

# RANSOM OAKS NEWS

A Neighborhood Publication

Sponsored by Ransom Oaks Community Corporation and Our Advertisers

www.RansomOaks.com

2013 Thirty-Three Years of Ransom Oaks News

February 2013

Ransom Oaks Community Corporation • 101 Ransom Oaks Drive • East Amherst, New York 14051

## And the Winner Is...

Benedict Gregory III of 39 White Cedar Drive.

Mr. Gregory won a free ROCC assessment for 2013. His proxy was drawn from all those submitted for the ROCC election.

In order to ensure that a quorum of 100 ballots/proxies is submitted for the election, the ROCC exempts one residence, drawn at random, from the ballots and proxies submitted.

It pays to vote!! ■

## Ransom Oaks Who-to-Call

**INFORMATION** If you have questions, problems, comments, or concerns:

- **Charlesgate or Glen Oak**  
Clover Management, 688-4503
- **Briarwoods, Forest Edge, or Woodgate**  
Andruschat Real Estate Service, 688.4757
- **Ransom Oaks Architectural Matters**  
(regarding Single-family homes ONLY!)  
Mike Deck, 689.0988
- **Ransom Oaks Facilities Manager**  
(including Clubhouse Rentals) Tom and Kathy Halter, 691.7352
- **Comments** President of R.O.C.C.,  
Mark Walsh, 636.6242
- **Vandalism, Animal Control or Security Concerns** Amherst Police, 689.1311
- **Swormville Fire**, 688.7055

## Board of Director's Meeting Highlights January 14, 2013

### Topics raised were:

- Five residents attended the meeting.
- Election results can be found elsewhere in this Newsletter.
- Currently, we are right on budget for 2012 and expect no significant changes. This was achieved despite approximately \$50,000 of unplanned pool repairs by adjusting other expenditures.
- Approximately 150 assessments have been paid already. The assessments are due by February 28.
- Apparently the Babysitter list has some obsolete entries. We will "scrub" the list to make it current.
- We will host a Town of Amherst "Imagination Station" at one of our Rec. Centers this summer. More details to come.
- We know of three residents that did not receive the January Newsletter. If you did not receive the Newsletter, please contact the Board Secretary.
- The Architectural Committee acted 5 times in the period from December 23 to January 10. ■



## The Ransom Oaks Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of Ransom Oaks Community Corporation was held on Monday January 14, 2013.

The meeting included the election of three (3) members to the Board (for a three year term each)

### The candidates that received the most votes:

- **James Golding (Incumbent)**
- **Forrest Benson (Incumbent)**
- **Peter Calinski (Incumbent)**

There is no change to the board membership as a result of the election. However, board member, Dennis Thompson has moved out of state so there is a vacancy.

Any resident in good standing that has an interest in joining the board should contact Board *President*, Mark Walsh. ■



## In This Issue

- 2 **Ransom Oaks Board of Directors**
- 3 **Facilities Report:** Tom & Kathy Halter
- 4 **Selling Your Home:** Maureen Mirand
- 5 **Medical Identity Theft:** Bill Barber
- 6 **Totes:** ROCC Board of Directors
- 7 **Window Facts:** Mark Mayle
- 9 **Car Corner:** Bruce Weiss

## Happy Birthday!

### February Friends



<b>Matthew Lyskana</b> .....	<b>10</b>
February 5	
<b>Michael Brown</b> .....	<b>25</b>
February 7	
<b>Meredith Cook</b> .....	<b>23</b>
February 12	
<b>Emilio Marong</b> .....	<b>20</b>
February 15	
<b>Nithya Priya Ramalingam</b> .....	<b>22</b>
February 16	
<b>Elana Lesse</b> .....	<b>22</b>
February 16	
<b>Molly Ferguson</b> .....	<b>21</b>
February 22	
<b>Michelle Sawaya</b> .....	<b>21</b>
February 23	
<b>Matthew Berus</b> .....	<b>19</b>
February 25	
<b>Oliver Jackson</b> .....	<b>19</b>
February 26	
<b>Papa Goeckel</b> .....	<b>??</b>
February 26	
<b>Emily Gnozzo</b> .....	<b>12</b>
February 26	
<b>Eyob Marshall</b> .....	<b>7</b>
February 27	
<b>Thomas Jackson</b> .....	<b>14</b>
February 27	
<b>Marcia Wells</b> .....	<b>??</b>
February 28	
<b>Lemony Snicket</b> .....	<b>43</b>
February 28	

### Happy Belated Birthday to:

**Gabriella Mirand** .....

**8**  
January 21

Join the list! Send your name and birth date (and age if you prefer) to [jkursten@ransomoaks.com](mailto:jkursten@ransomoaks.com). The list will remain on file and printed annually unless you request to be removed. Please let us know if someone has moved. ■

## Ransom Oaks Board of Directors

RANSOM OAKS is a planned community of 1,100 families. We value its location and believe it is a great place to live and raise a family.

<b>Mark Walsh, President</b>	636.6242	<a href="mailto:mwalsh@ransomoaks.com">mwalsh@ransomoaks.com</a>
<b>Gene Zambarda, Vice President</b>	689.0924	<a href="mailto:gzambarda@ransomoaks.com">gzambarda@ransomoaks.com</a>
<b>Jim Golding, Treasurer</b>	689.4919	<a href="mailto:jgolding@ransomoaks.com">jgolding@ransomoaks.com</a>
<b>Pete Calinski, Secretary</b>	688.1871	<a href="mailto:pcalinski@ransomoaks.com">pcalinski@ransomoaks.com</a>
<b>Michael Deck, Architectural</b>	689.0988	<a href="mailto:mdeck@ransomoaks.com">mdeck@ransomoaks.com</a>
<b>Tom Meldrum, Landscaping</b>	639.7364	<a href="mailto:tmeldrum@ransomoaks.com">tmeldrum@ransomoaks.com</a>
<b>James Burke, P/R Communications</b>	913.8381	<a href="mailto:jburke@ransomoaks.com">jburke@ransomoaks.com</a>
<b>Forrest Benson, At Large</b>	688.4688	<a href="mailto:fbenson@ransomoaks.com">fbenson@ransomoaks.com</a>
<b>Vacant, Facilities</b>		

**RANSOM OAKS COMMUNITY CORPORATION (R.O.C.C.)** Board of Directors consists of volunteer residents who are elected to office by a vote of the ROCC membership. The Board meets monthly at the Greenwood Drive Recreation Area, see calendar. Residents are welcome and encouraged to attend. ■

## Ransom Oaks Staff

<b>Kathy &amp; Tom Halter, Facilities Managers</b>	691.7352	<a href="mailto:thalter@ransomoaks.com">thalter@ransomoaks.com</a>
<b>Jennifer Kursten, News Editor/Designer</b>	434.0994	<a href="mailto:jkursten@ransomoaks.com">jkursten@ransomoaks.com</a>





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## Ransom Oaks

# Facilities Report

Did you know that Ransom Oaks has a five year plan for projects and repairs? The board of directors, Kathy and I have put together a plan every year since 1997. Well, the board has asked us to fill you in on where the current five year plan stands.

The plan is reviewed by a sub-committee of the board of directors twice a year to review the status of projects. The current year budget has \$34,000 set aside for several projects to be completed in 2013. We are currently working on bids for the 2013 projects. Below is the current five year plan for your review. Please feel free to email your comments or suggestion to any board member or attend a future board meeting, which are held on the second Monday of the month 6:30 PM at the Greenwood building.

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### Five Year Capital Improvement Plan

*The goal of the five-year plan is to put together a list of projects and items that can and should be accomplished in Ransom Oaks. They will not only add to the value of the facilities, but also add to the value of living in Ransom Oaks. This list should be ongoing with new ideas to keep our community alive and growing with the area around us.*

---

A parallel project to the five year plan is the reserve study which was completed in 2010 and has been updated recently with forecasted projects through 2020. The reserve study is being reviewed by the board and will be discussed at the February meeting.

Both the five year plan and reserve study a tools used to assisted the board of directors in the decision making process that help ensure that property values stay strong in Ransom Oaks.

Just a reminder that assessment on all properties in Ransom Oaks is due by February 28. The amount for 2013 is \$294.00 and \$59.47 for Old Meadow residents. The assessment supports the pools, tennis courts, playgrounds, community buildings, maintenance on common grounds, newsletter and website.

If you are refinancing or selling your property the 2013 assessment MUST be paid prior to Ransom Oaks supplying any proof of payment documents. Lastly, now is the time to send us your resume if you are interested in a Life Guard position this coming season. Qualified applicants should send their resume to Kathy Halter, 38 Maricrest Drive, Amherst, NY 14228. Please include copies of your CPR (for the Professional) as well as your Life Guard certificate.

Tom and Kathy Halter  
Ransom Oaks Facilities Managers  
716.691.7352 ■



## Improvements projected for the next Five Years

### 2013

- Remodel Greenwood community room
- Replace pool heater Ransom Oaks
- Drain tile behind Ransom Oaks pool
- Tree removal behind Ransom Oaks
- Shelter for Glen Oaks playground
- Replace fencing at Ransom Oaks
- Security system Greenwood

### 2014

- Rehab Eveningwood playground
- Resurface Ransom Oaks tennis court
- Reseal Bramhill Court
- Replace fencing at Ransom Oaks
- Remodel community room Ransom Oaks
- Replace Greenwood hot water tank

### 2015

- Replace furnace and air conditioning Greenwood
- Replace fencing at Ransom Oaks
- Greenwood marcite both pools
- Resurface tennis court Greenwood
- Rehab Eveningwood playground

### 2016

- Replace pools cover Eveningwood
- Replace fencing at Ransom Oaks
- Replace fencing at Greenwood
- Replace awning Greenwood
- Swing replacement Ransom Oaks

### 2017

- Replace fencing at Ransom Oaks
- Replace fencing at Greenwood
- Swing replacement Ransom Oaks
- Replacement sign at all buildings
- Replace hot water tanks Ransom Oaks
- Replace bathroom fixtures Greenwood
- Install sidewalk at Glen Oak playground ■

## 3 Tips for selling your home in 2013

*After years of stable or declining home values, and, in some areas a buyers' market, 2013 could be the year of the seller.*

Though the situation can vary even within neighboring areas of the county, we've seen promise for sellers and the housing market in general over the past six months. Homes that didn't move started getting activity as buyers came off the sidelines, their confidence in the housing market and their financial situations greatly improved. That confidence, coupled with record low interest rates and rising rents has been the fuel the real estate market needed. Add to this the low inventory seen in many markets, and you've got buyers motivated to make a purchase.

If 2013 might be your year to sell, start planning, engaging professionals and doing as much of the legwork as soon as possible. You only have one chance to be "Just Listed" in this new market. More than ever, you've got to put your best foot forward when presenting your home to motivated buyers.

Here are three things you can do now to transition from homeowner to successful home seller.

### 1. Know the comps

One of the first people you'll want to

connect with is a competent real estate agent. They are your "feet on the street" and have their finger on the market's pulse. Real estate agents generally pick up on trends or shifts in your particular neighborhood or market before the press or the bloggers.

Start going to open houses to see what's selling. Get a feel for values and how homes are being presented. Likely a home you see at an open house in February could sell by the time you list in May or June. Future buyers will probably use this home as a "comparable" sale. Having seen the "comps" yourself puts you in the buyers' mindset. It enables you to get ahead of the curve or learn from the mistakes of other sellers.

### 2. Have your property inspected

The buyer, after they have a signed contract on a home, is supposed to pay for an inspection, right? While that's true, you can beat them to the punch and know what needs to be repaired before you go on the market.

Imagine if you list your home and have a great offer from a solid buyer. What if the buyer finds out through the inspection that the roof needs replacement and the deck has dry rot? That excellent offer may not seem so great if you have to negotiate thousands of dollars in credits with the buyer.

Having your property inspected

months in advance will allow you time to make a plan to get the big (and small) things repaired. If you can identify the problems upfront, you can fix them for a lot less money than those repairs would get negotiated for down the road. Or, you can price your home factoring in the needed repairs. Plus, a home with a clean bill of health can be advertised as such. Many buyers are looking for a home in "move-in" condition, free of any needed repairs or fixes.

### 3. Hire a designer or stager

Your real estate agent should have a good designer or stager they like to work with -- someone who can help you start to view your home as a product to be marketed. This should be someone you reach out to once you have the place inspected and know the property's condition.

Many people think a designer means big money or a wasted expense, but this isn't always the case. Many designers charge by the hour. It could be as easy as hiring a designer for two hours to help you decide on colors to paint a room or two; a stager to help you declutter or decide which furniture to move out to make some rooms show better.

Based on your real estate agent's feedback, you may decide to engage the designer on a minor kitchen or bathroom remodel. An old kitchen with linoleum countertops, knotty redwood cabinets and avocado-colored appliances can easily be updated with an inexpensive cabinet makeover and new stainless steel appliances.

### You'll save money in the long run!

Like any major decision, selling a home takes a lot of planning, timing and consultation. Consulting with professionals and getting the facts in advance will help the process go a lot smoother, will help you make an informed decision and will most likely save you a lot of money when you sell. If you're a homeowner, transitioning to a seller mindset isn't necessarily easy. The sooner you start that transition, however, the easier the process will be.

Maureen Mirand,  
Ransom Oaks News ■

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# Medical Identity Theft

These days, it's easier than ever for the wrong person to get hold of your personal information. Most people think of the financial and credit ramifications of identity theft. However, there is another, very dangerous form of ID theft surfacing: medical identity theft.

## What is medical identity theft?

Medical identity theft occurs when someone steals another's medical information to obtain or pay for health care treatment. It's a crime that can have a serious impact on your personal, financial and medical well being.

According to the World Privacy Foundation, medical identity theft has affected 1.5 million Americans at a cost of more than \$30 billion.

If someone steals your medical information they illegally use your health care insurance to obtain medical care, buy prescription drugs or submit false insurance claims in your name, all of which can lead to devastating financial results or potentially hazardous changes to your medical records.

## Tips to protect your Medical Identity

Here are a few things you can do to safeguard your medical identity:

- ✓ Closely monitor any "Explanation of Benefits" sent by health insurers.
- ✓ Pro-actively request a listing of benefits from your health insurers
- ✓ Request a copy of current medical files from each health care provider.
- ✓ Dispute/correct erroneous and false accounts and bills with the facility, medical provider, or insurance company.
- ✓ Destroy/shred old health insurance cards as you would old credit cards.
- ✓ If you are a victim, file a police report.

The personal expense of resolving a medical identity theft is about \$20,000, according to actual victims. The same victims also said they had spent four to six months resolving the theft as reported by the 2011 Ponemon Institute Research Report.

To learn more about what you can do to protect your medical identity or identity theft insurance visit [www.nationwide.com/medicalIDtheft](http://www.nationwide.com/medicalIDtheft) or contact your local Nationwide Insurance agent.

Bill Barber  
Ransom Oaks News ■

# Keep it CLEAN!

## Your sidewalk, that is!

Be safe and be courteous and obey the law! Keep your sidewalks free of snow and ice. If you are not able to shovel seek the help of a neighbor or friend or hire a plowing service.

Keeping it clean helps keep you and your neighbors safe!



# Annual Assessment NOTICE

**Amount Due: \$294.00**  
**Due Date: by February 28, 2013\***

## Check Payable to:

Ransom Oaks Community Corporation

**Return to:** Tom and Kathy Halter,  
38 Maricrest Dr., Amherst, NY 14228

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Ransom Oaks Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print Names of those Residing at Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please return with a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you would like Facility Use tags.

- Without tags, you may not use the facilities.
- Tags will be mailed in April.

\*A 1.5% Monthly Service Charge will apply after February 28, 2013.



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# Do You Know Where Your Totes are as of 1/15/13?

As a community that collectively cares about the appearance and values of our homes we had hoped that residents would follow the Covenants and Restrictions which require that garbage (and by implication recycling) containers should not be visible except on the day that pickup is made. All residents are not complying with the C&R.

We decided to tabulate just how many residents conformed to the C&R. To do this we divided the single family homes of Ransom Oaks into 16 Zones and counted totes that are visible from the street in each Zone. Note, we did not attempt to find totes that were visible from other vantage points.

The totes were counted monthly for the last five months. The results are shown in the table below.

**Note:**

- (1) Over 400 or 74% of the 558 residences are now hiding their totes. Two points more than last month.**
- (2) Zone 16 showed the greatest improvement of 8 points**
- (3) Unfortunately Zone 16 is still the Zone with the lowest compliance.**
- (4) The first 10 zones all have over 70 % compliance as they did last month.**
- (5) Three Zones, 5, 10, and 14 each dropped their compliance.**
- (6) Zone 8 took the lead from Zone 5.**

If you have internet access you can get the full spreadsheet showing the actual addresses that are in each Zone and the status of each on the day we made

the count. Follow this link:  
<http://snipr.com/zoneoverview>

If you prefer to examine a hard copy of the file, contact the secretary of the Ransom Oaks Community Corporation.

Residents should feel free to comment on this information in the Resident's Forum, or on the RansomOaks online Forum at: <http://RansomOaks.freeforums.org/>

Sincerely,  
 The Ransom Oaks  
 Board of Directors. ■



**Table 1**

Zone	Description	Homes Per Zone	Hidden 9/5/12 %	Hidden 10/22/12 %	Hidden 11/20/12 %	Hidden 12/17/12 %	Hidden 1/15/13 %
1	Bramhill & Part of Old Oak Post (OOP)	31	68	61	74	77	81
2	Glen Abby & Coriander	34	68	76	76	79	82
3	Part of OOP, Moorgate, Kinderhook	43	77	79	72	72	77
4	Doral, Part of OOP, Old Hempstead, Kingsbrook, Woodmoor	32	75	72	69	75	75
5	Fiddlers, Inverness, Part of Ransom Oaks, (RO), Oakhill	32	72	81	88	88	84
6	Part of RO, Pinehurst, Sweetwater, Part of Glen Oak (GO)	32	88	75	78	78	81
7	Part of RO, White Pine, Oakmont, Shady Oaks	33	64	61	67	70	70
8	Part of GO, Oakcliff, Redbud	42	76	79	79	83	88
9	Primrose, Skylark	43	72	77	79	79	86
10	Eveningwood, Part of GO, Periwinkle	37	57	65	84	81	78
11	Smith, Part of White Cedar	37	51	62	62	68	62
12	Part of White Cedar, Whispering, Odessa Ct.	37	59	70	62	62	68
13	Odessa Dr., Honeysuckle	30	47	60	57	60	67
14	Ginger, Lilybrooke	32	53	69	50	66	63
15	Part of GO, Opal, Topaz	38	42	50	53	58	58
16	Part of GO, Ruby	25	36	44	56	48	56
		<b>Hidden</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>413</b>
		<b>% Hidden</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>68.3</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>74</b>
		<b>Total Visible from the Street</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>145</b>
		<b>Total</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>558</b>

## Town of Amherst "Imagination Station" coming to Ransom Oaks

Ransom Oaks is proud to announce that this year we will be hosting Imagination Station at the Eveningwood Facility this summer.

This seven-week program offers a variety of activities for youth ages 12 and under, including games, arts and crafts, athletics and special events. Children 5 and under must be supervised by someone 13 years or older at all times. The playmobile which has specialized crafts and sporting activities will visit throughout the week.

A parent/guardian must register their child on the first day of participation. A valid Town of Amherst Youth and Recreation Department card is required. More information to follow in upcoming newsletters. ■



## Ransom Oaks Resident's Forum



*The Resident's Forum provides an easy way for residents to express their interests, concerns, what pleases them or what bothers them about Ransom Oaks. To submit something for the forum any resident can call, send an email, or mail a letter to any board member or the Newsletter Editor. We will not accept anonymous items but you can specify if you want the item to be published anonymously, with a nickname, or with your name.*

- "Do you have a problem with your street light? You can report it on the National Grid website: <https://www1.nationalgridus.com/Street-light>. In one case, a report made on a Sunday was repaired the following Thursday. Three working days, not bad!"
- Let us respect our neighbors by keeping our pets on leashes, not parking in front of driveways, or in reserved parking spots (for example: Charlesgate.)

## Window Facts

### *Interesting Notes.....*

Pure Vinyl replacement windows have proven to be the best investment for homeowners today as they last much longer than wooden windows and will not absorb moisture causing mold or mildew, or need occasional scraping and painting to keep them from rotting.

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The LowE coatings also help to block harmful ultraviolet rays from fading and damaging window treatments, floors, and furniture.

When shopping for new windows, always take these facts into consideration to save money now and in the future.

Mark A. Mayle,  
Ransom Oaks News ■

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# How to Advertise With Us . . .

If you would take advantage of the opportunity to affordably reach over 1,100 residents, please follow the instructions below to start advertising your business or service in the Ransom Oaks News:

**1. Call or email:**

Jennifer Kursten, Editor, 716-434-0994  
jkursten@ransomoaks.com

**2. Write check to:**

Ransom Oaks Community Corporation  
Indicate which month(s) to apply your payment.

**3. Mail payment to:** Jennifer Kursten  
PO Box 777, Lockport, NY 14095-0777

**4. Deadline:** All ad payments and ad verbiage must be received by the **18th two months prior** to publication. Without receipt of payment for the 18th of two months prior, the ad will not run.

### CLASSIFIED AD RATES

Promote your service or sell an item. Thirty word maximum per ad.

**RESIDENTS:** ■ \$7/mo.

**NON-RESIDENTS:** ■ \$10/mo.

### DISPLAY AD RATES

- 2 Col. (4.75" x 1.5" high) Ad: \$35/mo.
- 2 Col. (4.75" x 3" high) Ad: \$60/mo.
- 1/3 Page Ad: 3 Col. x 3" \$80/mo.
- 1/2 Page Ad: 3 Col. x 4.5" \$120/mo.
- 2/3 Page Ad: 3 Col. x 6" \$150/mo.
- Full Page Ad: 3 Col. x 9.5" \$225/mo.

### Advertising Notes

Residents who place an ad in the Ransom Oaks News will no longer receive a duplicate copy mailed to their home. This is in an effort to be more green by not generating extra paper to be recycled and to reduce costs associated with printing. ■

**Note:** The R.O.C.C. Board of Directors and Staff do not necessarily have personal knowledge, nor are they able to recommend the advertisers who choose to advertise in this newsletter. ■

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### Car Corner

#### Did you know? . . .

Most of today's vehicles take a four wheel alignment. Incorrect wheel alignment can cause a vehicle to pull, steering and suspension problems, premature tire wear and even cause poor gas mileage.

Because of poor road conditions and for good preventative maintenance a vehicle should be aligned about once a year.

Bruce Weiss,  
Ransom Oaks News ■



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Bruce Weiss-Owner



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# February

Please visit our web site at [www.RansomOaks.com](http://www.RansomOaks.com)

**Next ROCC Meeting:  
Monday, February 11, 2013  
6:30pm**

MEETINGS are at 6:30 pm on the 2nd Monday of the month except for Oct & Nov 2013. RESIDENTS are welcome and encouraged to attend.  
**See you there!**

**February 18**  
Deadline for  
*Ransom Oaks News*  
**March** issue!

**2013 Meetings**

February 11	July 8
March 11	August 12
April 8	September 9
May 13	October 15
June 10	November 12
July 8	December 9

*R.O.C.C. Covenants & Restrictions documents are available free of charge to residents who attend their community meeting, otherwise there is a \$20.00 fee. Monthly meetings are held at the Greenwood Drive Recreation Center, unless noted otherwise.*

**Charlesgate Meeting:**

second Wednesday of each month.

**Forest Edge Meeting:**

fourth Tuesday of each month.

**INFORMATION** If you have questions, problems, comments, or concerns:

- **Charlesgate or Glen Oak**  
Clover Management, 688-4503
- **Briarwoods, Forest Edge, or Woodgate**  
Andruschat Real Estate Service,  
688.4757
- **Vandalism, Animal Control or Security Concerns** Amherst Police, 689.1311
- **Swormville Fire**, 688.7055



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