

# NEWSLETTER

## HOA Board Meetings

The last regular Board of Directors meeting of the year will be held from 7:00PM to 9:00PM on Thursday, November 17 at the Schmidt residence. All homeowners are welcome to attend. Come hear what is happening in the community. ❖

## HOA Web Site

The Brookeville Farms HOA web site is located at <http://www.bfmdhoa.org/>. This site includes information pertaining to the HOA such as ARC 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@prstech.com](mailto:bfneighbors@prstech.com)".

This list has been used to find recommendations for service providers, find carpool buddies, and to participate in joint purchasing agreements (like, propane and whole-house generators). The Homeowners Association newsletter is also distributed to this list. ❖

## Landscape Committee

The HOA Landscaping Committee, lead by Mark Wesolowski, will have a busy fall season. The following projects are being planned.

- The dead cherry trees on the Abrams Court cul-de-sac will be replaced.
- The erosion at the West entrance wall will be repaired.
- The juniper bushes at the East entrance will be evaluated and replaced, if necessary.
- The dead tree at the East entrance will be removed. ❖

## MoCo 511

The new Maryland 511 traveler information system now available throughout the State. It provides key travel information to help guide Marylanders before heading out to major events, cross-state travel and daily commutes. Calling 511 from any mobile or land line or logging onto [www.MD511.org](http://www.MD511.org) provides free one-stop shopping for travel information on State maintained roadways, including travel times, incident or work zone lane closures, weather reports and connections to transit, airport and tourism information.

With 511, commuters and visitors are offered more predictable travel in Maryland. Drivers can save time, fuel costs and the frustration that often breeds aggressive and unsafe driving.

Personalize your traffic information and travel times with My Maryland 511, a feature of the [www.MD511.org](http://www.MD511.org) web site, where you can create a profile and set up designated "trips," (i.e. from home to work or from home to beach). Thereafter every time you log in, you're instantly offered customized traffic information as well as instant access to up to six pre-selected live traffic camera views. In your profile choose to include commonly used phone numbers, so that when you call 511, you are recognized and offered tailored information bypassing the general menu prompts.

The 511 system is available every day, anytime. ❖

## Septic Systems

A typical septic system has four main components: a pipe from the home, a septic tank, a drain field, and the soil. All of your household wastewater exits your home through a pipe to the septic tank. The septic tank is a buried, watertight container typically made from concrete, fiberglass, or polyethylene. It holds the wastewater long enough to allow solids to settle out (forming sludge) and oil and grease to float to the surface (as scum). It also allows partial decomposition of the solid materials. Compartments and a T-shaped outlet in the septic tank prevent the sludge and scum from leaving the tank and traveling into the drain field area. The wastewater exits the septic tank and is discharged into the drain field for further treatment by the soil. The partially treated wastewater is pushed along into the drain field for further treatment every time new wastewater enters the tank.

Septic tank wastewater flows to the drain field, where it percolates into the soil, which provides final treatment by removing harmful bacteria, viruses, and nutrients.

Regular inspections and pumping are the best and cheapest way to keep your septic system in good working order. Newer tanks generally have risers with lids at the ground surface to allow easy location, inspection, and pumping of the tank. You should have a typical septic tank pumped as recommended by the inspector (generally every 3 to 5 years,

depending on the number of people in the household).

### Care for your septic system

- Plant only grass over and near your septic system. Roots from nearby trees or shrubs might clog and damage the drain field. Discourage root damage by keeping trees at least 100 feet away from the septic system. Trees with very aggressive roots, such as willows, should be even farther away from the system.
- Do not plan any building additions, pools, driveways, or other construction work near the septic system.
- Do not drive or park vehicles on any part of your septic system. Doing so can compact the soil in your drain field or damage the pipes, tank, or other septic system components.
- Keep roof drains, basement sump pump drains, and other rainwater or surface water drainage systems away from the drain field. Flooding the drain field with excessive water slows down or stops treatment processes and can cause plumbing fixtures to back up.
- Make sure you are aware of the types and amounts of extra waste materials that are poured down the drain. Limiting the use of your garbage disposal will minimize the flow of excess solids to your tank. Garbage disposals usually double the amount of solids added to the tank.
- Do not pour cooking greases, oils, and fats down the drain. Grease hardens in the septic tank and accumulates until it clogs the inlet or outlet. Grease poured down the drain with hot water may flow through the septic tank and clog soil pores completely.
- Pesticides, paints, paint thinners, solvents, disinfectants, poisons, and other household chemicals should not be dumped down the drain into a septic system because they may kill soil microorganisms that help purify the sewage. Also, some organic chemicals will flow untreated through the septic tank and the soil, thus contaminating the underlying groundwater.
- Never flush cat litter, disposable diapers, paper towels, facial tissues, coffee grounds, or cigarette butts and filters. They'll clog your septic tank in less time than you might imagine.
- Do not put too much water into the septic system; typical water use is about 50 gallons per day for each person in the family. The drain field does not have an unlimited capacity. The more water your family uses, the greater the likelihood of problems with the septic system. Water conservation practices can help reduce the amount of wastewater generated in the home.

Periodically check your plumbing for leaky faucets and toilets. Uncorrected leaks can more than double the amount of water you use. Many soils that can absorb the 200 to 250 gallons of sewage usually produced each day by a family of four would become waterlogged if an extra 250 gallons were added.

- Be sure that foundation drains, roof waters, gutter waters, and surface waters from driveways and other paved areas do not flow over the septic tank or the drain field.
- Periodically have the solids pumped out of the septic tank. Many experts advise a family of four with a 1,000-gallon septic tank to have the tank pumped after 3-5 years of full time use.
- Hire a licensed professional (listed in the phone book under "septic tank cleaners") to pump the waste out of your tank. The tank should be pumped out through the manhole, not the smaller inspection ports. The tank should be cleaned completely, leaving nothing in the tank. Make sure the baffles are inspected and that the tank is checked for leaks.
- Never attempt to open a septic tank yourself. Gases and bacteria in it are dangerous.
- You do NOT need to add any commercial products or yeast to your system. Additives do not improve how well your system works. There are always plenty of natural bacteria available to do the job. (They come from YOUR digestive system.) In fact, additives can damage your system by breaking up the sludge and scum layers, causing them to flush out of the tank and clog the infiltration bed. Additives that say, "Never worry about pumping your septic tank again" are the worst! ❖

### Change to Maryland Law

Maryland law now requires motorists to give bicyclists three feet when passing. Since last October, Maryland law has required motorists to safely overtake a bicycle, electric personal assistive mobility device (EPAMD) or a motor scooter at a distance of at least three feet. This passing rule does not apply if the highway on which the vehicle is being driven is not wide enough to lawfully pass the bicycle, EPAMD, or motor scooter at a distance of at least three feet. Additional exceptions are:

- If the bicyclist fails to ride to the right;
- If the bicyclist is in a bike lane; or
- If the bicyclist, EPAMD or scooter doesn't keep a steady course.

The law now requires vehicle operators to yield the right-of-way to bicyclists riding when entering or crossing occupied bike lanes and shoulders. Bicyclists are no longer required to ride on the shoulder. However, when riding at a speed slower than vehicle traffic, a bicyclist must still ride as near to the right of the roadway as practicable and safe, except when:

- Making or attempting a left turn;
- Riding on a one-way street;
- Passing a stopped or slower-moving vehicle;
- Avoiding pedestrians or road hazards;
- Using a right lane that is a right-turn only lane; or
- Operating in a lane that is too narrow for a bicycle and another vehicle to travel safely side-by-side within the lane.

When riding on a sidewalk, where such riding is permitted, a bicyclist may ride in a crosswalk to continue on their route. Motorists are required to yield the right of way to a bicyclist operating lawfully in a crosswalk at a signalized intersection. ❖

## Fall Pet Tips

Antifreeze and pets don't mix. Your pet may be inclined to lick up this sweet tasting, but toxic chemical. Check the ground for spills after you use antifreeze, and store it safely out of reach.

Use rodenticides carefully. Rodenticides lure mice and rats, but they can also attract your pet. Read directions carefully and take precautions to keep your pet safe from these chemicals.

Candy is a "no-no." Halloween candy and its wrappings can make your pet sick if ingested. Also, while jack-o-lanterns and maize are relatively non-toxic, they can upset your pet's tummy.

Human medications can be harmful. They topped the ASPCA's list of common hazards for the past few years. Be careful—your pet can grab a bottle off a counter or eat pills dropped on the floor.

If your pet does ingest poison, the ASPCA® Poison Control Center (APCC) can help at 1-888-426-4435. A \$65 consultation fee may apply. ❖

## Know Your Family's Medical History — It May Hold The Key To Living Longer

While fitness and a good diet are significant in helping us stay healthy and live longer, scientists say our genetic traits and inheritance also determine our

health and longevity. By keeping track of your family's medical history, your doctor may be able to detect diseases you're likely to develop before they get the best of you.

Whom should you ask to find out about your family's health and medical history?

Mother, father, siblings, aunts, uncles. If you do not know your biological parents or siblings, doctors suggest that you search for their death certificates or talk with their physicians and access their hospital records.

What information should you document?

- Causes of death
- Diseases and disorders: Visual impairment, glaucoma, hearing impairment, obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, cancers, depression, muscular dystrophy, Tay-Sachs disease, hypothyroidism, Down syndrome, etc.
- Habits: Smoking, diet, alcohol or drug use, exercise and fitness.

Where should you keep the information?

Record your family's health and medical history in a journal. And if you'd like, create a chart or family tree listing any health traits under each person's name. Store the journal in a safe box with other invaluable records, such as birth certificates and home mortgages. But remember to take the journal with you whenever you or your immediate family members are scheduled to see your family physician. Share all of your findings on your family's medical history with your doctor and record any new information after each physical. ❖