

# NEWSLETTER

## HOA Board Meetings

Regular Board of Directors meetings are held from 7:00PM to 9:00PM on the following dates: Thursday, February 21 (Annual Meeting - RE/Max Realty Centre); Tuesday, April 16 (Sager residence); Thursday, June 13 (Sager residence); Thursday, September 17 (Sager residence); and Tuesday, November 14 (Sager residence). All homeowners are welcome to attend. ❖

## HOA Web Site

The Brookeville Farms HOA web site is located at [www.bfmdhoa.info](http://www.bfmdhoa.info). This site includes information pertaining to the HOA such as Architectural Review forms, minutes from previous board meetings, current and previous newsletters, as well as contact information for board members.

## Community E-Mail List

The Brookeville Farms community maintains an e-mail distribution list to make it easier to communicate with our neighbors. The e-mail address is "[bfneighbors@bfmdhoa.info](mailto:bfneighbors@bfmdhoa.info)". This list has been used to find recommendations for service providers, find carpool buddies, and to participate in group purchasing agreements (like, propane and whole-house generators). The Homeowners Association newsletter is also distributed to this list.

To add, change, or remove your e-mail address to the list do the following:

- Using your web browser, go to the HOA web site - [www.bfmdhoa.info](http://www.bfmdhoa.info).
- Select "E-mail List" from the left column.
- Fill in the form at the bottom of the page. ❖

## Trash Pickup

Potomac Disposal is our service provider. Their web site is [www.potomacdisposal.com](http://www.potomacdisposal.com). Trash is collected each Wednesday and Saturday morning, usually pretty early. You should place your trashcans at the end of your driveway either late the night before or early in the morning. Because we have so much wildlife around here, it is imperative that all trash be in hard containers with lids secured (i.e., no plastic or

paper bags exposed). Please retrieve your trash containers as soon as possible following pickup.

The trash collection service fee is included in your HOA annual assessment. Potomac Disposal works every holiday except for Christmas Day and New Years Day. If those holidays fall on a Wednesday or Saturday, trash pickup will be skipped and trash will be collected on the following Wednesday or Saturday. ❖

## Recycling

Montgomery County collects recyclable paper, cardboard, newspapers, bottles, and cans on Thursday. Please use the blue containers provided by the County. You should place your recycling containers at the end of your driveway late the night before or early in the morning. Please retrieve your recycling containers as soon as possible following pickup.

The charge for recycling is included in your County tax bill. If recycling day falls on a holiday, the recycling pickup will slide to the next day. If you want a reminder about recycling collection service changes due to upcoming holidays, you may sign up for email alerts by using Alert Montgomery at: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OEMHS/AlertMontgomery/index.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OEMHS/AlertMontgomery/index.html). ❖

## What to Know About Fireplace Care and Maintenance

### Safely lighting a fire

When starting a fire, open the fireplace doors and place your kindling, logs and newspaper inside. Open the damper and a window a couple of inches. Always open a window when lighting a fire to encourage the smoky air to go up the chimney. Light a match to test — if its smoke goes up the chimney, you're OK to start a fire.

Never leave children alone with a burning fire or let them play nearby. Kids should also be discouraged from playing with fireplace tools. Consider installing a guard in front of your fireplace to keep children and pets from harm.

Diagnose your wood: Safe to burn?

Only burn seasoned wood that has been dried for six to 12 months and has less than 20 percent moisture in it. A quick test: Seasoned wood produces a ringing sound when two split pieces are knocked together, whereas green (or wet) wood makes only a dull thud. Green wood burns inefficiently and produces more soot, so you should avoid it. Hardwoods like oak, ash and maple produce more heat than softwoods (pine, poplar, cedar), so choose by type too.

Dispose of ashes properly

Wait three days after a fire before removing ashes from your fireplace, so the coals are fully cooled. Then close the damper to prevent dust from stirring up, open a window to prevent negative air pressure and put on a dust mask. Using a shovel — never a vacuum — scoop the ashes out and put them into a metal container. Ashes contain nutrients plants love, so sprinkle them on your flowerbeds for healthier plants.

Clean the inside of your fireplace at least once a week during the winter, but leave an inch of ash remaining to act as insulation for a hotter, faster fire next time. Keep it completely clean during the summer or periods of disuse.

Upkeep tips

- Don't burn a fire in a fireplace for more than five hours.
- When using, keep the glass door open to allow air up the chimney, but keep the screen closed. This will protect your carpet from sparks.
- Consider buying a nonflammable rug to put in front of your fireplace.
- If you wish to clean your fireplace doors, just be sure to wipe away any stains with a lint-free product, like newspaper.
- To clean a slate hearth: Wash, dry and coat it with lemon oil for shine every six weeks. To clean a brick hearth: Buy a brick cleaner from a home improvement store.
- Brass fireplace tools can be shined with Worcestershire sauce!
- Always keep working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in your home.
- Once a year, a trained professional should inspect your chimney — at the end of winter or before your use for the season.

The best way to ensure a safe, accident-free fireplace is by maintaining it. Keeping it in tip-top shape will

keep it beautiful, clean and healthy for your family to enjoy. ❖

**Tackling Pet Stains and Odors**

Having to deal with stains and odors could affect the joy of pet companionship. The following tips can help you keep your house free from pet stains and odors.

- Vacuuming regularly prevents many odors from collecting in your house and also picks up pet hair. Be sure to get into all the sneaky areas your pet likes to go. Even if they're not allowed on the couch, you may still find some dog hair in the upholstery. Remember that dogs that don't shed still have dander, so vacuuming is a no-skip step.
- Regular bathing of your pet is important to keep them healthy and your home odor-free. If your pet lives in a dirty environment, it will be harder to locate stains they leave behind. Create a space you all want to keep clean.

Despite your best efforts, your pet inevitably will cause some stains. Don't panic — it doesn't have to be the end of your expensive décor.

Wet Stains: Carpets

- Soak up the stain with paper towels and newspaper, standing on top of both to absorb the stain and repeating as needed.
- Rinse the stained area with water.

Tip: To retrain your pet, move the stained paper towels to the area where they should use the bathroom.

Set Stains: Carpets

- Use carpet stain remover to remove lingering stains.
- Use an enzymatic neutralizer to remove odors, such as baking soda, citrus and hydrogen peroxide, or use a store-bought neutralizer. Try to avoid spraying stains with strong scents, however, which will only entice your pet back to that area
- Avoid using anything hot on the area, like a steam cleaner, which set stains further.

Once your pet has an accident, retraining them is essential to prevent future stains. The best way to do this is to make the stained area unattractive and the area you want them to use attractive. As long as they don't have any medical causes for their accident, identify what caused the accident and address it with that knowledge in mind. Dogs usually urinate outside of their usual areas because of excitement or fear or because they are marking their territory. Training usually will take a week or more, so be patient with your pooch. ❖