

# Stoneleigh News

September 2010

## UPCOMING STONELEIGH EVENTS

- Neighborhood Picnic - Saturday, 9/25 at 4pm
- Annual Meeting - Tuesday, 11/9 (Time and location TBD)

## NEIGHBORHOOD PICNIC

***Saturday, September 25 at 4pm***

On September 25 at 4pm, all neighbors are invited to a picnic in the grassy area at the corner of Alicent Place and Dunterry Place. It will be potluck-style and BYOB, so just bring yourself and your best side dish or dessert. Hamburgers and hot dogs, non-alcoholic drinks, plates, utensils, cups, etc., will be supplied by the HOA. There will be activities for the kids. We can use any extra tables and chairs that you have, so bring some with you if you can. Hope to see you all there!

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## JULY 4TH FUN

The July 4th parade and games were a big success. The kids, parents, and a few grandparents had a great time playing with water balloons, running through the sprinkler, and eating watermelon and ice cream. And everyone enjoyed a special treat when the Fairfax County Fire Department came by to show us the truck and gear and give us some fire safety tips. Remember to replace your smoke alarm batteries and unplug your toaster!



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Community Master Plan

My fellow Board members have encouraged me to put together an article outlining Stoneleigh's community Master Plan. In our community we only maintain a few physical assets, so the Master Plan is fairly simple and includes streets, sidewalks, signage, and lighting.

**Streets** – All the roadways in our community are privately owned, and we don't receive any funding or assistance from Fairfax County or VDOT for maintaining them. Recent maintenance work includes the complete resurface of Alicent Place, Candlewick Court, and Dunterry Place in 2001. The cost to perform this work was \$225,000, a portion of which was paid for from our reserve funds, with a special assessment to cover the balance. We lucked out when Falls Church Water footed the bill for replacing the service road on Westmoreland Street in 2001, when the company replaced the water main that runs under that road.

Roads in a community like ours have a life span of about 20 years, so we have roughly 10 years before we have to revisit this issue again. In the mean time, we will continue to sealcoat and restripe the parking lots every few years in order to extend the life of our streets and parking areas. Additionally, we will resurface small areas of the streets as needed. Seal coating, restriping, and small repair costs are paid for out of our reserves. Resurfacing of the roadways as we did in 2001 would be a project that would require a special assessment.

**Sidewalks** – We have a huge amount of sidewalks in our community. The association is responsible for maintaining all sidewalks in the front, rear, and sides of our homes. The HOA is also responsible for maintaining the lead walks (the walkway from the sidewalk to your front stoop) and all curbs and gutters. For the last five years, we've spent about \$20,000 annually to maintain our sidewalks, curbs and gutters. We skipped this year as we didn't have a great deal of concrete work to do (a lot was done as part of the drainage project the year before). We will need to pick back up in the spring of next year.

In case you are wondering why we don't just replace all the sidewalks at once, we did get quotes from several contractors a few years back on what it would cost to do this, and the proposals all were in the \$400,000+ range.

**Signage** – This consists of all the street signage in the community, and the large Stoneleigh sign in the front of the property. The large Stoneleigh sign in the front of the property was refaced at no cost to the association by the developer of McLean Cove a few years ago, and we replaced the lettering and lighting at that time, so we most likely will not need to spend any money on this sign for many years to come. Signage maintenance is a fairly small expense and is paid for from our reserve fund.

**Lighting** – This is the one area of our community that has become quite controversial. The results of our recent survey show that the community is split regarding 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.

Properly lighting our community is an expensive proposition and would likely cost \$200,000 - \$300,000 dollars. Our plan for the present is to maintain the lighting that is currently in place while we continue to explore alternate solutions.

Finally, the board has approved our budget for the next fiscal year which begins in October 2010, and I'm pleased to announce that, for the sixth year in a row, there will be no increase in our quarterly dues!

If you have any feedback, questions, or suggestions, please drop me an email at [president@stoneleigh.org](mailto:president@stoneleigh.org).

- Mitchell Sacks, Stoneleigh HOA President

## ARCHITECTURAL COVENANTS COMMITTEE

**ATTENTION:** If you received a letter this spring about architectural covenants violations (and if you did, you're not alone), please take a moment to read this notice.

The Architectural Covenants Committee will be doing a walk through the community in the next couple of weeks, and checking to make sure that all residences have come into compliance with the covenants. Any homes still not in compliance by then will begin to be fined for each day they remain non-compliant. It's the least fun part of what we have to do, but it's what keeps our neighborhood looking nice and attracts new residents.



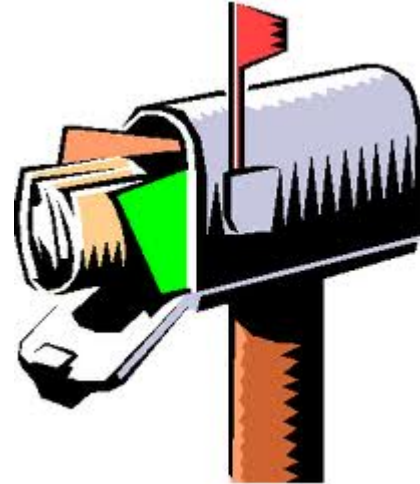
### BE HEARD IN WASHINGTON

On the first Monday of each month, a representative from Congressman Frank Wolf's office visits the McLean Community Center from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Citizens are invited to express their opinions on issues or topics currently before the United States Congress. Citizens may also seek assistance with problems of a federal nature. Take advantage of this opportunity to let your voice be heard!

Congressman Wolf is currently serving his 15th term in Congress, and is running for re-election on November 2. He represents the 10th District of Virginia, which stretches from McLean to Winchester. For more information, call the Congressman's Herndon office at 703-709-5800. His website can be found at <http://wolf.house.gov/>.

Senator Jim Webb can be contacted by phone at 703-573-7090 or online at <http://webb.senate.gov/>.

Senator Mark Warner can be contacted by phone at 703-442-0670 or online at <http://warner.senate.gov/>.



### DOWN WITH JUNK MAIL!

- Tired of hundreds of pounds of catalogs stacking up around the house?
- House look like it could be on an episode of "Hoarders"?
- Feel bad for the mailman?
- Feel guilty about the negative impact on the environment?
- Don't know how to make it stop?

Look no further than Catalog Choice ([www.catalogchoice.com](http://www.catalogchoice.com))! Just register on the website and start entering the catalogs that you no longer wish to receive. It helps if you have the catalogs in front of you, so you can enter your specific customer number and the exact name to which it is being sent. Everyone gets duplicate catalogs to the same person with or without the middle initial, right? Or catalogs sent to people who haven't lived in your house for 15 years? If you have the catalog in front of you, it's easy to make sure ALL of them stop arriving through the mail slot. But be warned - there is some lag time for many of the companies (I'm looking at you, Pottery Barn). If you're patient, though, one day you'll suddenly realize that you've finally stopped getting so much junk mail!



### LANDSCAPING NEWS

Considering the lack of - and then plenty of - rain, the turf looks pretty good around Stoneleigh. During the late summer we will be working on adding to the paver edging along the walks and resident lawns. We have tried wood, metal, and pavers. The pavers definitely stay in place better and have less upkeep. The areas where the pavers will be installed are at the ends of Alicent Court and Dunterry Court.

Fall seeding, fertilization and aeration of the grassy areas should be completed by October 15. In late September we will put in some new plantings. We have a few trees on common property and front yards that need to be replaced due to storm damage and just plain old age. In the community areas, we will rejuvenate the plants behind and around the main signs. We are learning that the rule for plants along the Dunterry Place entrance is less is better. We know that some of the areas behind fences look like they need some work and will start planting grass or ground cover as appropriate over the next year. We will be asking residents with homes close to these areas to help with watering for a few days when we do this work.

The annual tree trimming was done in late August/early September. Stoneleigh inventories each tree on the property and keeps a file for all treatments and pruning. Our arborist can then advise us on the schedule for each tree. There are obvious exceptions to this schedule due to storms or the tree exhibiting problems. Be assured that we are working to maintain the tree canopy that makes Stoneleigh such a delightful place to live. Regular trimming involves the removal of dead limbs and pruning away from roofs.

I know it is early to talk about fall leaf removal. We have leaves removed three or four times. The last removal is very late in the season and involves cleaning the parking areas and drains. Our contract requires that the leaves be removed within seven days of the fall/winter holidays.

The fall is a good time to reseed and fertilize lawns to get them ready to grow quickly in the spring. Tulip, daffodil, and narcissus bulbs are best planted in the fall. Perennial flowers are also good candidates for fall planting if you plant them in time to allow for the roots to become established. In our area that is best done in September. At Stoneleigh we plant shrubs and trees in the fall, based on our arborist and landscaper recommendations.

If you have noticed areas that need work, let me know. Also, please let me know if you would like to volunteer to help on the landscaping committee. Contact Winnie Pizzano at [pizzano@erols.com](mailto:pizzano@erols.com) or 703-288-4728.



## THE STONELEIGH PARKING LOT

Stoneleigh's parking lot is where our daily routines intersect with our neighbors'. More often than not these interactions are friendly and thoughtful. However, in an article about Stoneleigh's parking lot we would be remiss not to mention that the parking can quickly stir up emotions. The intent of this article is to address a few issues that continue to resurface with the board: parking lot rules, towing, and Stoneleigh's speed limit.

**PARKING LOT RULES** ♦ The rules of common courtesy always apply in our parking lot interactions.

- Don't park in another resident's assigned spot.
- Don't allow guests to park in a neighbor's parking spot – even if it's only for a few minutes.
- If you see a visitor or contractor parking in a neighbor's spot, take a minute to politely inform them that Stoneleigh has assigned parking spots and direct them to a guest spot they should use.
- Do not park in fire lanes or next to yellow curbs.

We also have formal rules that govern parking and vehicles on Stoneleigh property. These rules appear in their entirety in the October 1989 amendment to Stoneleigh's Deed of Dedication in Section 11 (a - i), which is posted on the library area of the Stoneleigh website. These rules are summarized below:

- Only non-commercial vehicles (passenger automobiles, station wagons, vans, and motorcycles) are allowed to park overnight in the Stoneleigh parking lot (numbered or guest spots). Noticeably absent from this rule are SUVs and pickup trucks. It is the opinion of the board that these types of vehicles are also allowed to park overnight in Stoneleigh as long as they are private vehicles and do not bear commercial signage.
- Each Stoneleigh residence has one assigned parking space.
- Guest parking spots are Stoneleigh common property and do not belong to any particular residence, even if they are located directly in front of your home's front door. Guest spots are for the open use of all residents and guests.

- Vehicles may not be stored on the Stoneleigh property – even in a numbered spot.
  - Vehicles that are kept on the property must be in good working order, registered in Fairfax County, and bearing valid Virginia license plates.
  - If you plan to leave your car for a long period of time because you are out of town or unable to drive, please notify a member of the board so that we can be aware of the situation if we receive a complaint from another resident.
- There is no parallel parking in Stoneleigh, except on the marked spots on the Chain Bridge access road. All other curbs in Stoneleigh are painted yellow, which means they are tow-away zones.
- The occupants of a rented unit can park up to three vehicles within Stoneleigh.
- No vehicle of any type, except emergency vehicles, may drive over Stoneleigh curbs, grassy areas or sidewalks. Violators will be charged for any damages, in addition to the minimum fee of \$50 for each violation.

**TOWING** ♦ Several vehicles have been towed from Stoneleigh over the past few years for a variety of reasons including vehicle storage, vehicles that have been in an accident, vehicles that continue to park in a neighbor's assigned spot, and vehicles that regularly park on Stoneleigh property with the drivers leaving the property. Communication with the vehicle owners is always the Board's preferred course of action. However, sometimes an owner cannot be identified or this outreach does not generate a response. Stoneleigh maintains a contract with AI's Towing (703-790-1156), and they are called when a vehicle ultimately must be removed from the property.

**STONELEIGH'S SPEED LIMIT** ♦ Everyone needs to slow down when entering and exiting the community. The Board has received numerous complaints about vehicles speeding through the community. The speed limit within all parts of the community, including service roads, is 15 MPH. Please drive slowly, even if your SUV easily clears the speed bumps and your kids cheer from the back seat to "go faster." Remember that we have a growing number of small children in the community and many treasured pets. Let's all slow down and keep them safe.

## NEWLY FORMED FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CODE COMPLIANCE

On July 1, Fairfax County launched the Department of Code Compliance. This department has been organized to address neighborhood quality of life issues including inoperable vehicles parked on lawns, uncut grass, construction without permits, junk in yards, too many people living in a home, noise violations and hoarding (*a complete list of topics is in the next column*). It also is structured to receive concerns from the public, and investigate and resolve violations of the following codes: building, blighted structures, fire, grass, property maintenance, zoning, and noise.

You can contact the Department of Code Compliance by phone at 703-324-1300, Monday - Thursday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Friday 9:15 a.m. - 4 p.m.

You can also visit the department online at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/code/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/code/) to learn more about its services or submit a complaint.



## Topics the Department of Code Compliance Addresses

- Animals & Pets
  - County rules for animals and pets on residential property
- Building Lots & Land Use
  - Accessory Structures
  - Fences
  - Home Businesses
- Construction
  - Unlicensed Contractors
  - Unpermitted Construction
  - Unpermitted Land Disturbance
- Hoarding
  - How to identify and report hoarding in your community
- Noise
  - Barking Dogs
  - Construction Activity
  - Electronics / Musical Instruments
  - Trash Collection
  - Vehicles
  - Yardwork
- Property Maintenance
  - Blight
  - Damaged Property
  - Grass Height
  - Junk and Debris in the Yard
  - Mosquitoes
  - Overcrowding / Boarding Houses
  - Trash Overflowing
- Outdoor Lighting
  - Outdoor lighting at residential and commercial properties
- Signs
  - Signs on residential properties and roads
- Vehicles & Parking
  - Vehicles Parked on Lawn
  - Commercial Vehicles
  - Construction Equipment
  - Inoperable Vehicles
  - Vehicles Blocking the Street