Celebrate the Holidays with Your Neighbors

December is filled with traditions, celebrations, good cheer, good friends, and childlike wonder. Three holiday events occur in the neighborhood that you will not want to miss. Contact social@fox-chase.org if you need directions or have questions.

Ladies Night Gift Exchange

The Fox Chase Ladies Night Gift Exchange is a neighborhood favorite. If you have not yet attended one, please make this year’s your first. Ladies, gather at the home of Christy Maupin on Saturday, December 13, beginning at 7:30 PM. Bring a snack to share, your favorite adult beverage (soft drinks will be provided), and a gift valued at $15-20. Wrap your gift, but do not put a tag on it. All gifts go under the tree and we draw numbers to determine the order in which we select a gift. It is a night filled with good food, good company, and lots of laughter.

Santa’s Visit

December is Santa’s busiest month, but he has promised to pay a pre-Christmas Eve visit to his friends in Fox Chase. Come see and talk to him at the Amenities Area on Friday, December 19, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM. Cookies and hot chocolate will be served. Parents, bring your cameras to capture your child’s meeting with Santa.

Cookie Exchange

Of course, when Santa does make his rounds on Christmas Eve, we need to have cookies ready for him. The cookie exchange will help ensure that you have a variety of cookies on hand for Santa and your family and guests. This year, the exchange will be hosted by Lisa D’Ablis on Saturday, December 20, beginning at 7 PM. Bring 3 dozen of one kind of cookie to swap (extras are welcome to sample) and your favorite adult beverage. Cookies must be homemade or from a bakery—no store-bought or prepackaged cookies please. Also, bring a container to carry your cookie bounty home. Snacks will be provided.

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FCHOA Annual Meeting

Please make plans to attend the Fox Chase Homeowners Association Annual Meeting in January. The Annual Meeting is a time to reflect on the past year and make plans for the new one. The Board is considering an exciting new plan to further develop the amenities area, offering more enjoyment to our residents. You can learn about that plan at the meeting.

The Annual Meeting also is the perfect opportunity to make a commitment to the Fox Chase community. Our HOA is run by volunteers who live here. Board members, including officers, are volunteers. The amenities area—grounds, pond, and pool—is maintained by volunteers. Routine maintenance and repairs throughout the property, to the extent possible, are performed by volunteers. Events that foster a spirit of community and provide activities within the neighborhood—such as the annual Easter Egg Hunt and Block Party, Ladies Night, grounds project work days, yard sales—are organized by volunteers. Those volunteers have jobs, families, and other responsibilities, but still make time to make Fox Chase a good place to live. Because of them, we can keep our dues down. Without them, we would be forced to hire a professional HOA management company and additional service providers, which would significantly raise the amount of dues we pay. Please consider how you can help keep Fox Chase a desirable neighborhood to live in, which increases our quality of life and our property values. The more who pitch in, the less work for all.

The Annual Meeting will be held Saturday, January 10, 2015, from 2 to 4 PM at the Wilderness Branch of the public library in Locust Grove. (In the event of snow, the meeting will be held on Saturday, January 17; same place, same time.) The library is approximately five miles from Fox Chase. To get there, take VA 3 W to VA 20 S (turn left at the Sheetz). Travel approximately 3 miles to State Rd 601 (Flat Run Rd). The library will be on the right.

Shorter Days Require Extra Caution

Winter is settling in...the days are getting shorter and the nights, longer; Daylight Savings Time has ended. Many of the activities our residents engage in on a regular basis before and after work—such as jogging and walking the dog—are now being done during hours of darkness. Likewise, many of our children are walking to and waiting at the bus stop before sunrise. Please use extra care when driving through the neighborhood during those hours of darkness. Respect the 25 MPH speed limit and be aware of the area around you; be mindful of pedestrians, pets, and wildlife.

Scan for deer as you drive. Mating season is October through early January, so deer activity is currently at its peak. You are more likely to encounter deer at dawn and dusk. Remember that deer travel in packs; where you see one, more are likely nearby. For more information, check out Geico’s deer safety page at https://www.geico.com/information/publications/newsletter/2009/deer-safety. Parents, please educate your teenage drivers as well.

Joggers, dog walkers, walkers, bicyclists, etc., please wear reflective clothing when out after dark. Parents, consider putting reflective tape on your children’s back packs and jackets.
Happenings in the 'Hood

- Christmas Ladies Night, Saturday, December 13, 7:30 PM (Gift Exchange)
- Hanukkah begins Tuesday, December 16
- Visit with Santa, Friday, December 19, 6:30—8:00 PM, Amenities Area
- Cookie Exchange, Saturday, December 20, 7:00 PM
- First day of Winter, Sunday, December 21
- Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25
- New Year's Day, Thursday, January 1, 2015
- Ladies Night, Friday, January 9, 7:30 PM (White Elephant Gift Exchange)
- Fox Chase Homeowners Association Annual Meeting, Saturday, January 10, 2—4 PM, Wilderness Branch Library (Snow Date: Saturday, January 17)

Keeping Fox Chase Looking Good

It’s hard to believe summer is over already. It seems as if we were all just planting flowers and planning vacations and now we’re raking leaves. Preparing our homes for winter is next on our list of things to do and with that in mind the ARC would like to put out a few reminders.

1. Visibility of items such as trailers, boats, and campers will be more prominent. Please be sure to conceal these items without relying on the trees as coverage.

2. Touch-up painting may need to be done but remember…..color changes to shutters, doors, mail boxes, mail box posts, etc. will need prior approval from the ARC.

3. Landscaping changes need prior approval also. These changes include excavations, driveway extensions, addition or removal of large flower beds, and new mailboxes and/or mailbox posts.

4. Commercial vehicles may not be maintained in Fox Chase. If you have a car or pick up with signage, please keep it in the garage.

5. Several driveways have become collection areas for construction and other items. We ask that you please maintain your driveway in a neat manner.

6. We have been seeing a lot of vehicles parked on lawns recently. This is extremely unsightly and is not allowed in Fox Chase. If a driveway extension is needed please submit for approval.

Without exception, all exterior changes to your home and landscaping need prior approval from the ARC. Recently there have been numerous violations pertaining to this. Be assured it is not the intention of the ARC to control improvements you would like to make. It is, however, the intention of the ARC to maintain the character of Fox Chase according to the covenants for which we all agreed to.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and happy raking.

A special note to our residents who continue to enjoy walking and jogging in the amenities area…

We appreciate the fact that you dispose of your trash, including dog waste, in the proper receptacles. However, to decrease costs, our waste removal contract is only in effect when the pool is open. Consequently, those receptacles are not currently being emptied. Please dispose of your trash and waste at your homes.

Thank you!
Holiday Safety

The holidays are a hectic time during which we transform our homes by adding lots of decorations. It also is a time when even those of us who seldom shop roam the stores. Here are a few tips to help ensure you and your family have a safe holiday. For more information, see the National Safety Council’s holiday safety tips at http://www.nsc.org/NSCDocuments/Holiday-Safety-Tips.pdf and http://www.ncpc.org/about/news/safety-first-holiday-safety-tips-for-last-minute-shoppers.

At Home

When decorating, use only lights and electrical accessories that have the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label. Inspect lights, extension cords, and surge protectors for cracked sockets, frayed or exposed wires, and loose connections. Consider switching to LED lights, which save energy and remain cool to the touch. Keep candles away from greenery, drapes, and other flammable materials. Place all trees (live or artificial) away from fireplaces and other heat sources. Do not overload extension cords and adhere to manufacturer’s instructions for limits on end-to-end light string connections. Turn off lighted decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.

If you use a live tree, cut two inches off the trunk and immediately place it in water. Ensure it is secure in its stand. Water at least once a day, but monitor it. More than one watering per day might be necessary.

While Out and About

Obviously, retailers and their parking lots are more crowded this time of year, but basic safe practices will benefit you year round. When shopping, keep track of your bags and do not buy more than you can comfortably carry. Do not approach unattended bags; rather, report them to store management or security.

Ladies, carry your purse close to your body to help deter purse snatchers; if possible, carry only a wallet. Ladies and gentlemen, carry wallets in an inside coat pocket or a front pants pocket. Ideally, carry it in a pocket that can be secured in some way, such as with Velcro, zippers, or buttons. Likewise, secure your cell phone and avoid using it in public where thieves might target it. Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.

Check receipts; if a receipt displays your full credit or debit card number, use a pen to scratch through it. Double check to ensure you have returned your card to your wallet after making a purchase and immediately secure your wallet.

Park only in well-lighted spaces. When shopping at night, use the “buddy system” whenever possible. Place packages in the trunk, out of sight. Have your keys in hand while walking to and from your car. If you feel threatened in any way, press the panic button on your key fob to activate your vehicle’s alarm system. Check the area around your car before getting in or out. Check the back seat before getting in. Keep your doors locked and windows closed at all times. Inside or out, always be aware of your surroundings, including the people around you.

Have a safe and happy holiday season.