

# The Acorn



The Oaks Homeowners Association, PO Box 163, Palmyra, PA 17078

## Special Interest Articles:

- Meet the New Board Members.
- Firework Safety
- Child Safety Seats
- Barbecue Safety
- McGruff "The Crime Dog"

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## MEET THE NEW BOARD MEMBERS

### President - Don

**Hassenbein, 838-6307, [dhassenbein@comcast.net](mailto:dhassenbein@comcast.net)** Don served as the first Oaks elected President from 2000-02 and is now serving another term from 2008-10. He was born and raised in Reading, Pa and served 9 years in the Air Force, including 5 stationed in Germany, where he met his wife Elke. Don and Elke have 2 sons, 1 daughter, 5 grandchildren and 1 Sheltie. His career included 22 years with AT&T & Lucent Tech. (including 5 additional years in Germany) and 10 yrs with Deutsche Telekom as President & CEO. Retired since 2000, he is very involved with local Classic Chevy & Porsche car clubs and enjoys attending events with his 2 grandchildren. Don's garage (with his collector cars and car memorabilia) always gets rave reviews at the Annual Oaks garage sale

### Vice President - Jim

**Graeff, 838-3817, [jjgraeff92@verizon.net](mailto:jjgraeff92@verizon.net)** Married to Jennifer, three grown daughters and three grandchildren as well as one dog - an English Spring Spaniel named Chelsey. We moved into the Oaks in April 2008 and we are very happy to be living

here. Jim retired from Bethlehem Steel after 25 years of service and then retired again from Computer Aid, Inc after 19 years as a Business Consultant. He is currently working part time for a food brokerage, servicing 7 local Giant Food Stores. Jim was born and raised in the Reading, PA area and a veteran of the US Army serving as a ski trooper in Alaska before attending the Army's USMA Academy Prep School. He attended Drexel University and the United States Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, NY.

### Treasurer - Pat Raskauskas, 838-2455,

[taverntreasure@aol.com](mailto:taverntreasure@aol.com) Pat and her husband Joe have lived in The Oaks since 1995. Pat had served as Vice President on the original Board of Directors and then took the position of Secretary. She is employed by the PA Turnpike Commission and an active member of the Board of Directors for the Pennsylvania Self-Insured Association. Pat also works as a product demonstrator at Weis and Giant.

### Secretary - Eric Hoffman, 838-0248, [huff20@yahoo.com](mailto:huff20@yahoo.com)

Eric is a graduate of Millersville Univ. of PA, hold a BS in Occupational Safety & Hygiene Management, with a minor in Computer Science. Currently he is an Occupational Safety Training Specialist & Webmaster for

the PA Dept. of L&I Bureau of PENNSAFE since 1999. Eric previously worked as a Safety Director for Stauffer's of Kissel Hill and was a Safety Manager for the Hershey Medical Center. Eric and his wife Heather have a 2 year old daughter, named Madelyn Rose. In his spare time, Eric is a PIAA basketball and baseball official and enjoys spending time with family and friends, playing baseball, basketball and golfing.

### Architectural Control Chair - Ray Urban, 838-8526

[rayurban@verizon.net](mailto:rayurban@verizon.net)

Born and raised in the Wilkes-Barre (NEPA) area. Education after high school consists of an Associate degree from Penn State and a Bachelors' degree from Western New England College. Military service was a two year hitch in the US Army (including Vietnam). Was employed by Pratt and Whitney, an aerospace manufacturing company (division of United Technologies Corp) located in East Hartford, CT. Work experience was in various Quality Assurance related functions and ultimately resulted in relocation to PA.. Retired from P&W after 40+ years of service. Just recently celebrated 41 years of marriage to Suzanne and am looking forward to many more. Two daughters and a son and eight grandsons ranging from ages 3 to 14 make up the rest of the family.

# Message from the President

Returning to the Board after 6 years has been challenging but quite interesting. I want to again thank the outgoing Officers, Marcia Perrotti, Secretary (served 5 ½ yrs) and Ron Burke, Vice President (served 5 yrs) for their outstanding service to the Oaks Association. Next April, during the Annual Meeting, we will be electing 3 new Officers for the President, Treasurer and Architectural Control Chairperson positions – I recommend you consider running for one of these positions. Please remember that, if elected, you will be eligible to have your Annual Maintenance Assessment reimbursed.

Please notify our Secretary, who is also Chair of the Nominating Committee, if you are interested. As might be expected during this economic downturn, many of our members, who are selling their homes, are experiencing difficulty with many buyers expecting huge discounts or concessions from the seller. Since the Oaks Homeowners Association consists of 85 single homes, 50 duplexes and 16 townhouses, it is difficult to come up with an average value for our homes. However, I believe we could safely estimate a minimum current average value of

approximately \$165,000 (plus or minus). This means that our current Annual Assessment of \$165 (\$13.75 per month) is equivalent to .01 % of the home value and covers the maintenance, ongoing sinkhole repair and taxes for 14 ½ acres of common ground; electric, maintenance and repair of 32 HOA street lights; annual mandated audits and filing of federal and state taxes and any legal or admin costs. If selling, please remember to confirm with the Arch Control Chair that all exterior improvements have been previously approved in order to avoid having any problems with issuing the necessary

Resale Certificate or requiring additional actions at Settlement. For your information, the Oaks development was originally surveyed by D. L. Reiber Associates Inc, 1529 E. Chocolate Ave., Hershey Pa 17033, tel 533-9077 and copies of their land maps, showing your property, are available for review from the Arch Control Chair. If you are considering having your lot surveyed (average cost \$1000) to find the original property pins, you may want to contact this firm for a quote since we understand that cost savings (approx. \$500) would apply since they had performed all the original survey work.

# Message from the Vice President

As in the past, the Vice President's responsibilities include maintaining the street lights and the grounds of the common area. Assisting with these responsibilities this year will be Ron Burke (838-6970) and George Raudensky (832-7277). These two gentlemen will be available for consultation and backup should the Vice President not be available. Currently all the street lights are in working order. Please notify the VP should you notice any problems with a street light. The Oaks main entrance sign was repainted last year and continues to look good.

The Oaks HOA Board took a tour of the common area the evening of May 5th. The general impression was that the area looked good. The grass in the catch basins is being mowed once each month while the remainder of the grass is mowed weekly during the height of the growing season. The rain that has been experienced this spring has made the grass mowing tough to keep current. The sink hole at the rear of Hickory Street (caused by decaying vegetation) has not grown noticeably larger since last year. The VP will tour the common area at least once each month in order to monitor

any changes to the size of the sink hole and to assure that the lawn service is living up to its contractual obligations. While on the tour of the common area the Board noted that there are many downed trees lying around at random in the wooded areas. The Board would like to see these wooded areas cleaned up. Removal of the downed trees would be a good first step. We are currently trying to find someone who is interested in removing these trees for firewood while they are still suitable for burning. If you should know anyone interested in removing all or a portion of this wood please pass on

their name to the VP. Finally, all suggestions and observations concerning the common ground and the street lights are more than welcome. Please direct any and all communications to the Vice President, Jim Graeff (838-3817) or on the net at [jjgraeff92@verizon.net](mailto:jjgraeff92@verizon.net)

Thank you for your help...

# Message from the Treasurer

I'm pleased to report all homeowners have paid the 2009 Annual Maintenance Assessment without any legal action being necessary. In addition, all invoices and taxes are current and the annual audit was completed in accordance with the By-Laws Sec. 10.08.

The Board hopes to reduce the administrative costs this year by sending information via e-mail vs. US mail. So if you have not already provided your e-mail address, please send this to the Secretary, Eric Hoffman at: [huff20@yahoo.com](mailto:huff20@yahoo.com) Invoices for 2010 Annual Maintenance Assessment will be issued again in

December but will have a new look! The Board has received comments that invoices previously sent did not look like a bill and were disregarded. As a result, we will correct this to avoid any further confusion.



## Message from the Secretary

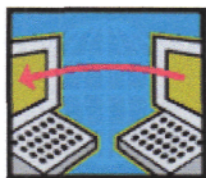
More and more the internet is becoming a regular method of communicating. Email is a quick and inexpensive way to communicate since the 44 cent stamp is eliminated on an email. The Oaks HOA Board would like to use email as frequently as possible to

communicate faster and without the cost.

If you have an email address, please send it to [huff20@yahoo.com](mailto:huff20@yahoo.com). We'll use email to send your newsletters and other Board correspondence. For those of you without email, we'll continue to provide materials through

the US Mail.

If you have any ideas for future Acorn articles or stories or if you have any ideas to improve our website please send me an email with your suggestion(s).



## Message from the Architectural Control Chairman

One of the most common approval requests is for a fence. When the first fences were approved for installation, they were generally an isolated occurrence and not much thought was given to a neighbors' fence. As time passed more fences were approved and erected and were installed adjacent to neighboring fences. Some are so close together, it's impossible to conveniently take care of the area between the fences, and results in unsightly growth because the lot line separating the two neighbors becomes a no-

mans' land and neither homeowner takes responsibility.. Other fences are located further apart but it still doesn't resolve who shall provide the maintenance i.e. mowing and weed control. While it seems like a good idea to have an agreement between the neighbors involved, that only lasts until one of the parties moves, then we're back to square one. It would seem the best idea would be to allow a mowers width between the lot line and the fence so that you are able to keep the grass cut as

effortlessly as possible. So, if you're considering a fence and the lot adjacent to you already has one, you may want to think about how the area between the fences will be maintained and by whom and if there is sufficient room.

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*"If you're unsure of the location of easements around your property, submit a plan showing details of your planting..."*





## KidCare Id Program

The North Londonderry Township Police Department provides KidCare Identification Cards as a public service to local residents. Project KidCare is a national child photo identification and safety education program that was jointly developed by Polaroid and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

The Objectives of the program are to increase awareness about the issue of missing and

exploited children and to educate parents and children about the ways they can protect themselves. Holding KidCare events is a great way for businesses and local organizations to get actively involved in this cause and help out their community.

The North Londonderry Township Police Department began offering this program in 2001 and the program is currently funded by donations from Jonestown

Bank. Events are held at various locations in the community throughout the year and so far, approximately 1,000 children have been photographed and fingerprinted.

If you desire to have your child photographed, you may attend a KidCare event or you may call and set up an appointment to go to the Police Department to have the photograph taken.

## Bicycle Licenses

North Londonderry Twp. Police encourages residents to register their bicycles at the Police Department. The police will record information about your bicycle and keep it on file in case your bicycle is lost or stolen.

You will be issued a numbered metallic registration sticker to place on your bicycle. There is no cost for this service.

There are two methods to register your bicycle. You may bring your bicycle to the Police Department (Mon-Fri 8AM – 3PM) and complete the registration form or you may print out the registration form, (PDF file) complete it at home and mail it to the Police Department at 655 E. Ridge Rd, Palmyra, PA 17078. Registrations received in the mail will be processed promptly and your license will be mailed to you

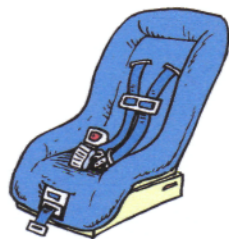


## Child Safety Seat Inspection

Sgt. Thomas Hentz is a certified "Child Safety Seat" inspector. If you wish to have your child seat inspected or seek advice as to proper placement of the

seat, please contact Sgt. Hentz.

You may contact Sgt. Hentz at 838-5276 or email him at [thentz@nlondtwp.com](mailto:thentz@nlondtwp.com).



## McGruff

### "The Crime Dog"

In January of 2003 the North Londonderry Township Police Department added McGruff to its staff. McGruff is used in their Crime Prevention programs such as KidCare and National Night Out. McGruff also rides in patrol vehicles during Trick-or-Treat in October. McGruff also likes to attend parades and he goes to schools and daycare facilities. If your organization would like to have McGruff attend a program, please contact the Police Department to schedule his visit.



# Firework Safety

With July rapidly approaching many of you will be celebrating the Fourth of July holiday, we invite you to celebrate our nation's heritage on July 4<sup>th</sup> but celebrate safely. Here are a few safety tips to keep in mind as you celebrate.

- Use fireworks outdoors only.
- Obey the law, if fireworks are not legal where you plan on setting them off, do not use them.

- Always have water handy. (A hose or bucket).
- Only use fireworks as intended. Don't try to alter them or combine them.
- Never relight a "dud" firework. Wait 20 minutes and then soak it in a bucket of water.
- Use common sense. Spectators should keep a safe distance from the shooter and the shooter should wear safety glasses.

- Alcohol and fireworks do not mix. Have a "designated shooter."
- Only persons over the age of 21 should be allowed to handle sparklers of any type.
- Do not ever use homemade fireworks or illegal explosives: They can kill you! Report illegal explosives to the fire or police department.

**Have a happy and safety Fourth of July!**



# Barbecue Safety

Barbecue season is finally here! There are a few things to watch out for when cooking outdoors so that you enjoy yourself and stay safe!

## BEFORE BARBECUING

- Check your grill thoroughly for leaks, cracking or brittleness before using it.
- Clean out the tubes that lead into the burner.
- Make sure the grill is at least **10** feet away from your house, garage, or trees.
- Store and use your grill on a large flat surface that cannot burn (i.e.- concrete or asphalt).
- Don't use grills in a garage, porch, deck or on top of anything that can catch on fire.
- Keep children **away** from fires and grills. It is a good idea to establish a safety zone around the grill and

instruct children to remain outside the zone. A chalk line works great for this purpose

- Have a fire extinguisher, a garden hose attached to a water supply, or at least 16-quarts of water close by in case of a fire.

## DURING BARBECUING

- Don't wear loose clothing that might catch fire.
- Use long handled barbecue tools and/or flame resistant mitts.
- Never use any flammable liquid other than a barbecue starter fluid to start or freshen a fire.
- Never pour or squirt starter fluid onto an open flame. The flame can easily flashback along the fluid's path to the container in your hands.
- Keep alcoholic beverages away from the grill, they are flammable!

- Never leave the grill unattended.

## AFTER BARBECUING

- Always follow the manufacturer's cleaning and storing instructions that accompany the grill.
- Keep your grill clean and free of grease buildup that may lead to a fire.
- Never store liquid or pressurized fuels inside your home and/or near any possible sources of flame.

## IN CASE OF A BARBECUE FIRE

- For PROPANE Grills - turn off the burners. For CHARCOAL Grills - close the grill lid. Disconnect the power to ELECTRIC Grills.
- For PROPANE Grills - if you can safely reach the tank valve, shut it off.
- If the fire involves the tank, leave it alone, evacuate the area and call the fire department (911).

If there is any type of fire that either threatens your personal safety or endangers property, ALWAYS DIAL 911.

- NEVER attempt to extinguish a grease fire with water. It will only cause the flames to flare up. Use an approved portable fire extinguisher.



## The Oaks Homeowners Association

P.O. Box 163  
Palmyra, PA 17078

E-MAIL:  
dhassenbein@comcast.net

We're on the Web!

See us at:  
[www.palmyraoaks.com](http://www.palmyraoaks.com)

## Welcome to our new Oaks Homeowners

The Board is continuing to visit new homeowners, in accordance with our Welcome Visit program. One of the Board Members will visit each new Oaks Homeowner and present them with a Flyer with basic info about the Oaks and answer any questions they may have about the Association. It appears that many of the new homeowners have never belonged to an Association before and are not familiar with By-Laws and Restrictions and Covenants. Some questions that are often asked at recent Welcome Visits include:

- **Why do we have an Association?** Any development in PA that owns common ground and their own street lights falls under the "Planned Community" law and must register as an Association.

- **What legal documents apply to the Oaks Homeowners Association?** 1) Articles of Incorporation; 2) the By-Laws plus 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendments and 3) Declaration of Restrictions & Covenants plus 1st, 2nd

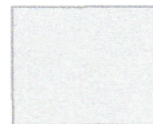
and 3rd Amendments. A copy of these documents are given to all new owners at settlement. Ask for a replacement copy if you need one.

- **What exterior modifications must be approved?** Check the Restrictions and Covenants, plus the 3 amendments, for a list of items requiring approval from the Architectural Control Chairman. Call the Architectural Control Chair for further clarification and to submit your request.

- **Why do I have to pay "dues" each year by March 1?** The term "Dues" is actually not correct since this term is normally used when one belongs to a Social Club. The correct term, per our legal documents, is "Annual Maintenance Assessment" which goes toward upkeep of the Association.

- **When is the Annual Meeting held and why should I attend?** The annual meeting is normally held on the first Monday in April. Exact date, time and location of the Annual Meeting will be

announced when you receive your Assessment in January. Each year, either 2 or 3 of the 5 Board Member positions are up for election. The President, Treasurer and Architectural Control Chair positions are elected in even years; 2010, 2012, etc and the Vice President and Secretary positions are elected in odd years; 2011, 2013, etc. Each Board member provides a formal report at the meeting and voting may occur on an issue. Volunteers are selected from the attendees to count the sealed election ballots with the new Officer's names being announced at the end of the meeting. The new Officers will receive their respective Oak Board Member Books at the end of the meeting and arrange for briefings with the outgoing Board Member. The Annual Meeting is important to you since it is an opportunity to have your voice heard, find out where your money has been spent and future plans and to meet your neighbors."



**THE OAKS HOA**  
P.O. Box 163  
Palmyra, PA 17078

**COMPANY NAME**  
**STREET ADDRESS**  
**CITY, ST 22134**