

# The Meadow Lark



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

At Centre Ridge Elementary

## Annual Meeting on December 9

The Annual Meeting of the Council of Co-Owners of The Meadows will be held on Tuesday, December 9 at 7:30 PM in the gymnasium of the Centre Ridge Elementary School. Some of the issues of last month's *Meadow Lark* listed the wrong location—please be aware that the meeting is *not* at Centreville High School.

The election of new members to the Board of Directors will be held at this meeting. Five two-year terms on the Board are up for election this year. There will also be a presentation of information about what is going on in the community.

Centre Ridge Elementary is located at 14400 New Braddock Road, it is the school attended by elementary students from The Meadows. Please plan to attend this important meeting.

## 2015 Meadows Budget Passed

After careful consideration and review, the Board of Directors passed a budget for the coming year which will raise the monthly condominium fee by \$6 each month for all units. The new fees, effective January 1, 2015, are \$306 monthly for a three-bedroom unit and \$272 for a two-bedroom unit.

This is only a 2% increase which will ensure that the needs of our 43 year old community are met in the year ahead, as well as in the future through reserve funding. The Board understands that even the smallest increase in the condominium fee matters, which is why they work so hard every year to adopt a budget that makes certain The Meadows is financially sound without being a drain on the wallets of our Co-Owners.

You will receive new coupon books in the mail by early-December. If you do not have them by December 15th, please contact SFMC at (703) 392-6006. Please note that your payment will be due on the 1st of each month even if you have not received your coupon book.

## Two Decorating Contests

Congratulations to the winners of the Halloween Decorating Contest. The following addresses were awarded prizes for displaying the most original decorations: 6172 Strasburg, 14417 Golden Oak, 14473 Cool Oak and 14430 Cool Oak. Thank you to all the others who also decorated for the October holiday.



There will be another decorating contest—the Holiday Decorating Contest will be held with judging from 6 PM until 8 PM on Saturday, December 20. Please have all of your lights on during this time, and good luck to all. Happy Holidays to everyone!

## DECEMBER

**Board of Directors Meeting:** Because of the holiday season, the Board of Directors will not meet in December. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 15, 2015, 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).

**Annual Meeting:** Tuesday, December 9, 7:30 PM at Centre Ridge Elementary School.

**Holiday Decorating Contest:** Saturday, December 20. Turn your lights on by 6 PM.

**Office Closed:** December 24, 25, at noon on December 31 & closed January 1.

**Christmas Tree Pickup:** December 26–January 6.

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



## HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

Closed December 24, 25. Closed at noon on December 31. Closed January 1.

## NO TRASH PICK-UP

on December 25 or January 1.  
Please do not put trash out on December 24 or 31

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## President's Corner

Hello everyone! I hope your Thanksgiving was filled with happiness, family, friends, and wonderful food!

The end of the year is quickly approaching. Among all the holiday festivities, cold weather preparations, and end of year work items, there is one other "end-of-year" item that is on my watch list...the end of my term as Board President for our community. I've seen, heard, and learned a good deal about our community over the year and I would like to share something with you all.

Buried within the noise of all the complaints, the praises, the comments, and the suggestions that I have heard during the year is one unifying message. That message is that we all, as residents, care about the community we live in. We all want this place to be better, look nicer, be safer, etc. As a Board member, we have been elected to be the voice of our residents. We have been entrusted to make the right decisions for our residents and our community, no matter how hard that choice is. In every decision, we always weigh both sides and we always separate the "want" versus "need". Many of these decisions upset one group, but make another group happy. It is the nature of the beast, as they say.

As this may be my last "President's Corner" entry, I want to remind everyone that we all want our community to improve. We all share that same passion about where we live. Let us never lose sight of that. Let us all work together so that as a community, we can achieve our goal!

Thank you all for your support over the past year. I appreciate it.

Happy Holidays! Have fun and be safe.

~ Eric Sokolowski

## Board of Directors Motions

*At the November 20 Meeting:*

- Passed a motion to approve an Architectural Review Form for a satellite dish.
- Passed a motion to cash in two CDs maturing at the end of November.
- Passed a motion to approve a bid of \$6,800 from Katchmark for sidewalk repairs.
- Passed a motion to approve installation of a heat pump on the common elements.
- Passed a motion to close the office all day Christmas Eve and close early at noon on New Year's Eve.
- Passed a motion to reaffirm previous email votes to approve repairs to the second golf cart, three waterproofing jobs and additional sewer repairs.
- Passed a motion to accept a bid from Middeldorf of \$3,650 for powerwashing of building siding.
- Passed a motion to renew the landscaping contract with Valley Crest for three years at the current price.
- Passed a motion to conduct a holiday decorating contest with an allowed expense of \$100.
- Passed a motion to deny a request to install a trash can.
- Passed a motion to remove a bench to be relocated in the spring.
- Passed a motion to deny a request to conduct violin lessons in the clubhouse.
- Passed a motion to deny a request to waive a dog violation fee.
- Passed a motion to deny a request to waive a \$50 administrative fee associated with a violation.
- Passed a motion to follow our attorney's recommendation concerning three delinquency cases.
- Passed a motion to write off eight small balances from either former owners or cases related to bankruptcy.
- Passed a motion to approve performance evaluations for our staff members.
- Passed a motion to approve pay raises and bonuses for staff members.

COMPLETE MINUTES OF BOARD MEETINGS  
AVAILABLE AT THE OFFICE

## Security Totals

October 15 – November 14, 2014

Vehicles Ticketed: 32

Vehicles Towed: 5

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

Avocado Court: 0

Cool Oak Lane: 2

Golden Oak Court/Road: 11

Rustling Leaves Lane: 0

Saguaro Place: 5

Saint Germain Drive: 5

Strasburg Drive: 3

Turin Lane: 1

Calls referred to FCPD/FCFD: 6



## 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.
- 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.



## Christmas Tree Pick-Up

According to Fairfax County regulations, Christmas trees must be recycled—they cannot be put out with your trash. For your convenience, a drop off area will be located next to the Clubhouse on Strasburg Drive, December 26– January 6.

All decorations, including tinsel and garlands, must be removed. If you use a carry plastic bag, this must also be removed.

## Frozen Pipes = Big Trouble!

Our Management is trying to make sure that the utilities remain on and the thermostats are set to the proper temperature in all units to prevent pipes from freezing and breaking. This is done to prevent water damage to the affected home as well as the possibility of water damage to surrounding homes.

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!

See the back page for office and emergency after hour phone numbers.

## Thanks to Volunteers

Many thanks go to the volunteers who participated in the Adopt-a-Highway pick-up held on November 8. Turnout was much better than in the past. There were five concerned members of the community who spent a little over an hour picking up 11 bags of trash along St. Germain Drive.

Thanks to Larry, Ron, Bill, Sean and his son Reed. The assistance was greatly appreciated.

## Don't Feed the Critters!

Occasionally residents are putting out various 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, but 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, we do not need to feed them. And we certainly don't want to attract more rodents 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!

## 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



## Turn the Water Off!

Everyone is reminded that all outside water spigots are required to be turned off by December 1st. In order to prevent pipes freezing and damage to your unit or those of your neighbors, please turn off both the front and rear faucets located in all lower units.

## Safety Reminders

### ■ Keep Your Porch Lights On!

In order to promote safety in our neighborhood, everyone is reminded to keep 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.

### ■ Regular Furnace Maintenance

It is critical to ensure safe and efficient operation of your furnace regardless of the age of the unit. Many heating and air conditioning companies offer discounted specials this time of year.

### ■ 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.

## Important Safety Issue!

It has been noticed that the insulation covering the electric wiring and gas lines running from the meters into the utility closet at some units have deteriorated, which could eventually result in exposed wiring. Exposed electrical wiring may cause injury, so please check the wiring behind your unit as soon as possible.

These sections of wiring and gas lines belong to the Co-Owner and it is the Co-Owner's responsibility to maintain them; however, we have been made aware that the utility companies may perform this work at no cost. You can reach Washington Gas at (703) 750-1000 and NOVEC at (703) 335-0500.

Please take a moment to inspect your wiring and gas line and contact the utility company or a certified electrician to make necessary repairs as soon as possible.

## Reminder for Pet Owners

The Meadows Rules and Regulations state that all pet feces must be bagged and removed from the Common Elements immediately. In addition, please be reminded that the Fairfax County Leash Law is in effect at The Meadows. This law requires dogs to be on a leash at all times when outside. For the health and safety of our residents, please immediately remove dog feces and keep dogs leashed at all times when on the Common Elements. It is important to remember that violations of these policies could result in the assessment of penalties in the amount of \$50 per occurrence.

In addition, please do not leave the baggies you use to scoop up your dog's waste anywhere on the Common Elements. These baggies should be placed in the proper pet waste stations that we have located throughout the community or should be taken to your unit for proper disposal.



# APPROVED OPERATING BUDGET (January 1, 2015 - December 31, 2015)

2BR Fee = \$272 / 3BR Fee = \$306

	Adopted 2014	Projected 2014	Approved 2015
<b>INCOME</b>			
Assessment Income	\$2,119,395	\$2,118,312	\$2,164,059
Late Fee Income	7,000	9,275	9,000
Interest Income	6,807	5,993	6,083
Owner Interest Income	3,500	3,088	3,000
Owner Admin. Fees Income	350	155	105
Miscellaneous Owner Income	1,200	1,533	3,000
ARC Violation Income	2,500	4,458	5,000
Miscellaneous Income	2,800	3,955	4,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$2,143,551</b>	<b>\$2,146,769</b>	<b>\$2,194,247</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>UTILITIES</b>			
Electricity	\$35,000	\$31,260	\$32,500
Telephone	5,000	5,577	5,600
Gas - Clubhouse	1,900	2,740	3,000
Water & Sewer	408,550	407,548	410,000
<b>Total Utilities</b>	<b>\$450,450</b>	<b>\$447,126</b>	<b>\$451,100</b>
<b>GENERAL &amp; ADMINISTRATIVE</b>			
Education & Training	\$800	\$664	\$635
Newsletter	3,500	3,521	3,500
Office Equipment & Repairs	500	1,457	1,000
Office Supplies	2,350	3,764	3,000
Lease Exp.- Office Equipment	3,300	5,600	5,600
Uncollectible Charges	35,000	20,289	20,000
Legal - General	20,000	42,782	20,000
Legal - Collections	40,000	38,295	40,000
Legal Fee Reimbursements	(9,000)	(11,926)	(5,000)
Legal Fees Other	10,000	736	9,000
Uniforms	500	843	600
Insurance Loss/Deductible	5,000	5,000	10,000
Social & Rec	2,300	2,383	2,300
Postage & Mail	3,500	2,683	3,500
Printing & Reproduction	800	1,703	800
Realized Loss on Sale	295,971	167,539	268,800
Website	1,000	719	500
Miscellaneous Expense	2,000	2,508	2,500
<b>Total General &amp; Administrative</b>	<b>\$417,521</b>	<b>\$288,560</b>	<b>\$386,735</b>
<b>MAINTENANCE &amp; REPAIRS</b>			
General Maintenance & Repairs	\$7,000	\$4,818	\$5,000
Plumbing Repairs	9,800	11,956	14,000
Painting - Supplies	250	0	250
Exterminator Services	7,500	10,718	7,500
General Supplies	6,000	4,515	5,000
Welding	1,000	800	1,000
Antenna Repairs	1,000	3,131	1,000
Roofing Repairs	2,000	900	0
Gutter Repairs & Cleaning	10,000	10,000	8,000

	<b>Adopted 2014</b>	<b>Projected 2014</b>	<b>Approved 2015</b>
Vehicle Expense	1,000	416	1,000
Pool Repairs, Supplies, Maint	1,000	1,589	2,000
Playground Repairs	500	0	500
Landscaping Improvements	5,000	1,107	2,500
Tree Planting	5,000	5,000	2,500
Tree Maintenance	25,000	12,155	18,500
<b>Total Maintenance &amp; Repairs</b>	<b>\$82,050</b>	<b>\$67,104</b>	<b>\$68,750</b>
<b>CONTRACT SERVICES</b>			
Pool Contract	\$56,700	\$56,700	\$60,650
Management Contract	87,591	87,591	86,343
Auditor	6,000	6,300	6,000
Architect & Engineering Services	0	12,116	3,000
Insurance Master Policy	162,336	176,890	183,770
Painting - Exterior	80,000	75,000	88,000
Grounds Maintenance Contract	87,025	87,024	87,024
Security Contract	166,832	166,832	166,832
Snow Removal	18,000	30,275	20,000
Trash Removal	79,368	79,368	79,368
Pet Waste	5,500	4,500	5,500
<b>Total Contract Services</b>	<b>\$749,352</b>	<b>\$782,597</b>	<b>\$786,488</b>
<b>PAYROLL</b>			
FICA Payroll Taxes	\$18,045	\$16,391	\$18,067
Unemployment Taxes	510	341	418
Group Health Insurance	23,200	19,242	25,056
Life Insurance	2,875	2,935	2,875
Pension Contribution	9,436	9,138	9,447
Staff payroll	233,787	221,370	236,172
Temporary Labor	0	0	0
Swim Team Coaches	1,500	0	0
<b>Total Payroll</b>	<b>\$289,353</b>	<b>\$269,415</b>	<b>\$292,035</b>
<b>TAXES &amp; LICENSES</b>			
Income Taxes	\$3,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Personal Property Tax	125	125	100
Licenses, Fees & Permits	1,700	605	655
<b>Total Taxes &amp; Licenses</b>	<b>\$4,825</b>	<b>\$1,730</b>	<b>\$1,755</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,993,551</b>	<b>\$1,856,532</b>	<b>\$1,986,863</b>
<b>RESERVE EXPENDITURES</b>			
Expected Reserve Expenditures	\$300,000	\$288,217	\$280,160
<b>Total Reserve Expenditures</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$288,217</b>	<b>\$280,160</b>
<b>RESERVES CONTRIBUTIONS</b>			
Replacement Reserve	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$156,000
Reserve Interest	\$0	\$0	\$6,914
Operating Reserve	\$0	\$0	\$44,470
Transfer from Reserves	(300,000)	(288,217)	(280,160)
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>(\$150,000)</b>	<b>(\$138,217)</b>	<b>(\$72,776)</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,143,551</b>	<b>\$2,006,532</b>	<b>\$2,194,247</b>
<b>SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$140,237</b>	<b>\$0</b>