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# The Courts and Ridges of Ashburn

Issue 9

October–November 2005

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## NEWS FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

*Neil R. Manausa, Board of Trustees President*

At the recent Board of Trustees meeting held on October 10, the board voted to amend our community bylaws to allow for a one-time adjustment to the tenure of specific, newly-elected, board members. The change is intended to stagger the terms of the Board of Trustee members to prevent the entire board from leaving office at the same time.

In the upcoming election, six new Board of Trustee members will be elected. The four candidates receiving the most votes will serve a two-year term. Those candidates receiving the fifth and sixth most votes will serve a one-year term. Any vacancy created on the Board of Trustees will be filled by appointment for the balance of the term of the vacated position.

Also, the Board of Trustees thanks Andy Adams for his years of service as Chairman of the Neighborhood Watch Committee. His departure leaves a void that needs to be filled. If you are interested in serving on the Neighborhood Watch Committee, please contact Liz Deapen, our community manager, at 703/771-9355

The board encourages residents to attend the BOT meetings on the second Monday of each month, held at 7:00 pm, in the clubhouse. If they wish, attendees are allowed to speak publicly to the Board of Trustees before any board business is begun.

Hope to see you in the clubhouse.

## IT'S BEEN A LONG, HOT, DRY SEPTEMBER

*Robert Atland, Open Space Chair*  
*open\_space@courtsandridges.org*

Fortunately for the community, Mark Wright and Laurie Tolles worked with the Association Board of Trustees to identify funds to water new plantings to ensure their survival. With the lack of rain, much of the grass in the community, to include the open space, has gone dormant. Additionally, many of the plants and trees throughout the community are losing their foliage early and we may not have a very colorful autumn.

The Open Space Committee also worked with the Board of Trustees to identify and secure funding for tree replacement throughout the community. In many areas of the community, there were either dead trees or the stumps of trees that had died. You'll see a number of new trees with green "agra-gator" bags at their base. These are new trees that have been planted to take the place of dead trees. In some areas, due to the cost of tree replacement, we opted simply to have the tree stumps removed and the area seeded. Hopefully, we'll have a wet autumn and winter, so the community trees and open space grassy areas will thrive.

This is the first year with our new landscaping company, Blade Runners, and so far we've received many compliments on their work. The company has worked closely with the Open Space Committee and the PMP to keep the trees trimmed and grass mowed. The Open Space Committee will be meeting with Blade Runners to review this year's work and to plan for work that needs to be done in the community next year. If you have any concerns or questions about the landscaping in the community, please e-mail the Open Space Committee at [open\\_space@courtsandridges.org](mailto:open_space@courtsandridges.org) or contact PMP. All the contact information for both the Open Space Committee and PMP can be found at the Courts and Ridges of Ashburn website.

Finally, the Open Space Committee is down to three members. If you are interested in joining the committee, we would appreciate your help. The next Open Space Committee meeting is the 19th of October at 7 pm in the community clubhouse.

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## FROM THE COMMUNITY MANAGER

Liz Deapen, Community Manager  
liz.ad@pmpbiz.com

Hello again, folks! Over the past month or so, several residents have made inquiries on how the Association handles compliance issues—with respect to maintenance issues, as well as architecturally related issues, such as building a deck, fence, or otherwise changing the appearance of someone's home (as viewed from the outside). Here's basically how it works . . .

I am in the community a few times each week for various reasons, such as conducting resale inspections, delivering reports to Board members, Committee members, delivering supplies, etc. Each time I am in the community, I leave with a list of anywhere from a half dozen to 25 to 30 resident addresses where I notice that there is a compliance "issue"—someone is storing their trashcan in front of their home (yes, there are *STILL* folks who insist on doing this for some reason); someone is not mowing their grass; someone has a project underway that I do not recognize as going through the proper approval channels; someone has toys or other articles consistently lying on their front lawn; or someone else needs to do painting—you get the idea.

When I get back to my office, I generate what we infamously refer to as "violation letters". This is a several step process governed both by the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions for Courts and Ridges, as well as the Virginia Property Owners Act; both of which each homeowner is bound by.

We are required first to send a letter to identify the problem to the homeowner and provide them a certain number of days to correct the problem. If they do not correct the problem, a second letter is generated, and so on. The third letter is referred to as a Cease and Desist notice. This notice contains specific legal language and requires the owner either bring their property into compliance or request a hearing within ten days.

If they do neither, and the violation persists, the Commonwealth of Virginia allows the Association to impose violation charges. The owner is notified of this as well. Regretfully, we have had to go to this extent on a handful of Courts and Ridges properties.

While I am in the community frequently, it is impossible for me to see everything. As a homeowner living in the community, you see things on a day-to-day basis that may go unnoticed by me. There are also pockets of the community that I cannot view at all because there is no common area to view the lot from (pipe stem properties are an example).

Thus, in addition to my regular visits to the community, I also rely on you to bring to my attention things that you fear may have been missed. Particularly if you see some construction going on—it is vital that you report this immediately—especially if you fear it may not be in compliance with your architectural guidelines. Your application process

requires neighbors to obtain neighbors' signatures when embarking on an improvement that will affect their property. If you haven't been approached by your neighbor and you see a load of lumber being dropped off—call or e-mail my office!

Maintenance issues also can be reported to me via e-mail. The person reporting a physical covenant violation is not identified in the violation letter that we generate (you won't be identified as the person who "ratted out" your neighbor). This is because a "physical" violation can be verified unlike a "behavioral" violation, such as parties or loud music. Behavioral violations must be submitted in writing because they most often cannot be verified personally by the Association or its agent.

In closing this segment, I wish to thank those of you who take pride in your homes and maintain them on a consistent basis! Your efforts help in keeping the Courts and Ridges a first-class community.

Now that the mowing and painting season is drawing to a close, I will be concentrating on other issues, such as the above-noted storage of trashcans in front of the homes and other violations that, while by themselves may not be of utmost significance, still are against the covenants and community rules and do have an overall impact on the appearance of the neighborhood.

One last reminder: about the dog stations, they are cleaned up and restocked once a week, generally on Wednesdays. Thank you to those of you who are using those facilities *instead* of the grass!

Elizabeth A Deapen, AMS  
703/771-9355 x 19 • 703/771-9366 FAX

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# COMMUNITY EVENTS COMMITTEE UPDATE

Janice Houck, Events Committee  
events@courtsandridges.org

## Fall Family Festival

This year's event was held on Saturday, September 24th. The moon bounce was a big hit, as always. Spiderman entertained a crowd of youngsters with the story of how he became a superhero, magic tricks, and lots of games. We served up 50 servings of popcorn (we promise to have more next time, it ran out after the first hour!), and 150 servings of cotton candy.

The Neighborhood Watch committee, represented by Andy Adams, had a tableful of literature about crime prevention. They distributed free DNA identification kits that you can use for your children. The Pedal Shop was there providing free bike and helmet inspections and repairing bikes. The Ashburn Volunteer Fire Department was also there with an engine; the kids loved climbing into the truck!

Thanks to Andy Adams for making arrangements with the Pedal Shop and Fire Department. Thanks also to other volunteers who helped make this event possible: Brad Houck, Cheryl Kaplan, Aarin Wiltz, Margaux Wegeng, Diana Wilkins, Michael Hotaling, Debbie Koehler, and Kristin Ryan.

## Upcoming Events

Please check the community Web site at <http://courtsandridges.org> for any date changes or more information. For questions or to volunteer for any of these events, please contact Diana Wilkins at 703/729-7885 or send e-mail to events@courtsandridges.org.

*Halloween Parade*—Sunday, October 30, 2–4 pm. Meet at the cul-de-sac at the end of Snowpoint Place. The parade will proceed along Snowpoint Place and then onto Laurel Ridge Drive to the clubhouse. The party at the clubhouse will include games, treats, and a fun and easy craft.



## Committee Dates

Pool Committee: November 1  
ARB: November 8  
Board of Trustees: November 14  
Open Space: No Meeting  
Events Committee: November 16  
Communications Committee: December 1  
Pool Committee: December 6  
Board of Trustees: December 12  
ARB: December 14  
Events Committee: December 14  
Open Space: No Meeting

All meetings are held at 7 pm in the Community Clubhouse (unless specified in the calendar). Locations for Events Committee meetings are on page 5.

If you would like to donate Halloween cookies for the event or volunteer in any way, please contact event chairperson Ruth Brunelli at 703/723-6323.

*Ornament Exchange*—Saturday, December 3, 8 pm. This year's event will be at the home of Chip and Tina Oswald, 43920 Championship Place. Join us for this annual adults-only party. Bring a wrapped holiday ornament (usually valued under \$10). We do a lively round-robin gift exchange that gets everyone in the holiday spirit.

*Caroling & Holiday Illuminating*—Wednesday, December 21, 7 pm. Meet at the clubhouse. This is a terrific annual tradition for kids and adults. We have some semi-professional singers in the neighborhood that lead the singing, but all you need is the Christmas spirit to join along! Song sheets will be provided along with light refreshments at the clubhouse afterward. *Note:* If you know of any homebound folks or other residents that



Scenes from the Courts and Ridges Fall Festival.

would particularly like a visit from the carolers, please e-mail [events@courtsandridges.org](mailto:events@courtsandridges.org) or call the event chairperson Tom Brunelli at 703/723-6323.

*Frosty Frolic*—Saturday, January 14, 2006, 4–6 pm.  
Location: Ashburn Fire Department Social Hall. This is a great family event that melts away the winter blues! A DJ provides entertainment for young and old alike and Frosty makes his appearance and poses for photos (please bring \$1 if you want a Polaroid photo). We provide yummy sliced ham and turkey from Heavenly Ham and a big cake from Costco, and we ask that you bring an appetizer, side dish, or dessert to round out the menu. There will be crafts for the kids—including a snowflake/snowman bracelet/napkin ring kit. To reserve your seats and sign up to bring an appetizer or side dish, please call Janice Houck at 703/724-0534 or send an e-mail to [events@courtsandridges.org](mailto:events@courtsandridges.org).

**The Events Committee Needs You!**

The Events Committee needs several new members if we are to continue offering these fun events to the community. To join, come to a meeting, e-mail [events@courtsandridges.org](mailto:events@courtsandridges.org), or call Diana Wilkins at 703/729-7885. We have a great time getting together once a month to plan these fun community events.

**Community Events Committee Meetings**

- Wednesday, October 19, 7:30 pm, at the home of Anne Delphia, 43949 Championship Place
- Wednesday, November 16, 7:30 pm, at the home of Jennifer Solomon, 20370 Flushing Meadow Court
- Wednesday, December 14, 7:30 pm, at the home of Ruth Brunelli, 20370 Snowpoint Place

**REMINDER**

It is recommended that you keep an outside light on in the front of your house overnight. The Sheriff's Department encourages it as a deterrent to criminal or mischievous activity.



**Take a Bite Out of Crime**® if you notice any *Non-emergency* activities in the community report them to the Loudoun County Sheriff's Dept. using the following numbers:  
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## WHO'S THAT AT THE DOOR?

Mark Wright

You're finally sitting down to eat dinner when the doorbell rings . . . another meal interrupted. You answer the door only to find that it's someone selling magazines, looking for reference customers for their latest security system, requesting donations for youth groups, etc. The list goes on and on.

Although the interruptions to our lives caused by solicitors are often bothersome and inconvenient, door-to-door solicitation is not illegal within Loudoun County, also the Courts and Ridges HOA does not have a bylaw or covenants addressing solicitation, and even if it did, it has no authority in dealing with solicitors. In many cases, there are requirements that companies or persons wishing to solicit within Loudoun County must first register with the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) and receive a Solicitor Permit. However, there are many exceptions to this requirement (see Chapter 828 of the Loudoun County code for full details).

I'm sure we have all heard about scams where fly-by-night contractors offer services like repairing or resealing driveways at exorbitant cost, often seeking compensation up front. After receiving payment, the "contractors" never return. In other scams, one thief keeps the resident occupied at the front of their home while the thief's partner enters the house from the rear. Valuables are taken while the residents were conversing in their front yard.

While it is important to be concerned about fraud, there are also many legitimate contractors that may provide valuable services. Not every door-to-door salesperson is a scam artist. You can protect yourself and your family by following a few simple guidelines.

- Never buy from a solicitor without first seeing their Solicitor Permit or Business license. If they can't provide one, ask for a business card or write down their company information. If you think you might be interested in their products or services, request that they come back later, checking them out in the meantime
- You can call the LCSO non-emergency line (703/777-1021) to verify that they have or need to have a Solicitor Permit.
- Don't let solicitors into your home; they may be inspecting your valuables for a future theft.
- Don't trust salespeople who claim to have done other work within the community, but refuse to give you the names of some past customers.
- Be suspicious of anyone who tries to sell by playing on your emotions. For example, some sellers will suggest you are shirking your responsibilities to your family if you don't buy their product.

- Don't pay any money up front. Ask yourself how you will get your money back if the salesperson doesn't deliver or if the product is defective.
- Finally, if a solicitor is particularly aggressive, call 911. According to the Standard of Conduct provided by the Loudoun County Ordinances, a solicitor must conduct themselves in an orderly and lawful manner at all times.

For those residents who wish to discourage solicitors, it is permissible to place a small "No Solicitation" sign next to the front door. These signs can be purchased at most hardware stores. If a solicitor is abiding by the county ordinance, the LCSO cannot require them to cease based strictly on the sign by your door. However, if you request that the solicitor leave your property, and they fail to do so, then the LCSO can charge them with trespassing.

If you have any questions or comments, please e-mail [watch@courtsandridges.org](mailto:watch@courtsandridges.org)



### Family Watchdog

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Who is watching your children when you are not! Sexual predators have no physical borders, and are not confined to any given socio-economic groups and could be closer than you think. Family Watchdog allows you to see where registered sexual offenders live and work around you.

Go to <http://www.familywatchdog.us>.

### Upcoming Community Events

Halloween Parade: October 30, 2-4 pm

Ornament Exchange: December 3

Caroling: December 21, 7pm

## POOL SEASON 2005

Larry Cimbalista, Pool Committee Chair  
pool@courtsandridges.org

I'm happy to say that we've had another successful summer. A new height restriction policy to keep our kids safer was put into place with the help of the parents and lifeguards. The new system of having guests pay at the door by check went very smoothly. Also, Splash modified the water lines to recycle the slide water.

Currently, the pool committee is reviewing the budget for 2006, which will include the purchase of additional pool furniture. Additionally, our committee is always looking for volunteers—join us on the first Tuesday of each month at the clubhouse at 7 pm.

## WHAT'S COOKING!

Submitted by Debbie Wright

Here's a couple of easy recipes for upcoming Halloween parties. Found originally in the *Washington Post* Food section, they are guaranteed to put a smile on your kids' faces.

### Butter Beer

- 1 pint of vanilla ice cream
- 1/2 stick of butter
- 1/3 cup light brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 3 cups sparkling apple cider

Allow ice cream to soften and bring butter to room temperature. Cream together the butter, sugar, and spices in a large bowl. Add to ice cream and refreeze. Heat the sparkling apple cider in a pot until warm but still sparkling (at least 3 minutes). Fill each glass with a generous scoop of the ice cream mixture and pour warm cider over ice cream; it will foam like beer. Yield: 6 servings.

### Disappearing Pretzel Wands

- 1/2 cup chocolate fudge frosting
- 1/2 cup candy sprinkles
- 10 pretzel rods (such as Snyder's of Hanover)
- 2 tablespoons vanilla frosting

Transfer chocolate frosting to a microwave safe glass-baking dish. Microwave on high for 10 seconds or until melted; stir until smooth. Roll each pretzel rod in the melted frosting, making sure to coat completely. Dip each pretzel in the sprinkles, transfer to a piece of foil or baking sheet and refrigerate for about 40 minutes to set the frosting. Place vanilla frosting in a small microwave safe bowl and microwave on high for 10 seconds to soften. Dip the tip of each pretzel in the vanilla frosting, return to foil and let stand for 2 hours until frosting is set. Then watch the wands disappear.



A **McGruff House** is a temporary haven for children and others who find themselves in frightening or dangerous situations.

Ensure your children recognize the McGruff House sign and look out for participant homes in the community.

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## EVER EVOLVING GUIDELINES

Rodger Williams, ARB Chair  
arb@courtsandridges.org

Unlike the U.S. Constitution, the original Courts and Ridges Architectural Guidelines were not drafted by inspired men of Virginia (no offense to the developers' staff intended), but, much like the Constitution, the Guidelines over time are interpreted differently, get amended, and inspire great debate about what they actually mean.

Just over a year ago, the Guidelines underwent a major review and revision, which improved a lot of sections, addressed short-sighted regulations, and created guidelines on matters that were not even issues when the original guidelines were drafted. (Can you remember a time before satellite dishes? If you read the original guidelines, these things would not be allowed in Courts and Ridges. Who would ever give up their satellite dish?!)

After a long period of hard work, why would the ARB dive into another review? Simply put, new issues that are inadequately covered have come to our attention? For example:

- Replacing entryway doors and sidelight windows. A number of you have been faced with deteriorating doors and are finding it difficult to match the originals. The guidelines do not address replacing doors.
- Trex(R) did not exist and was uncommon as a decking material until recently. While this has been allowed from the very beginning, it does present challenges on regulating color in some instances.
- Home businesses—not typically an ARB concern—is covered by the Guidelines, and recent issues have pointed out how vague the Guidelines are.
- Home expansions and porches have also recently given the ARB pause on items like setbacks, and how certain details have been documented within the Guidelines.

So during the relatively quiet winter months, the ARB will be reviewing and making recommendations on amendments to the Guidelines. As with the last revision, the drafts will be posted on the Web site for comment. If you have any suggestions, do not hesitate to e-mail us at [arb@courtsandridges.org](mailto:arb@courtsandridges.org). We do value the input of the community as we try to balance community standards and homeowner's wishes.

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- Pediatric/Developmental Optometry
- Vision Training

## SUPPORT OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS

Clip and earn cash for our neighborhood schools! Many of our local schools run fundraising programs that we can all help just by clipping Box Tops and Labels from products that we buy every day at the grocery store. Two such programs are "Box Tops for Education" sponsored by General Mills, Inc., and "Project A+" sponsored by Tysons Foods, Inc.

Box Tops for Education (see example below) can be found on products such as Betty Crocker, Nature Valley, Old El Paso, Pillsbury, Totinos, Yoplait, Ziplock, and hundreds of cereal brands. Each Box Top is worth 10¢ to our school. Visit [www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com) for a complete list of products.



Project A+ (see example below) can be found on many of you favorite poultry dinners and deli items. Each label is worth 24¢ to our schools. Visit <http://www.tyson.com/projectaplus/labels/products/default.asp> for a complete list of products.



If you don't have school age children, clip and donate to a neighbor or contact us at [communications@courtsandridges.org](mailto:communications@courtsandridges.org) and we will be happy to collect and pass them along.

## COURTS & RIDGES ODD JOB SQUAD

We are often asked by residents about getting extra help with some of those little jobs around the house. If your child is interested in making a little extra cash helping out his/her neighbors, let us know and we will publish in the newsletter.

Please provide the Child's Name (only first names will be published), Phone Number, and Service(s) offered, e.g., Babysitting, Pet sitting/Walking, Yard Work, Car Washing, and Snow Shoveling. We encourage parents to meet or speak to the requester of services.

Jenny or Katy	703/724-1891	Babysitting
Jessica	703/858-2437	Babysitting
Margaux	703/723-5905	Babysitting, pet sit/walk
Zac	703/726/1217	Pet sit/walk, yard work, shovel snow

## SCOUTING FOR FOOD

Scouting for Food will soon be in our area. Boy Scout Troop 1173 will be collecting food items for the Community Holiday Coalition that will help needy people in our area.

Items the Coalition is accepting include: Tea, Coffee, Canned Juices, Evaporated Milk, Soup (all types), Breakfast foods (cereal, oatmeal), Canned Vegetables, Canned Yams, Boxed Mashed Potato Mix, Canned Gravy, Cranberry Sauce, Tomato Products (especially canned spaghetti sauce, diced tomatoes, and tomato sauces), Stuffing Mix, Pasta, Canned Fruit, Cake Mix & Frosting, Pumpkin Pie Fillings, Boxed Whipped Toppings (for pie), Peanut Butter and Jelly, Baked Beans, Pork & Beans, Canned Meats (tuna, chicken), Canned Meals (beef stew, SpaghettiOs)

### Schedule

November 5—Boy Scouts will drop off bags

November 12—Boy Scouts will pick up filled bags from 10 am–12:00 (if there are not many bags out, the Scout will probably be knocking on doors).

If you have any questions regarding this, please contact this e-mail address: [Carmina@solcent.com](mailto:Carmina@solcent.com), or call 703/858-7377.

Thank You for your support, Boy Scout Troop 1173.

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## MAINTENANCE TIPS

Mark Wright

With the homes in the Courts & Ridges having ages of four years and over, it is worth performing the following maintenance task before it turns into a bigger more expensive task.

**Maintenance Tip 1:** If your toilet system is a two piece (bowl and tank), the bolts that secure the tank to the bowl have a tendency to corrode or the rubber washer may disintegrate, causing a water leak. Replacement is a very simple do-it-yourself job. You can purchase the replacement kits at Home Depot or Lowes. Look for Tank-To-Bowl Bolts—they are usually under \$3.00 per set.

Instructions:

- 1) Turn off the water supply line to the tank and flush the toilet
- 2) Bail out any remaining water.
- 3) Position a towel and/or bowl under the tank to protect any floor coverings

4) Remove the old bolts and washers (note how they are assembled)—some assemblies may require the water supply line to be disconnected.

5) Replace with new bolts and washers—be careful not to overtighten, as you may crack the ceramic toilet bowl or tank.

6) Turn back on the water supply line and check for leaks

**Maintenance Tip 2:** This winter remember to turn off the water to your outdoor spigots before temperatures dip below freezing. Locate the shut-off valve from inside the house, shut off the water supply, and loosen the bleeder cap. Go outside, turn on the spigot, and open the anti-siphon fitting (usually by sliding the plastic ring back toward the house). This will allow any water that is left in the pipes to drain. If you have an outdoor sprinkler system, shut it off at the same time and purge water by its drain valve (if installed) or with compressed air. Also remember to drain garden hoses. This will save several hundred dollars worth of repairs in the spring!

## LOUDOUN COUNTY AND INOVA HOSPITAL TO DISPENSE FLU SHOTS

The Loudoun County Health Department will provide flu shots to residents on Tuesdays from 4 to 6 pm. On October 18, the shots will be restricted to people in priority groups. The groups include those who are:

- 65 or older.
- 6 months to 23 months.
- 6 months or older with a chronic medical condition.
- Pregnant.
- Living in a long-term-care facility.
- Caregivers of children younger than 6 months.
- Health care personnel who provide direct patient care.

The shots will be given on a walk-in basis at the Health Department's patient services office in the Shenandoah Building, 102 Heritage Way NE, Leesburg. The cost is \$28. For information, call 703/777-0236.

Inova Loudoun Hospital's mobile health van will be at Dulles Town Center on October 20 and 22 to dispense flu shots. Recipients must be ages 4 or older. Children ages 4 to 17 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Shots will be given from 9 am to 2 pm on October 20 and from 10 am to 5 pm on October 22. The cost is \$25.

Additional flu shot dates will be announced. For information, call 703/771-2917.

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*This is not intended as a solicitation if your home is already listed with another broker*

## OCTOBER GARDENING TIPS

- Fall is the best time of year for moving many plants. Transplant deciduous trees and shrubs when they are dormant. Evergreen trees or shrubs, however, may be transplanted earlier in the fall, before they go dormant.
- The next time you plant a tree, allow a child to hold the plant upright while the hole is filled. Years later, the tree will be a great reminder to the individual that he or she was so much smaller—or bigger—than the tree when it was planted!
- The particular shade of orange, red, or purple fall color that is developed by the pigment anthocyanin in leaves is related to the acid or alkaline condition of the sap of the plant. If the sap is acidic, the color will be orange or red. With neutral sap, the pigment turns light purple. When the sap is alkaline, a dark purple or blue color is evident.
- Water evergreens thoroughly before the ground freezes. Evergreens continue to lose water by transpiring during the winter, but when the ground is frozen they cannot replenish the water.
- In deciding on new trees or shrubs to plant around your home, remember to select varieties with a mature height and width to fit the desired location. This will greatly reduce pruning and other maintenance in the future.
- When selecting trees for fall color, keep in mind that color is more strongly influenced by genes in the plant than by the environment. Trees selected in the fall when they are in full color can be expected to produce the same colors in future years. Red Maple cultivars that display outstanding colors include “Red Sunset,” “October Glory,” and “Autumn Flame.”

Courtesy of Debbie Dillion  
Urban Horticulturist  
Loudoun Cooperative Extension

## GENERAL & SPECIAL ELECTION, NOVEMBER 8, 2005

Loudoun County voters will go to the polls on Tuesday, November 8, 2005, for a general and special election to decide races for governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, and members of the Virginia House of Delegates. There will also be nine local bond questions on the ballot. Don't forget to vote!

## 12TH ASHBURN FARM 10K, 5K, 2K SET FOR THANKSGIVING MORNING

The 12th annual Ashburn Farm 10K, 5K, and 2K Fun Run is set for Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 24, 2005, 8:15 am sharp, at Crossroads United Methodist Church, corner of Crossroads Drive and Ashburn Farm Parkway in Ashburn Farm.

More than 1400 runners are expected to run the USATF-certified course. Cash prizes of \$300, \$200, and \$100 will be awarded to the top three male and female 10K run finishers. The top male and female 5K finishers will receive \$150, \$100, and \$50.

Registration is \$23 for the 10K if postmarked by Nov. 14 and \$30 after. The 5K is \$20 before Nov. 14 and \$25 after. The fun run is \$15 and does not increase.

Local merchants have donated many prizes for a random drawing to be held before and after the race. (Must be present to win.) A generous assortment of post-race foods and refreshments will also be served.

All proceeds from this event benefit The Humble Place mission, an orphanage and school founded by Crossroads UMC in Lukojjo, Uganda. For more information or to volunteer to help, call Crossroads UMC at 703/729-5100 or visit [www.ecrossroadsumc.org](http://www.ecrossroadsumc.org). Online registration is available at [www.active.com](http://www.active.com).

Mail or drop off entry forms with checks made payable to Crossroads UMC (note 10K in memo line) to Ashburn Farm 10K, Crossroads United Methodist Church, 43454 Crossroads Dr., Ashburn, VA 20147.

## FREE ANNUAL CREDIT REPORT

*Mark Wright*

As previously advised in the February/March issue of the Newsletter, you can order free copies of your Credit Report via [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com). You are entitled to receive one free credit file disclosure every 12 months from each of the nationwide consumer credit reporting companies—Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. This free credit file can be requested through the website, by phone, or by mail.

It is your choice whether you order all three credit file disclosures at the same time or order one now and others later. The advantage of ordering all three at the same time is that you can compare them. (However, you will not be eligible for another free credit file disclosure from the Central Source for 12 months.) On the other hand, the advantage of ordering one now and others later (for example, one credit file disclosure every four months) is that you can keep track of any changes or new information that may appear on your credit file disclosure.

## THE CRITTER CORNER

Dr. Steve Velling

### "Junk Food Dog"

A woman called me the other day, frantic that her six-month-old Labrador puppy, Max, was choking. I asked her if Max could have gotten into anything. She said Max had been eating a rawhide bone a short while earlier. I told her to check in the pup's mouth, and I heard her shout, "Oh, my gosh!" She was able to get her hand down the dog's mouth and hook her finger behind a large piece of rawhide wedged in there. Luckily, she was able to dislodge it. This woman and Max were both very fortunate. What if that had happened while Max was left alone?

Dogs get into all sorts of stuff that they shouldn't, but quite often they are given things they shouldn't have. Like every good dog owner, you want to make your dog happy, but how do you discern which toys and treats are safe? Some owners give their dogs just about anything under the sun—from worn out shoes and socks to steak and chicken bones left over from dinner. Others may pick out any toy that looks cute. Both groups unknowingly put their dogs at risk for choking, intestinal obstructions, or stomach and pancreatic infections, any of which may cause death.

Stuffed toys, socks, towels, in fact, anything that can be torn apart, can potentially be swallowed and cause

problems. I've seen dogs swallow socks whole and need them surgically removed.

What about rawhides, pig ears, or Nylabones? Rawhides are usually well-tolerated, but they may cause stomach upset, or become a choking hazard as mentioned earlier. It is best to observe your pooch if you give him or her one. Pig ears are trouble. Though dogs seem to love them, I've seen far too many dogs become very ill after eating them. Nylabones can also be dangerous. Made from nylon, these knobby bones are supposed to stand up to chewing, but if a dog bites off a large enough piece, this indigestible material could spell danger.

What should you leave with your dog to keep him or her occupied while you are gone? Provide only sturdy toys that won't shred, break up, or be swallowed whole. When it comes to dog toys, one size does not fit all.

Till next time, Dr. Steve

P.S. If you want to contribute money to help animal victims of Hurricane Katrina, go to [LVMA.org](http://LVMA.org).

### ADVERTISING RATES

Full details about advertising in the Newsletter are available at: <http://courtsandridges.org/Communications/Newsletter.html> or contact [communications@courtsandridges.org](mailto:communications@courtsandridges.org)

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