2010