

# The Meadow Lark

A Monthly Publication by and for the Residents of The Meadows, a Family Condominium Community



## Do You Want Vultures Here?

This picture is not a scene from the Hitchcock classic 'The Birds'. It was actually taken on Golden Oak Road at noontime on a recent Wednesday. Not seen in this photo are the 10-12 additional vultures perched on the roofs of the nearby buildings. This is just one example of what happens when trash is put out early. Rats, squirrels, raccoons, and even foxes have been spotted on our property tearing into bags and enjoying the veritable smorgasbord that putting trash out early creates. Once wildlife discovers that there is a consistent food source here, they make The Meadows their home; they nest and multiply here. Needless to say this is problematic in many ways. We do not want to be a haven for vultures or rats, so do not put your trash out early.

Please be considerate of your own home and your neighbors! All trash should be properly bagged and kept in your trash bin until the designated pick up dates/times. Trash can only be placed on the Common Elements AFTER 5:00 PM on Sundays and Wednesdays, for pick up on Monday/Thursday mornings. Recycling is only picked up on Mondays. Trash/recycling that is put out early could result in a violation charge of \$50 to the owner of the offending unit.

Anytime trash/recycling are affected by a holiday, we will post signs at the entrances and include the adjusted schedule on the website and in the newsletter. Inclement weather can also affect pick up; if your trash/recycling has not been picked up by 4 PM you should put the trash/recycling back in your trash bin until the next regular collection date.

FEBRUARY

**Board of Directors Meeting:** Thursday, February 15, 2018, 7:30 PM in the Clubhouse. Residents and Co-Owners are encouraged to attend. Agendas are posted online and at the Clubhouse on the Tuesday before the meeting. Minutes available upon request at The Meadows office and online at [mymeadows.net](http://mymeadows.net).

*Residents and Co-Owners are welcomed and encouraged to attend any committee meeting. Meetings are held in the Clubhouse.*

The Meadows



## Slow Down!

Our security officers are reporting that lately there has been a rash of our residents driving well above the posted speed limit in our community, which is 15 MPH. Driving in this manner is very hazardous to the many pedestrians we have here in The Meadows at just about any hour of the day.

Please slow down! We do not want to have someone hit by a car and badly injured or even worse! Remember, the speed limit within The Meadows is 15 MPH, obey it.

Meadows Website [www.mymeadows.net](http://www.mymeadows.net)

## President's Corner

Happy early Valentine's Day!

I recall about two years ago I was writing this article while there were a few feet (yes, feet) of snow on the ground. Now, I'm writing this article wearing shorts and a long sleeve shirt! I feel like we're going to finish out this winter season with little to no snow.

Trash has always been an issue in our community. As a reminder, our trash pickup days are Monday morning and Thursday morning. This means that trash can be left on the curb starting on Sunday evenings at 5 PM, and on Wednesday evenings starting at 5 PM as well. It is critical that we do our best to ensure our community is kept clean. On more and more occasions, I see trash being placed out far too early. We all are residents here in our community. We all want to live in a clean and well-kept neighborhood. We all need to pitch in to help make this community a cleaner place.

I hope everyone is enjoying their 2018. A new year is a fresh start. Make the best of it!

~ Eric Sokolowski

## Vacant Seats on the Board of Directors

We currently have two open seats on the Board of Directors. If you are interested in investing your skills, talents and time into your community, then the Board would like to talk with you!

To be considered for appointment to this seat you must be a co-owner and your account must be in good standing. The Board meets on the third Thursday evening of every month with a few work sessions or special meetings/events throughout the year.

If you meet these requirements and are interested in serving, please drop an email to [brooke.themeadows@verizon.net](mailto:brooke.themeadows@verizon.net) or stop by the Management Office to complete an application.

## Board of Directors Motions

### At the January 18 Meeting:

- Passed a motion to approve an Interior Alteration Request for new cabinets and flooring.
- Passed a motion to reaffirm two email votes which approved an antenna repair and a Board appointment.
- Passed a motion to deny a towing reimbursement request.
- Passed a motion to deny a request to delay paying a unit's condo fees.
- Passed a motion to deny a request to waive trash violation fees.
- Passed two motions concerning requests for waiving of Co-Owner's late fees.

COMPLETE MINUTES OF BOARD MEETINGS  
AVAILABLE AT THE OFFICE

## Rules Review

February is the month in which the Board reviews our Rules and Regulations each year. If you have any recommendations for changes to our rules, please submit them in writing to the Board for consideration. You can email your comments to [meadowsoffice@verizon.net](mailto:meadowsoffice@verizon.net) or drop them in the black mailbox in front of the Clubhouse.



## Keep the Lights On!

In order to promote safety in our neighborhood, everyone is reminded to leave your porch lights on, both front and rear. Generally, criminals like to operate in the dark, so the more light that is present, the less likely they will be to strike in that area.

Although we are blessed to have street lights, they cannot provide full light everywhere. If all units keep their porch lights on, the level of light in the community will be much more of a crime deterrent.

## Security Totals

December 15, 2017 – January 14, 2018

Calls for service and/or situations involving or requiring security assistance, by street:

Avocado Court:	0
Cool Oak Lane:	0
Golden Oak Court/Road:	7
Rustling Leaves Lane:	1
Saguaro Place:	0
Saint Germain Drive:	3
Strasburg Drive:	1
Turin Lane:	2
Vehicles Ticketed:	54
Vehicles Towed:	5
Calls referred to FCPD/FCFD:	2

The Meadows



## Fire Regulations

- Kerosene, or any fuel heaters, are forbidden by Meadows regulations.
- Residents should not store combustibles in furnace rooms. It is a serious fire hazard and is against County and Meadows regulations.
- Smoke detectors are required on *each level* of homes in The Meadows.
- Charcoal grills only are prohibited on The Meadows property.
- Residents should maintain a fire extinguisher in their units. It should be rated at least 2A:10BC.



## Carbon Monoxide Detectors

The furnaces and most hot water heaters in The Meadows use gas. It is imperative that all homes have a working carbon monoxide detector. Carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless gas which can cause death.

## Adopt-a-Highway Thank You

With a break in the weather, an impromptu Adopt-a-Highway trash pick-up was held on January 20. Thanks to Joan for setting it up and to Larry and Daniel for helping out. Seven large bags of trash were collected from the far side of St. Germain Drive. Please be advised that this area is not a trash dumping area – it should be kept clean as it reflects badly on The Meadows when trash is dumped there. Another pick-up will be scheduled in the early spring, plan to come out to help with this community project.

## Don't Feed the Critters!

It has recently been noted in some areas around the community that people are putting out various types of food items to feed the birds, squirrels, etc. It should be noted that it is against Meadows rules to do this, in fact even dogs and cats must be fed inside your unit and no food for them left on the Common Elements.

In the past we have had a rodent problem in some areas of the community, which was either caused or made worse by having a food source available for the mice, and even worse, rats. The rat problem has been controlled, we have bait stations in several places within our development; however if food items are left out, the rats are more likely to feed on this rather than the bait which will control their population.

Our feathered and furry friends for the most part have food provided for them by nature, so we do not need to feed them. And we certainly don't want to attract rats into our community. If you do see any rodents, please let the office know so action can be taken to eradicate them.

## Utilities Must Remain On!

ALL Co-Owners are required to keep the utilities on in their units. The heat must be set at or above 65°F in all units, vacant or occupied. This temperature may seem a little high, but one must consider that the furnace room where the pipes originate is unheated and may be affected by the wind chill factor. Another thing to consider is if the water is turned off, it remains in the pipes and is subject to even quicker freezing. Every year, major damage to several units has occurred as the result of pipes freezing and breaking in this manner.

*Any damage resulting from broken pipes, etc., caused by improper heat being maintained in a unit will be the responsibility of the Co-Owner. A minimum of 65 degrees Fahrenheit must be maintained during the winter months. – Rules and Regulations.*

In addition, to this regulation, The Meadows Rules also includes a Utility Maintenance Requirement for all units. It states:

*In the event that a Co-Owner does not keep electric and/or gas utilities connected as required, the Council of Co-Owners shall take any and all measures reasonably necessary to protect the common elements of the condominium which shall include but are not limited to the appropriation of funds to reconnect and maintain electric and gas utilities. All costs and changes incurred by the Council shall be assessed against the unit owner.*

You can help by reporting vacant units to the office as soon as you notice them. Send reports to the office via email, fax or phone. Make sure that you include the address. Report any evidence of possible broken pipes or water coming from a unit immediately!

## What To Do If You Experience a Leak

If you experience a leak in your unit you must contact your own plumber to respond.

If your leak appears to be from a neighboring unit you should attempt to reach your neighbor and have them shut off the water to their unit to minimize damage. Most shut off valves are located in the utility closet behind the hot water heater; however, if there have been any plumbing changes in the unit by a current or previous Co-Owner, the valve may have been moved. If the neighbor is not reachable or unable to shut off the water, contact the Fire Department and they will report and turn the water off. In these cases, you may contact the Management Office on the next business day; however, since this is a neighbor-to-neighbor issue, The Meadows involvement is limited. You are encouraged to contact your neighbor directly or if that is not possible, file a claim through your homeowner's insurance company.

The only exception to the procedures outlined above is if you are in an upper unit and inspection of your attic indicates the leak is coming from the roof. If this is the case, please contact the office to schedule an appointment for a maintenance technician to inspect the leak. In the meantime, simply place a bucket or pan under the leak to keep the water from penetrating into your living space. While this is not an after-hours emergency call, we do ask that you let us know as soon as possible so that we may see the attic while it is still wet. This helps us determine where the problem is.

## Ice & Snow and Our Trash Service

In the interest of safety, drivers will make a judgement call as to whether they can make it up and down our streets in inclement weather. If your vehicle skids five feet in the snow, a large trash truck will slide at least thirty feet. The rule of thumb on snow/ice days should be to put your trash out. If the trucks can't get there that day, they will not return for it until the next scheduled pickup day. (If your trash is not picked up, remove it until the next scheduled pickup.)



Council of Co-Owners  
**The Meadows**  
6100 Strasburg Drive  
Centreville, VA 20121

The Meadow Lark is published each month exclusively for the benefit of the residents and owners of The Meadows. It is the official publication of the Council of Co-Owners and is under the purview of the Board of Directors. News items, personal ads, and such are welcomed and should be placed in the large mailbox in front of the Clubhouse, emailed to meadowsoffice@verizon.net or faxed to 703-815-0755. The deadline is the 20th of each month. Personal ads must be 25 words or less, on 8½x11-inch paper. Include your name, Meadows address, and telephone number. They must be renewed each month. The Meadows does not endorse any advertisers.

EDITORS: Bill Liedtke and Joan Orvis

**Meadows Office**  
Monday–Friday, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM  
Phone: 703-830-4464  
Fax: 703-815-0755  
E-Mail: meadowsoffice@verizon.net  
Website: mymeadows.net

**24-Hour EMERGENCY ONLY**  
**Service First: 1-888-980-8958**

**Security**  
703-628-9481

**Towing**  
Battlefield Towing: 703-378-0059

**AAA/Republic Services**  
703-818-8222  
Call for special pick up, Thursdays only

## Remodeling?

Any desired changes to the exterior or interior of your unit must be submitted on an ARF or Request for Interior Alteration form to the Board of Directors for approval **PRIOR** to the change being done.

## A/C UNITS

If you replace your air conditioning unit, you may install it inside your utility room or submit an ARF for proposed exterior installation.

## Satellite Dishes in The Meadows



*This article originally appeared in February 2015. So far this year we have escaped most snow, but you never know!!*

## Please Shovel the Sidewalks!



When it snows, please do yourself a favor and shovel the snow off the sidewalks (and steps) in front of and adjacent to your unit. Did you know the The Meadows rules require that that this be done? It is only common sense to remove the snow and ice from in front of your residence. Why take a chance on having someone slip and fall on the ice/snow—that

someone is most likely to be you! Most people leave their unit several times a day to go to work, go to the store, run errands, etc. Each time you go out you will have to walk on the steps and sidewalk outside *your* unit, and if these areas have not been shoveled you increase your chances of being the victim of a fall. Please be reminded that salt products are prohibited because they damage concrete.

Fairfax County, unlike many other local jurisdictions, does not have a law that requires homeowners to shovel the snow off of their sidewalks. The County does, however, heavily encourage all residents to keep their sidewalks clear and safe. Be a good neighbor, help prevent your neighbors (as well as yourself) from falling and hurting themselves in front of your unit

Work together with your neighbors to ensure the sidewalks on your street are shoveled. If one of your neighbors is elderly or unable to get out and shovel perhaps for medical reasons, pitch in and make sure their steps and sidewalk are shoveled. There are three units in each of our buildings, work out a plan with your two neighbors so that each time it does snow the sidewalks in your area are not hazardous.

## Required Action to Avoid Pipe Freeze and Water Damage

To safeguard against costly frozen/broken pipes it is required that ALL units, to include those that are vacant and/or bank owned, maintain a *minimum* temperature of **65° Fahrenheit** during the winter months. To this end, all utilities must remain connected and all machinery (i.e. furnace, hot water heater, thermostat, etc.) must be in proper working order.

Thank you for your prompt attention to these important matters.