



Lafayette Village Community Association

December/January 2017 Newsletter

Thank You, LVCA Volunteers!

Our Association only works because we have a dedicated group of volunteers who have agreed to serve on the various committees guiding the community. As we start a new year, it appropriate that we take a minute to thank these volunteers who help make Lafayette Village a better place to live.

Our **Finance Committee** drafts the annual budget, monitors Association finances, and reviews the annual audit. Chaired by our Treasurer **Jim Franklin**, its members include **Kathie French, Nathan Switzer, and Collin Dewberry**.

Our **Architectural Control Committee** helps enforce our covenants and helps you ensure your exterior home and yard improvements meet our ACC Guidelines. Its members include chair **Angela Cutter, Tina Snapp, Bob Rosenbaum, Chas Ryan** and **Matthew Drown**.

Our **Grounds Committee** is responsible for maintaining and improving our common areas and assists in managing our grounds maintenance and trash collection contracts. Chaired by **Michael Nutbrown**, its members are **Anne Sansbury, Amanda Sansbury, John Alexander, Imran Amin, Gustavo Vega, Steve Longstreet, and Courtney Gorham**.

Our **Neighborhood Watch** committee is responsible for community security by establishing community patrols and providing crime prevention tips. Its members are chair **Steve Longstreet, Linda Boone, Donna Jacobson, Amanda Sansbury, Anne Sansbury, Ruth Furpahs, and Nathan Garcia**.

Our **Pool and Recreation** committee provides a liaison between pool patrons and the lifeguards and Atlantic Pool, our maintenance company, coordinates pool events, and manages reservations for the pool picnic pad. **Lisa Conoly** chairs this committee, and is assisted by many in setting up the various pool events, including **John and Pat Grant, Larry and Deborah Dunham, John Alexander, Angela Cutter, and Courtney Gorham**.

The **Communications Committee** is responsible for the website, newsletter, Nextdoor.com, and the community mailing list. It is chaired by **Carl Iddings**, who is assisted by all the newsletter article contributors and those who distribute the newsletter, including **Greg Johnson, Linda Boone, Kathie French, DJ Terreri, Imran Amin, Chris Karasiewicz, Christie Woodward, Tina Snapp, Larry Dunham, and John Wolken**.

When you see your neighborhood volunteers, give them a big thanks for all they do to help Lafayette Village be a great place to live!

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Notice to Tenants

If you are renting a home in Lafayette Village, your landlord or property manager should have given you a copy of the summary rules and regulations of Lafayette Village and asked you to sign an acknowledgement that you have received that copy and agree to comply with the Association's rules and regulations. You should receive this document annually.

The Association has contacted all absentee homeowners and provided them with the appropriate Tenant Information Disclosure documents. If your landlord or property manager has not given you the acknowledgement to sign, you may want to contact them.

You can find the form at

<http://www.lafayettevillage.org/docs/TenantInfoResolutionFinalSigned.pdf>.

Our Community Information...

LVCA Board Members

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Jim Franklin - Treasurer

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LVCA Committee Chairs

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Grounds – Mike Nutbrown

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Finance – Jim Franklin

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Sequoia Management Company

Dale Edwards

dedwards@sequoiangmt.com

Phone: 703-803-9641

Fax: 703-968-0936

Patriot Disposal Services

Phone: 703-257-7100

HOME OWNERS REMINDER!

First Quarter Assessments were due January 1, 2017.

If you did not received your 2016 coupon book and are not on an automatic payment plan, please contact Sequoia as soon as possible.. Remember that your assessment payment must reach Sequoia by the 15th of the month they are due, or you will be **assessed interest at 8% on your outstanding balance.**

LAFAYETTE VILLAGE COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

Monthly Meetings (Check Website for Details)

Board Meetings – 2nd Monday of month at 7:00 PM in the library at Mason Crest Elementary School, 3705 Crest Drive (January 9, February 13).

ACC Committee – 3rd Thursday of month at 7:00 PM at 3713 Yorktown Village Pass (January 19, February 16)

Grounds Committee – 4th Monday of month at 7:30 PM at 7920 Brunswick Forest Pass (January 23, February 27)

Finance Committee – Third Tuesday of month at 7:00PM at 3735 Yorktown Village Pass (January 3 (December makeup meeting), February 21)

Neighborhood Watch – Third Wednesday of month at 7:00pmat 7876 Hampton Village Pass (January 18, February 15).

Note that starting in January 2017, all Board meetings will be held in the library at Mason Crest Elementary School, 3705 Crest Drive, Annandale. Crest Drive is the first right off of Wayne Drive after the Gallows Road/Wayne Drive intersection.

All residents, including renters, are invited to attend scheduled meetings. Please check the website for the most current information: <http://www.lafayettevillage.org/>.



Dog License Renewal Deadline is January 31

The dog license fee is \$10 per dog and is good for one year (excluding service dogs, which receive licenses free of charge). All dogs four months old and up must be licensed. If your dog has been licensed in Fairfax County, but you didn't receive or misplaced your renewal letter, contact the Department of Tax Administration at 703-222-8234. If you are a new dog (looking at you, Dozer!), go to http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dta/dog_licenses.htm for details on how to become a licensed dog!

A note from the President:

At its January meeting, the Board began considering a resolution that documents its policy regarding basement apartments in Lafayette Village. As you may know, our covenants provide that “No portion of any dwelling (other than the entire dwelling) shall be leased.” Basement apartments are clearly a portion of a dwelling that has been leased separate from the entire dwelling. As part of its fiduciary duties, the Board enforces the provisions of our covenants. This new resolution the Board is considering explains exactly how the Board will enforce this provision.



The resolution explains what a basement apartment in Lafayette Village is, how basement apartments are identified, and what happens once a basement apartment has been identified. The Association may request the Fairfax County Office of Code Compliance investigate, but will send a violation notice to the homeowner requesting that the basement apartment cease operation, and may request the Association’s legal counsel send a letter to the homeowner. If the violation continues, the Board will schedule a hearing to give the homeowner an opportunity to respond to the alleged violation, and may ultimately take the homeowner to court over the covenant violation.

This resolution will be on the Board’s agenda at its February meeting. You can review this resolution on the website at <http://www.lafayettevillage.org/docs/ResolutionEstablishingLVCABoardPolicytoAddressBasementApartments-LegalReview.pdf>.

During 2017, LVCA Board meets on the 2nd Monday of each month

The LVCA Board of Directors meets the second Monday of the month in the library at **Mason Crest Elementary School**, 3705 Crest Drive, Annandale. Crest Drive is the first right off of Wayne Avenue after the Gallows Road intersection.

Our meeting schedule for 2017 is:

January 9	July 10
February 13	August 14
March 13	September 11
April 10	October 5
May 8	November 13
June 12	December 11

The Board hopes you can attend these meetings!

2017 LVCA Budget Keeps HOA Fees Unchanged

At its November meeting, the LVCA Board adopted the FY 2017 budget for the Association as recommended by the Finance Committee and presented to the membership at the October annual meeting. Once again, HOA fees will remain unchanged for 2016, at \$328 per quarter for town home owners and \$167 per quarter for detached home owners.

The 2017 Budget fully funds the Association’s reserve fund (to support future major projects) at \$88,000. The approved budget has been posted on the website at [http://www.lafayettevillage.org/docs/LVCA2016Budget\(Adopted\)11-9-2015.pdf](http://www.lafayettevillage.org/docs/LVCA2016Budget(Adopted)11-9-2015.pdf). Homeowners should have received a copy of the approved budget in the mail. Also, at the end of this newsletter is the Automatic Debit Form you can use to pay your HOA Fees electronically.

2017 Community Food Drive for Martin Luther King Day of Service a Success



Volunteers helping to load donated food for delivery

Each year since 2009, the Association has held an activity to support the Martin Luther King Day of Service. This year for the third year in a row, we held a food drive to benefit a local food bank. Thanks to generous residents, we delivered **388 pounds of food** to the Annandale Christian Community for Action (ACCA) Food Pantry.

The ACCA Food Pantry prepares and delivers boxes of a week’s worth of food to needy families in Annandale and Bailey’s Crossroads. Last year, the Pantry delivered over 800 boxes of food. To learn more about how ACCA helps Mason District, go to their website at <http://accacares.org/>.

And if you missed this year’s food drive, you can still participate by helping to “Stuff The Bus.” The countywide “Stuff the Bus” food drive will be collecting donations for the ACCA Food Pantry at the Annandale Giant Food at 7137 Columbia Pike on February 11.

Thank you to the volunteers who helped with this event: Bonnie Weiss, Vanessa Elsasser, Madonna Aveni, Jenny Lu, Jamie Ryan, Alex Ryan, and Omari Rochon and his family.



Committee Reports

Finance Committee and Treasurer's Annual Report – Jim Franklin, Chair

Overall Assessment: The community association fiscal position is strong and the outlook for 2017 is positive. Our financial position and budget projections are in line with past years and there is no need to increase dues nor do we foresee the need for any special assessments in the coming year.

- Funds are secured and in stable investment vehicles
- Sequoia Management has done an excellent job in managing our finances for 2016 and we expect the same in 2017
- Excellent budget discipline has resulted in a surplus in excess of budget forecast
- Property values have been steadily rising for the past two years indicating that our community is on solid financial and real property basis

Audit Outlook: We have implemented and followed all audit guidelines from the 2014-2015 audit with outstanding results in our financial management.

- We do not expect any significant audit findings for the 2015-2016 audit to be completed shortly
- The new reserve study may impact our financial oversight guidance, but we have already implemented sufficient replacement reserve amounts to ensure funding for all required infrastructure improvements and maintenance
- Financial management and oversight processes are in place to comply with auditing standards

Balance Sheet: Our financial position and value are in good shape. Our assets are secure with sufficient liquidity to provide all ordinary and emergency funding necessary for operations and future property/infrastructure enhancements.

- Operating Cash Maintenance: Sequoia has adhered to financial management guidelines strictly, and our operating cash position has been maintained to provide maximum fiscal returns on invested assets
- Debt/Equity: Our debt/liabilities remain very low, and our Debt/Equity ratio is an impressive 14.7 to 1
- Book Value: The association has a 2016 year-end book value/net worth (Assets less Liabilities) of \$515K

Statement of Income: Financial operations for 2016 resulted in a surplus resulting from good budget and operational spending discipline.

- 2016 Surplus: \$41,451 (\$33K over budget projection)
- 2016 Revenue: \$4,267 Over Forecast (due to interest income and legal reimbursement)
- 2016 Expenses: \$29,402 Under Forecast (due to Maintenance)

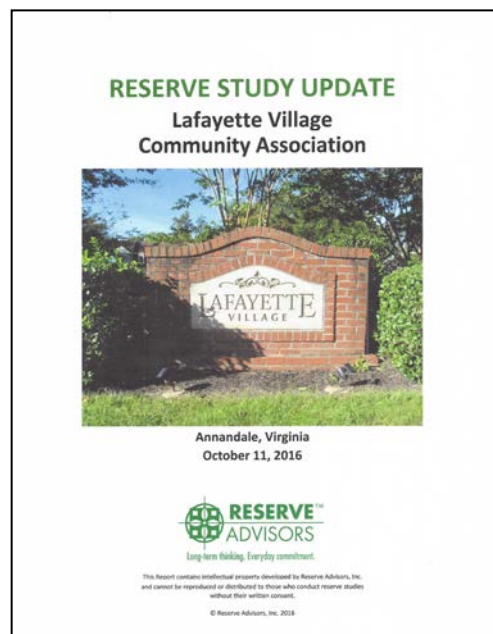
Reserve Fund Status and Outlook: The recently completed Reserve Study increased our Replacement Reserve Fund requirements, and the new amounts have been budgeted for 2017.

- 2016 Replacement Reserve Balance Required: \$518,859
- 2016 Cash Reserve on Hand \$518,054
- Slight Underfunding (To be Corrected in End of Year Adjustments) (\$ 805)

The new Reserve Study is on the website at <http://www.lafayettevillage.org/docs/LVCA2016ReserveStudy.pdf>.

Key Watch Items and Events Forecast: No significant watch items have arisen in 2016; however, a few items bear watching in the coming year.

- Snow Removal: We have budgeted for the equivalent of two major storms, but no matter what happens this snow season, we have adequate cash surplus to deal with any snow removal requirement.
- Pool Expenses: 2016 pool expenses exceeded budget for valid reasons, but we will monitor the pool operation closely this season to ensure efficient funds use.
- Legal Fees: 2016 legal expenses exceeded budget by \$2,288 but legal reimbursements made up for it. However, we will continue to monitor the legal expenses through 2017.



New Reserve Study Now Available on the Website

Committee Reports, continued....

- Maintenance Coding: The overall maintenance expenses were \$26,274 under budget, but several line items were not within budget guidelines. We will monitor the coding of actual expenses to ensure that the accounting for funds disbursement is aligned to budgetary guidance.

Pool and Recreation Committee – Lisa Conoly, Chair

The pool closed on Labor Day after a busy summer. Some highlights of the season included:

- We had a fantastic lifeguard staff led by Manager Kevin and including Jordan, Petr, and Alex.
- We completed a project to freshen up the interior of the pool house including painting, a new counter, new restroom partitions, new screen doors, and some light fixtures.
- New plantings were installed in front of the pool house.
- We began a twice-a-week water aerobics program. We've been trying to get this program going for a couple years and are happy with the participation level it received. Look for the program to return next year.
- We held two cookouts, one to kick-off the pool season and one to say goodbye to the summer, with the Association providing burgers, hotdogs, chips, condiments and bottled water.
- We held two of the always-popular "Swim Under the Stars" nights. We turned on the pool lights, turned up the music, and kept the pool open late.
- We hosted our second adults only "Wine and Cheese Mixer". We kept the pool open late for the one night of the summer reserved exclusively for the adults in the community to have a drink with their neighbors in our wonderful patio area. Attendance at this event doubled over our first year.
- Several families took advantage of the opportunity to reserve the pool picnic pad for small parties. This opportunity is available to all residents in good standing.
- We continued our Reader's Exchange bookcase. Readers can take a book they'd like to read or leave a book they'd like to share.

Thank you to the many people who volunteered their time and talents to make our events successful. And thank you to everyone who helped make this a safe and enjoyable pool season for all of us.

Remember to save your pool passes for reuse next year so you don't have to pay for replacement passes. Look for the 2017 Pool Pass Application in the April/May newsletter.

The pool continues to be a great gathering place for the community. We hope to continue to make improvements and add events to enhance this wonderful resource. If you have comments or suggestions regarding the pool, please email me at lisac_234@hotmail.com.

Architectural Control Committee (ACC) – Angela Cutter, Chair

Following the spring 2016 inspection, about 130 homes received notices from Sequoia, containing over 300 violations.

Thanks to great cooperation from everyone, we're down to only 27 homes with a total of 39 violations.

We'll always have those few people who don't want to abide by HOA guidelines, often landlords who don't actually live in the community and who don't seem to care about even routine maintenance. Or whose tenants are unaware of the neighborhood expectations.

Thankfully most people are proactive about taking care of their homes. Apart from approving a dozen new roofs and



Thanks to the ACC and responsible homeowner, Lafayette Village remains an attractive community.

Committee Reports, continued....

half a dozen new fences, the ACC has fielded numerous requests for minor repairs in the past 6 months. Maybe the 2017 spring inspection will result in a whole lot fewer violations than 2016.

There were some minor adjustments to the ACC Guidelines this year. Most were to fix incorrect cross references or to remove confusing language, but please be sure to check them out on the website before you undertake exterior work, to see if prior approval is required. Especially if you're new to living in an HOA community like Lafayette Village. Like them or loathe them, HOAs help to maintain the integrity and appearance of a community, while protecting your investment.

My daughter lives in a small townhome community in Centreville that has a weak Board of Directors and almost no enforcement of architectural concerns. In the 5 years she's lived there, the houses have become a hodgepodge of misguided exterior improvements. No doubt the homeowners thought they were improving their property, but having no oversight has led to some very strange choices.

And each year more people are leaving the huge, rolling trash cans they're required to use in the front yard - it's about 50% at this point. After all, why roll yours out of sight if your neighbors don't bother and there's no enforcement?

Needless to say, every time I visit I'm reminded of how lucky we are to have such an active BOD and management company. I know I often reference trash issues – perhaps I see it as the thin end of the wedge. Following trash guidelines costs no money but shows consideration for your neighbors. It sends a message to everyone who comes through here that the residents of LV take pride in their property and have respect for each other.

So thank you to everyone who takes violation notices in the spirit in which they're issued. They're a heads up for potential problems with your home and a reminder that everyone has to do their part for the good of the whole.

And now that winter's upon us, please remove all gardening items, (like bags of mulch, rows of empty plant pots, tools, etc.) from the front of your home.

Finally, there has been talk of security cameras in the neighborhood. As yet, the ACC hasn't drafted any language concerning cameras on the exterior of homes, although Reg. 1.26 does require approval from the ACC prior to installing visible security devices. Our primary concern is that these be discreet in size and location.

Personally, I'd be sorry to see cameras and signs popping up all over the neighborhood. In 30 years of living here I've always felt perfectly safe walking dogs at any time of the night, have heard of only 3 home break-ins in that time, and no car thefts or violence against residents. It's understandable that people want to protect their property but I'd be sad if we sent the message that this is a dangerous place to live.

Communications Committee – Carl Iddings, Chair

This Report summarizes the activities of the LVCA Communications committee during 2016.

- **Newsletter**
 - Since the 2015 annual meeting, edited and distributed five newsletters (December, April, June, August and October), totaling 67 pages.
 - The cost of printing these five newsletters was roughly \$1777.59, spread across two fiscal years.
 - The newsletter printed numerous articles written by residents, committee reports written by the chairs of the various committees, contractor recommendations, and advertisements submitted by residents. It included photos submitted by residents.
- **Website**
 - Updated regularly with meeting schedules, contact information, and various LVCA documents, such as Board minutes, LVCA Newsletters, the annual budget, etc.
 - The cost of hosting the website is \$179.40 per year.
 - The domain name maintenance charge for three years beginning June 2016 is \$113.97. Total cost of the website is \$293.37.

Committee Reports, continued....

• Mailing list

- Approximately 47 announcements sent to LVCA mailing list. These announcements address general LVCA news and announcements of possible interest to our residents. During the winter months, snow announcements provide updates about the status of snow removal.
- Approximately 304 separate email addresses are on the LVCA mailing list.
- Announcements have also been posted on the Association's Nextdoor.com social network.

The Communications Committee has a number of volunteer distributors, the folks who distribute the newsletter door-to-door. During the past year, these included Kathie and Bill French, Mike Loudon, Christie Woodward, Tina Snapp, Linda Boone, DJ Terreri, John Wolken, Nathan Garcia, Greg Johnson, Chris Karasiewicz and Larry Dunham. A special thanks goes out to these individuals.

Grounds Committee – Mike Nutbrown, Chair

By the time this newsletter reaches you our autumn tree pruning and removal project will be complete. We managed to address all of the resident requests for pruning and removal this season within budget which we were very happy about. We've decided to put off new plantings until early spring since it was taking too long to get quotes back from vendors and we didn't want to plant too late.

We've added stepping stones and gravel along most of the retaining walls on Butterfield – this work was completed by year's end. This completes the new wall project at the bottom of the Butterfield hill and makes other areas nearby on Butterfield more walkable.

Late in the fall, we coordinated a volunteer effort to reseed areas around the neighborhood. Some of these areas took better than others, but I believe overall it was a worthwhile effort. I expect to try again in the spring to enhance the areas that took and take another crack at those that didn't. Special thanks to those who pitched in: Imran Amin, Amanda Sansbury, Jenny Lu, and Steve Chao. Also thanks to those residents who made the effort to water the seed near their houses.

We're always open for new members of the community who have an interest in the maintenance and beautification of our grounds to join the grounds committee and help make it a better place for everyone. If you are interested, please send me an email at grounds@lafayettevillage.org.



New gravel and pavers behind Butterfield Lane

Neighborhood Watch Committee – Steve Longstreet

Over the last six months the neighborhood experienced a range of crimes from car break-ins, a home burglary and even someone arrested down by the multipurpose court. It's important we work to keep ourselves and neighbors safe especially as we continue into the Holiday season. Here are a few things we should all continue to work on

1.) Get the police involved.

- If you see something suspicious - please err on the side of caution and call 911
- If you are the victim of a crime - report it to Fairfax County Police either by calling directly, or using the online citizen reporting tool for things like vandalism or car break-ins <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/reportcrime/>

2.) Keep valuables out of your cars and your car doors locked. The less incentive we give criminals to come back into the neighborhood, the better off we'll be

3.) Take extra steps with home security.

- Make sure your doors and windows are locked
- Consider a security bar for your rear sliding door

Committee Reports, continued....

- Ask a trusted neighbor to keep an eye on your house if you're away for a few days
- Don't advertise you're out of town. Save your stories and pictures on facebook, instagram and twitter for when your back at home. Don't tell your Uber Driver you're out of town for X days. Keep your vacation a secret
- I recommend the following checklists for anyone planning a vacation
 - <http://www.protectedhome.com/checklist-for-leaving-home.html>
 - <http://simplisafe.com/blog/vacation-check-list>

Also - if you're interested in joining the neighborhood watch or helping to coordinate neighborhood security - please contact me at slongstreet@gmail.com

We are fortunate to live in a community relatively free of serious crime. With your help and the Neighborhood Watch, we can keep it that way.

Preparing for Winter – Information you can use...

Winter will arrived (we think)!

After last year's snow removal meltdown after the January blizzard, the Board contracted with Peter's Landscape, Inc. to provide snow removal services to Lafayette Village this snow season. You may recall that Peter's was the company that finally cleared snow from Association streets after repeated delays from Blade Runners. The snow removal protocol remains much the same as in previous years:



The Snows of Yesteryear!

- If winter weather advisory is issued for our area that predicts snow in excess of 2 inches, Peters will wait to see that we receive at least the predicted amount. **In addition, for larger snowstorms, Peter's will pre-position snow removal equipment in our pool parking lot.**
- When the snow depth reaches two inches, Peter's will begin plowing operations, unless it appears the total snow amount will be considerably more. Once the snow has stopped and our roads are clear, Peter's may apply sand and calcium chloride to our streets to minimize icing.
- If we have the dreaded wintry mix – snow, rain, sleet, and ice – making the roads treacherous, Peter's will begin to apply a sand and de-icer mixture to our roads. The de-icer used is efficient at melting snow and ice, while being more environmentally friendly than alternatives, including salt.

Merrimac Trail is plowed by contractors who work for VDOT. Merrimac Trail residents can monitor the status of plowing on a VDOT website, www.vdotplows.org.

The Association will continue to give you updates as they're received about snow removal through the LVCA email list and Nextdoor.com.

If you do not already subscribe to the email list, now is a good time to begin – send your email address to lvcawebmaster@lafayettevillage.org and request to be added to the mailing. You'll then be assured of getting the latest snow updates this winter, as well as other valuable notices. You'll also receive an invitation to join LafayetteVillage.NextDoor. These alerts will keep you informed about winter events!

Snow Shoveling:

As a resident of Lafayette Village, you are responsible for shoveling the sidewalks in front of your home, as well as the sidewalk to your front door and your driveway. Peter's will be responsible for clearing the sidewalks on Lafayette Village Drive and Trammell Road next to Association property.

Preparing for Winter, continued...

Shoveling snow or picking up large debris such as fallen branches can be physically demanding and can lead to injuries such as sprains and strains. Please follow these safety tips when you clean up after our wintery weather:

- Shovel small amounts of snow at a time.
- Push the snow instead of lifting where possible.
- Use proper form if lifting is necessary: keeping your back straight and lift with your legs.
- If you have a history of heart disease, do not shovel without your doctor's okay.
- Avoid shoveling under snow and ice covered trees and roof lines due to possibly falling limbs, ice and snow.
- Take breaks while shoveling and do not overexert yourself, especially if you are inactive or over 40.
- Dress in layers and wear warm clothing and appropriate footwear.
- Watch where you are walking, even a little bit of snow can hide curbs and uneven walkways.
- Take off your boots or use a floor mat when you go back inside to avoid making floors slippery and hazardous.

More winter preparedness information can be found at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/hazards/winter-storm-snow-cold.html.

VDOT's Got Your Back this Winter – The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is the state agency that controls and maintains the roads in Fairfax County, and clears our public streets of snow. Drivers and residents may prepare for the year's first snowfall by adding VDOT Winter Resources to mobile devices to get information about road conditions while at home or work:

- See the real-time status of plowing in Northern Virginia neighborhoods: www.vdotplows.org;
- Follow [@VaDOTNOVA](https://twitter.com/VaDOTNOVA) on Twitter, and for real-time traffic updates and road conditions, call 511, follow [@511northernva](https://twitter.com/511northernva), use the [511app](#) or visit www.511virginia.org;
- Report unplowed roads and other issues to my.vdot.virginia.gov or 800-FOR-ROAD (367-7623);
- Get general snow removal information at www.virginiadot.org/travel/snow.asp;
- Visit www.virginiadot.org/novaemergency to access all of VDOT's online information resources

Winter maintenance tips:

With winter approaching, here are some tips to help you prepare your home for the upcoming season:

1. **Turn off the water supply to your outside faucets:** Every winter, one or two Lafayette Village homes suffer the consequences of burst water pipes leading to the homes' outside faucets (also called hose bibbs). Be sure to turn off the water supply to these faucets, then drain the water from your outside faucets. The shut-off valve should be located in your utility room, somewhere above the main water supply shut-off and pressure reducing valve. Once you've located the shut off valve, it's a good idea to label it for future use.
2. **Change your furnace air filter:** If you don't regularly change your furnace air filter, now is a good time to replace it. Townhomes with the original furnaces use 16x25x1 filters; Merrimac Trail homes use 20x25x1 filters. If your heating system has been upgraded, you may be using a different size filter. Air filters can be found at Home Depot, Lowes, or other hardware stores. Clean filters help your furnace (and air conditioner) work more efficiently.
3. **Schedule an inspection of your heating system:** It's always a good practice to have your heating system inspected once a year. There are a number of heating and air conditioning specialists in the area, but all will perform the basics:
 - Inspect and clean the blower assembly
 - Check and clean the combustion blower housing for debris and clean as necessary
 - Inspect for gas leaks
 - Inspect the burner assembly and clean and adjust it as necessary
 - Inspect the heat exchanger or heating elements



Burst water pipe

Preparing for Winter, continued...

4. **Clean your fireplace chimney:** If you use your fireplace regularly, it's a good practice to have your fireplace chimney cleaned once a season. This will prevent creosote buildup, a potential source of a chimney fire. Plus the chimney sweep service will inspect your chimney and recommend any repairs that may be needed to ensure the chimney works correctly.
5. **Check your CO detector:** Experts recommend installing a Carbon monoxide detector near your furnace, perhaps just outside your furnace room. If you don't have one, you can purchase one at Home Depot, Lowes, or other hardware stores. If you do have one installed, you should test it monthly. These monitors are sealed units with a limited lifespan. If yours is approaching the end of its life, you may want to replace it before it fails (and starts beeping with annoying regularity!). Also, see the article below about replacing your hard-wired smoke detectors with a new dual-function CO and smoke detector.



And not a maintenance tip, but good advice: if you will be leaving your home this winter for a long vacation or trip, consider shutting off and draining your home's water supply before you leave. You won't have to worry about flooding out your house should a leak develop while you're away.

Community Ads and Notices.....

Mark Rhodes, Interior Painting: We had Mark Rhodes come to paint in our townhouse. We got his name from this newsletter and would like to compliment him on such a neat, professional and pleasant-to-work-with job he did. **Mark Rhodes: 703-560-8329**

Kids First Day Care: Kids First day care provider for kids 0-4 years old. For more information please call Maha at (703)347-2876 (9am-5pm) Maha_kidsfirst@yahoo.com.

Don't Be Snowed In! With winter here, **you may want to line up backup child care now to be ready for school closures due to inclement weather.**

The Office for Children maintains a database of regulated child care programs in Fairfax County on its website www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc. Many of these child care businesses offer the option of occasional or back-up care. This includes hundreds of county permitted and state licensed family child care providers.

To make inclement weather days easier, plan ahead and arrange for care now. **You can search the list of snow day providers at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc/snowdaysproviders.htm.** Visit a few programs ahead of time to see which child care situation will work best on snow days. Then when bad weather hits, you'll have a number of child care programs to choose from.

For additional help, call the Office for Children at 703-449-8484, TTY 711

Notary Service Available: Notarial services are available from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Office of Mason District Supervisor Penny Gross, located in the Mason District Governmental Center, 6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale. **Please call 703-256-7717 to schedule an appointment.**

How to replace your existing hard-wired smoke detector.....

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends replacing smoke alarms every 10 years (see <http://www.nfpa.org/public-education/by-topic/smoke-alarms/installing-and-maintaining-smoke-alarms>.) Most homes in Lafayette Village have hardwired smoke alarms installed on the ground and top floors of town homes and various places in detached homes. However, those smoke alarms are now over 30 years old and should be replaced. If you are comfortable doing small electrical repairs (replacing a plug receptacle or installing a new light switch), replacing your smoke alarms is an easy task, taking no more than 15 minutes.



Example of an original smoke alarm

If you chose to replace your smoke alarms, you should replace all of them at the same time – hardwired smoke alarms are normally interconnected (as are the originals), so that if one alarm sounds, all alarms in the house will sound. Also, if you are not comfortable around electricity, you should make sure power to the smoke alarm you're working on has been turned off. You can do that at your electrical panel, located in your basement. (If you are lucky, you have already labeled each circuit breaker.) Turn off the one that provides power to the smoke alarm and other electrical fixtures on the same circuit

I purchased two Kidde FireX combination smoke alarm and carbon monoxide (CO) detector, model KN-COPE1. I chose this model because it detected both smoke and carbon monoxide, had separate warnings for either event, and had a front loading battery backup system, in the event of a power failure. Each alarm cost about \$50 at Home Depot. This model is also available online for around \$40.



Here is the smoke alarm I purchased, fresh from its packaging.

From the left, you see the base plate to which the smoke alarm attaches, the wiring harness that connects the house electricity to the smoke alarm, and the smoke alarm itself showing the backup battery door in open position. Not all models have a backup battery.



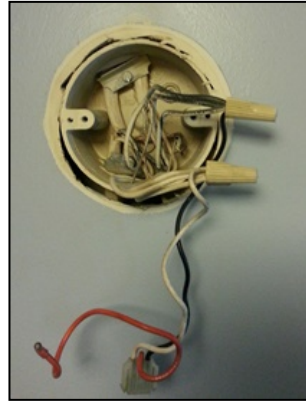
If your new smoke alarm does have a battery, remove any protective plastic covering it, replace it in its container, and close the container door.

To remove the old smoke detector, twist it counter-clockwise until it comes apart. You will see the wire harness coming out of the wall, consisting of red, black and white wires. The wire harness plugs into the smoke alarm and has connecting clips on both sides securing the plug to the alarm. Grasp the plug on either side and squeeze the connecting clips together to remove the plug.

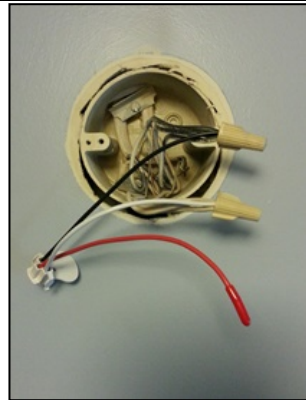


How to replace your existing hard-wired smoke detector, continued

Using a flathead screwdriver, unscrew the smoke alarm base plate and remove it from the wall or ceiling. Save the two screws, which you will use to attach the new connecting plate later. Pull the twist-on wire connectors out of the electrical box



Unscrew the two wire connectors – mine were yellow, and discard the old wire harness. Position the black wire from the new wire harness next to the black wire in the junction box and screw the wire connector onto both wires until you have a firm connection – the wires will not pull out of the connector. Do the same with the white wire from the new harness, connecting it to the white (or yellowed) wire in the junction box.



You do not do anything with the red wire.

Push the wire connectors back into the junction box. Then using the screws you saved earlier, attach the smoke alarm base to the junction box, making sure the wire harness connector goes through the center of the base.



You are almost done!

Attach the harness connector to the prongs on the back of the smoke alarm. The connector will snap in with an audible click. You will see a green light on the front of the smoke alarm, indicating it is powered up and active.



Once powered, my smoke alarm went through a power-on test, testing both the smoke alarm circuits and warning and the carbon monoxide circuits and warning.

How to replace your existing hard-wired smoke detector, continued

Push the wires back into the junction box, and connect the smoke alarm to its base, turning it clockwise until it's fully connected to the base. The green light indicates that the smoke detector is powered and functioning.

Congratulations – you have successfully replaced your existing wired smoke alarm with a new smoke detector that will last you for the next ten years!



You can dispose of your old hard-wired smoke detector in the trash – these models do not use radioactive isotopes that can require special handling. Remember to change the battery in your new smoke detector twice a year, and to test your smoke detector monthly.

Goings on About Town.....

2017 Native Seedling Sale: Fall Color

The Northern Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District's annual seedling sale makes low-cost bare-root native shrub and tree seedlings available to Northern Virginia residents. This year's sale features shrubs and trees that will add lovely fall color to your garden. They help clean our water and air, prevent soil erosion, provide valuable habitat, and add beauty and resilience to your landscape. The Shrub and Small Tree Package features 10 seedlings for \$16.95. The Tree Package includes 6 seedlings sold for \$11.95. **Online orders begin on February 1.** Seedlings may be picked up April 21-22 at the Packard Center in

Annandale. View online seedling sale store: <http://nvsxcd-velocitypayment-com.3dcartstores.com/>.



Photo © Heather Chalmers
Bald Cypress -- one of the native trees available for purchase

Why we prohibit putting your household trash in community trash cans:

This photo shows why the Association prohibits putting your household trash in community trash cans.

Someone missed the normal trash collection day, and decided to dump their trash into the community trash can near Brunswick Forest Trail. The result was an overflowing trash can, three days before the next scheduled trash collection. By trash day, plastic bag filled with dog waste overflowed the can, and the trash can cover blew across the road, getting crushed by a passing vehicle. It was an unsightly, unpleasant mess. And the Association will need to replace the trash can lid at some point.

The Association provides all residents with twice weekly trash collection. If you miss the trash truck one day, another trash collection day will soon arrive. Please do not dispose of your household trash in the community trash cans – they serve a different purpose.



Lafayette Village Homeowners Association

AUTHORIZATION AGREEMENT FOR DIRECT PAYMENTS (ACH DEBITS)

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

****Instead of completing this form, you may include a voided check and sign and date the form****

I (We) hereby authorize Lafayette Village Homeowners Association, hereinafter called "ASSOCIATION", to initiate debit entries to my (our) Checking or Savings account (select one) indicated below at the depository financial institution named below, hereinafter called "DEPOSITORY", and to debit the same to such account.

DEPOSITORY NAME: _____ BRANCH: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

ROUTING NUMBER: _____ BANK ACCOUNT NUMBER: _____
(Located on the bottom of your check)

This authorization is to remain in full force and effect until ASSOCIATION has received **written notification** from me (us) of its termination in such time and in such manner as to afford ASSOCIATION and DEPOSITORY a reasonable opportunity to act on it.

NAME(S): _____ LAFAYETTE VILLAGE ACCOUNT NUMBER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

DATE: _____ SIGNED: _____ SIGNED: _____

MAIL the completed form to: **Sequoia Management**
13998 Parkeast Circle
Chantilly, VA 20151-2283