

# NEWSLETTER

## HOA Board Meetings

The next regular Board of Directors meeting will be held from 7:00PM to 9:00PM on Thursday, November 14 at the O'Loughlin residence. All homeowners are welcome to attend. ❖

## 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 AERC forms, minutes from previous board meetings, current and previous newsletters, as well as contact information for board members. ❖

## Montgomery County's Common Ownership Community Law!

Montgomery County's Common Ownership Community legislation applies to condominiums, cooperatives, and homeowner associations throughout the County. The law created a Commission on Common Ownership Communities and an Office of Common Ownership Communities. The Commission and Office register all common ownership communities, offer a program to resolve disputes with adequate due process protections and to regulate elections, budget adoptions, and enforcement procedures. They also provide educational programs and technical assistance to unit owners and board members.

The Commission on Common Ownership Communities is responsible to act as an advisor to the County Council, the County Executive, and offices of County government on matters including:

- Offering education, public awareness, and association membership understanding of the rights and obligations of living in a common ownership community;
- Ensuring proper establishment and operation of homeowners' associations, condominium associations, and cooperative housing corporations;

- Through a mandatory registration process, maintaining a roster of common ownership communities, including their leadership and professional management companies, if applicable;
- Reducing the number and divisiveness of disputes and provide and encourage informal resolution of disputes or if necessary conduct formal hearings;
- Maintaining property values and quality of life in these communities;
- Assisting and oversee and make policy through public hearings or other forums including legislative recommendations in the development of coordinated community government policies, programs, and services which support these communities;
- Preventing potential public financial liability for repair or replacement of common ownership community facilities;

Disputes may not be filed with the Office and Commission until the parties have made a good faith attempt to exhaust all procedures as provided in the community documents. The Office and Commission have jurisdiction to handle disputes between two or more parties involving:

The authority of a governing body, under any law or association document, to:

- require any person to take any action, or not to take any action, involving a unit;
- require any person to pay a fee, fine or assessment;
- spend association funds; or
- alter or add to a common area or element;
- or the failure of a governing body, when required by law or an association document, to:
  - ◆ properly conduct an election;
  - ◆ give adequate notice of a meeting or other action;
  - ◆ properly conduct a meeting;
  - ◆ properly adopt a budget or rule;
  - ◆ maintain or audit books and records;

or

- ◆ allow inspection of books and records.

A dispute does not include a disagreement that involves:

- title to any unit or any common area or element;
- the percentage interest or vote allocable to a unit;
- the interpretation or enforcement of any warranty;
- the collection of an assessment validly levied against a party; or
- the judgment or discretion of a governing body in taking or deciding not to take any legally authorized action.

For further information, contact the Commission on Common Ownership Communities by telephoning 240-777-3636.

### Gas Station Safety Tips

Because self-service gas pumps are used by most people today, carjackers have identified service stations as excellent locations to find plenty of victims. Carjackers simply wait for the moment when they can most easily move into a vehicle and drive away. Many drivers leave their keys in the ignition and their cars unlocked when they get out of their cars to use self-service gas pumps. While the driver is putting gas in the tank, the carjacker can simply open the car door, get in the car and drive away. This is especially dangerous if your children and/or pets are in the vehicle.

Sometimes, the carjacker will wait until the driver goes to the gas station's cashier to pay for the gas. While the driver is busy paying the cashier, the carjacker will drive off with the car.

Carefully consider where and when you buy gas. Choose a safe, familiar area during daylight hours whenever possible. In addition, make a practice of filling up your tank when it is half-empty, if possible. Never let your gas supply get so low that you are forced to stop for fuel in an unsafe or unfamiliar area at a dangerous time.

In addition, sometimes it's not a carjacker but a thief who chooses self-service gas pumps for his crimes. Most people will leave their keys in the ignition and their purses and/or wallets, cell phones, etc. on the passenger seat of the vehicle. With doors unlocked, it's easy for a thief to open the door, take your belongings and flee. It only takes seconds.

Some tips when you are at a gas station:

- Never leave your keys in the ignition. Take them out of the vehicle and lock your car while you are pumping gas.

- Do not leave your valuables in plain sight when you exit your vehicle. Even with doors locked and no keys, the thief cannot resist your valuables.

- Pay attention to your surroundings. Do not let your cell phone distract you. (As a side note, using your cell phone at a gas pump is very dangerous. Cell phones and other electronic devices may have the potential to emit electrical charges, and should therefore be left in the vehicle during fueling).

- If you are going to pay for your gas inside the cashier's office, please do not leave your children in the vehicle, regardless if your doors are locked or not. Take them with you. It may seem like a hassle, but consider the alternative. ❖

### Thought of the Day

"My wallet and gas tank are always empty, my house is never quiet and free of dog hair, nor is my car, my inbox is full of ongoing despair and misery, but my heart and soul are replenished with unconditional love, loyalty, and joy that can only come from a rescued dog!" Author Unknown

