

January 2010



THE ACORN



FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Happy New Year to all! As we move forward into 2010, there are a number of items that the Board will be addressing and asking for input from our community. These issues are important to our community, and the more input we get from you the more inclusive the decision making process will be. So for this year, I hope our community resolves to be active and knowledgeable in our community affairs and takes the time to vote on issues brought by the Board. So, off we go!

New Board members were installed at the December meeting, and we want to welcome **Peter Okoli** as our Director. We are happy to see him stepping up and look forward to working with him.

Reminder on Homeowners Association Budget and Dues. Just in case anyone was confused by the budget insert in last month's issue of *The Acorn*, we should explain that the budgets for 2009 and 2010 had a built-in "deficit" because we started each year with some funds left over from the previous year. The Association has not been, nor will it be, "in the red." ***Please remember that your annual dues are payable by January 1st and must reach the Sequoia Management office no later than January 31st in order to avoid the 25 percent late fee.***

Still in Search of a Homeowners Association Secretary. We've been searching for an Association Secretary to replace **Blair O'Connor** for quite awhile. The Secretary's main duties are to attend the

Board meetings on the third Thursday of each month, take notes at the meetings, and then type up and circulate the minutes to the Board members. Is there someone out there who's willing to volunteer for this community service?

Tot Lot. We ordered new playground equipment to be installed at the tot lot on Washington Brice Road. The old equipment has been removed, and the new equipment is scheduled to be delivered on December 29th. The old equipment had become run down and unsafe; the new equipment was paid for from the reserve fund. As noted in last month's issue of *The Acorn*, we also have lined up an Eagle Scout project to make improvements at the other tot lot in the spring. Enjoy!

Traffic Calming Study. The Board requested from Supervisor Frey's office that a traffic study be conducted on Ox Hill Road and Charles Stewart Drive, the two main thoroughfares in our community. This study has been completed, and the full report has been posted on the FOEHA Homepage (www.foeha.org). The "Cliff Notes" version of the report is that the study found a high percentage of people are driving too fast on these roads. I don't think this is a surprise to any of us.

The results of this study found that these two roads are eligible for traffic calming measures that are described in the report. Some examples of measures that may be recommended by the County traffic

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engineers include speed humps, raised crosswalks, and/or signage. Our new Director has agreed to chair a neighborhood committee that will coordinate with Supervisor's Frey's office, work to disseminate information, and have meetings to take the pulse of the community about forthcoming recommendations of the traffic engineers.

These efforts will culminate in a community meeting where the traffic engineers will discuss traffic calming options and answer any questions. A community vote will be sought by the Board in the weeks following that will require 50 percent participation of the community. Of those who vote, 60 percent approval will be required for adoption of the traffic calming measures. The County would absorb any costs to install traffic calming measures.

If you would like to participate on the traffic calming committee, please send an e-mail to Jan Fenton at jfenton@sequoiamanagement.com.

Architectural Review Board. The Architectural Review Board will meet at 7:30 p.m. on January 19th at 12549 Lt. Nichols Road to review all completed applications received at least *seven days* before the meeting. An agenda for the meeting will be posted on the FOEHA Web site (www.foeha.org) prior to the meeting.

Important Note. Please be sure to submit your applications 30 days in advance. It is important that you follow the instructions closely on the application, such as providing a site plan (plat) of your property showing the locations of new decks, removal of trees, and so forth. Incomplete applications will slow the approval process.

ARB December 15th meeting results: Five applications were submitted for review, including a new shed, two requests for expanded decks, a new garage door, and new windows. All applications were approved.

Contact information. Sequoia Management is your primary contact for submission of ARB applications, requests for re-sale packets, and reports of ARB violations. Contact Jan Fenton, Fair Oaks Estates Homeowners Association, c/o Sequoia Management Company, Inc., 13998 Parkeast Circle, Chantilly, VA 20151-2283, 703-803-9641, 703-968-0936 (fax), or e-mail jfenton@sequoiamanagement.com.

Open Space Committee. Our snow removal contractor has gotten a workout already this season and has done a good job. The Homeowners Association is responsible for clearing the sidewalks on Ox Hill Road from West Ox Road to the VDOT gravel road, the common area where the path crosses Ox Hill Road, and along Charles Stewart Drive from the entrance on Alder Woods Drive and around the corner on Alder Woods down to the end of the wooden fence. We don't shovel the paths. If you can avoid using the paths when they are snow covered, please do. Several of the paths are on downward slopes, which makes for great sledding but also packs the snow down, making them treacherous.

I am sorry to report that we had a senseless act of vandalism—damage to the solar lighting and sprinkler control systems—at the Alder Woods Drive entrance that will cost \$300 to \$500 to repair. It's not just the expense but, because we are a volunteer organization, time to do the repairs is limited. Thankfully, this is very rare. In the seven years I have been doing Open Space Committee work, we've only had one other incident.

We occasionally get requests from homeowners for referrals for reliable contractors. We have been very satisfied with the work done by Humberto Molina (703-587-7425). Humberto and his crew do most of our tree work, brush removal, and snow removal, as well as most of the other outdoor odd jobs for the Homeowners Association.

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REMEMBERING JOE GALLAGHER

Joseph Michael Gallagher

January 12, 1932 - November 19, 2009

Joe Gallagher's father emigrated from central Ireland, from the town of Mullingar, in County West Meath around 1900 and later established the Gallagher Cab Company in Philadelphia. **Joe's** mother took the unusual step of managing the company after her husband's death when **Joe** was only three months old. As a boy, **Joe** loved to hang around the garage with the other drivers. He learned about engines by taking them apart and putting them back together. After graduating from Saint Thomas Moore High School in Philadelphia, **Joe** joined the Navy and served on the cargo ship USNS Antares during the Korean War. After his discharge in 1953, **Joe** returned to Philadelphia to work as a dispatcher for the family cab company. In 1979, he sold the family business and began a new transportation career with the United States Postal Service. He drove tractor trailers filled with mail from Philadelphia to New York. Receiving many awards for his record of safe driving, **Joe** became a driving instructor at Philadelphia's main facility on 30th Street. In 1998 after 23 years of service, he retired as a Transportation Supervisor.

After 39 years of marriage to Patricia Atkins, **Joe** became a widower in 1993. Was it Irish blarney when **Joe** claimed that one of the best things about the Postal Service was that it gave him the opportunity to meet his second wife, **Jamie**, in 1995? Her job promotion resulted in their move to Fair Oaks Estates in 1998. Although **Joe** missed Philadelphia's soft pretzels and cheese steaks, he was happy when he found a copy of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Blessed with good neighbors in and around the pipe stem off Ox Hill Road, **Joe** soon learned to love his new community. **Jamie** did confirm, however, that despite his many years in Northern Virginia, **Joe** never changed his allegiance from the Eagles to the Redskins.

Diagnosed with neuroendocrine cancer in the fall of 2008, **Joe** died peacefully at his home on November 19th. A Mass of Christian Burial was held at Saint Denis Church in Havertown, PA, followed by burial in the Gallagher family plot in Holy Cross Cemetery outside of Philadelphia on November 24th. Donations can be made toward carcinoid cancer research through <http://www.firstgiving.com/josephmgallagher>.

FROM THE PAGES OF THE ACORN

Here we go again with more news from *The Acorn* from 25 years ago. These items are from January 1986:

- Local runners were encouraged to contact **Gus Fulleborn** to see if there was interest in forming some kind of loose association of people who wanted to get together for occasional or frequent longer runs or to compete together in local running events. This proposal never resulted in anything in 1986; perhaps someone would like to organize a "Fair Oaks Runners Club" in 2010.
- We learned about John Barnes the miller, after whom John Barnes Lane is named. He came to Fairfax in the 1830s, and his son, John Barnes, Jr. continued to operate the mill until the Civil War, when he joined the "Fairfax Rifles." He later rode with Mosby's Rangers but was captured and incarcerated in Federal jails three times during the war. At the end of the war, he was sentenced to death for horse stealing but was spared by a pardon from President Andrew Johnson.
- Construction continued to move along on the Fair Oaks Hospital. The original facility was sized at 160 beds, with a planned staffing of about 420 physicians and another 400 or so full-time support personnel.

HELLO AND HIGH HOPES FOR 2010

White Squirrel. Lisa Bailey on Lt. Nichols Road said she saw White Squirrel for the first time in at least four years on December 6th in the usual spot at the top of Ox Hill Road. **Mary Hamill** saw the critter on the morning of December 15th in his usual place and doing his usual thing—eating! Both of these sightings are good news because they indicate WS survived the first snowstorm of the year, which resulted in a number of downed tree limbs in the vicinity of WS’s habitat. Now we need a report as to whether WS managed to get through our record-setting December snowstorm on December 18th-19th.

Low Crime But Not Crime Free. On the same theme as the vandalism incident at the Alder Woods Drive entrance reported in the Open Space Committee section of *The Acorn* this month, a recent issue of “Local Living” that comes in *The Washington Post* each week noted that cash had been stolen from a residence in the 12300 block of Ox Hill Road. We don’t appear to have much crime in the neighborhood, but it’s a good idea to take sensible precautions and to enlist support from your neighbors in helping to keep an eye on each other’s homes and property.



SURVIVING THE WINTER

Given what we faced in December, we'd better prepare for a tough winter. Here is some information from *The Acorn* from a few years ago that might help.

Snow and the Roads. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is responsible for removing snow and ice from the thousands of miles of public roads (Interstate, primary, and secondary) in Fairfax County. Clearing is done on a priority basis, with Interstates and high-volume roads cleared first. Once the most heavily traveled roads and emergency routes are adequately cleared, snow crews move to less-traveled roads and subdivisions. Public roadways maintained by VDOT can typically be identified by a route number sign, a small rectangular sign with black numbers on a white background, posted at the intersection with other public streets. Please contact the [VDOT Northern Virginia District Office](#) for additional information or to report problems at 703-383-8368 or 1-800-367-7623.

Winter Travel. According to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, residents should prepare for cold weather when traveling. Winter road safety tips include telling someone you are taking a trip, where you are going, the routes you will travel, and when you expect to arrive. Before you leave town, fill your gas tank, and refill frequently while traveling. Don't get on the road without a winter travel survival kit. Your kit should include items such as a cell phone, blankets or sleeping bags, water, high-calorie foods that don't require refrigeration or cooking, a flashlight with extra batteries, and a first-aid kit. If your vehicle breaks down, pull as far off the road as possible. Your greatest personal danger at this point is being hit by passing cars. Stay in the car if visibility is poor. You may become disoriented and lost while wandering in a snowstorm, making it more difficult for rescuers to find you. If you have a cell phone, call for help.

Stay Warm. Wind chill indicates how cold people and animals feel while outside. If you are going to be outside, the American Red Cross encourages you to dress appropriately. Air temperature does not have to be below freezing for someone to experience cold emergencies such as hypothermia and frostbite. Wind speed can create dangerously cold conditions even when temperatures are not that low. Dress in layers to adjust to changing conditions. Avoid overdressing or overexertion, which can lead to heat illness. Wear a hat, preferably one covering your ears, because most body heat is lost through your head. Wear mittens as they provide more warmth to your hands than gloves. Wear waterproof, insulated boots to help avoid hypothermia or frostbite by keeping your feet warm and dry and to help maintain your footing in ice and snow. After coming inside, immediately get out of wet clothes and warm the core body temperature with a blanket or warm fluids such as hot cider or soup. Avoid caffeine or alcohol in cases of hypothermia or frostbite.

Be Prepared. Because ice storms and blizzards can knock down power lines, freeze water pipes, and prevent you from traveling, you should be sure to have a home emergency supply kit. Such a kit should include at least a three-day supply of food that won't spoil, one gallon of water per person per day, a battery-powered radio, a flashlight with extra batteries, a first-aid kit, an extra supply of prescription or over-the-counter medicines, and a plan for those with special needs who may need to come stay in your home because they lost utilities from a storm. Those with special needs could include the elderly, people with disabilities, and the medically frail. Additional information on assembling an emergency supply kit is available online at the Fairfax County Citizens Corps Web site, www.fairfaxcountycitizencorps.org, as well as the Fairfax County's emergency information Web page, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency.

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FROM THE EDITORS

Happy New Year! Is it “two thousand and ten” or “twenty ten”? It probably doesn’t matter much, as long as you get “2010” correct on your checks. We only hope this won’t be another “Decade from H***”—*Time* magazine’s description for the past 10 years.

Copies of the January 2010 edition of the *Fair Oaks Estates Directory* should be in your mailboxes on January 1st or January 2nd—weather permitting—to help you get the new decade off on the right foot. Please let the editors know if any corrections or updates are needed.

We hope everyone liked the pre-Christmas snow—opportunities to meet your neighbors while shoveling; an early holiday vacation for the kids; government closings for our public servants; and the

thrill and excitement of driving on unplowed and glazed-over roads for more than a week.

We mentioned last month that one way for residents to contribute to *The Acorn* is by providing recommendations on service providers who have done a good job. Mr. and Mrs. Editor want to make such a recommendation—neighborhood plumber Ali Nazhand. During the first snowfall of December, we discovered a leaking kitchen faucet and valve on a Saturday evening. We called Mr. Nazhand, and he came out on the icy roads Sunday morning, figured out what was needed, went shopping for the required parts, and fixed the problem at a very modest cost. See his ad in the Bulletin Board section of *The Acorn*.

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