



A Condo News

December 2011

Courtesy of:
A Condominium
Management Co., Inc.

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A Condominium & University Lending help light up Rochester and Neighborhood House by Brandi Lane

Ahh...Lagniappe! For three years now A Condominium Management Company has donated delicious hot chocolate and time to help raise money for needy area families and children.



Lagniappe is Rochester's, our headquarters location, version of starting off the holiday season (and DTE's energy meters) with a "Big, Bright Light Show" and in true tradition of the word lagniappe "a little something extra."

This year we teamed up with University Lending, which is our downstairs neighbor, to raise money for Rochester Neighborhood House. This organization provides food, clothing, and financial assistance to needy families. We all know how important this type of help is around the holidays.

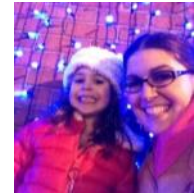
Despite the cold rain, we still managed to make just under \$100.00 for the cause. Though to some of us this may not seem like a lot, it means the world to those who receive the aid. I would like to extend a special thank you to David and Rita Geoffrey from our Pine Knob Enclaves



community for their generous donation and for showing up to support A Condominium. Also, thank you to Complete Lawn Care, Precision Comfort, and Aggressive Cleaning who are some of your vendors for also stopping by and donating. You guys are the best!

The best part of the night for me was for the first time the six-foot-two-inch geeky elf

didn't miss the lighting up of the town while making hot chocolate!!! YAY ME!! Oh yeah I'm the geeky elf...it is the light up glasses that make the look don't you think! If I missed acknowledging you for stopping by...thank you...and if you didn't stop by...you missed a good time!!



Special thank you to Dawn Johnson and Jenn Maurin (with daughter Nikki above) of University Lending for teaming up with us this year. If you are in the market to re-finance or to purchase a home please contact Dawn at (248) 895-2304.



Cut Costs: GO GREEN

Many stores offer a discount if you bring your own shopping bags. Consider investing in the canvas bags or even better go to IKEA and grab some of their big blue bags, they hold a ton and have two convenient handle choices!

HAVING A COMMUNITY EVENT??

At A Condominium Management, we love to hear about your community events. Having an association picnic and don't have everyone's email? Let us know! We can place it in our newsletter, or even put it on our website for you. Just make sure you give us all of your details and we'd be happy to include something for your owners to see!! Feel free to invite your manager too!



Help Them To Help You by Brandi Lane.

I dread the first snow of the season every single year. The biggest reason is that it seems most people, though they have lived in Michigan their entire lives, have forgotten how to drive on snow in the past six months. I don't understand it but have you ever noticed how many spin outs and slow pokes there are on that first snow?



I also dread it because in this state the first snow could arrive before the final fall clean-up. This means in a sense your snow contractors could be caught with their proverbial "pants down." Their trucks and equipment is still geared towards leaf removal and not salt spreading. Either that or the meteorologist down plays the weather and what should've been a "dusting" is a sloppy, icy mess. In any case, we inevitably receive a higher call volume of complaints on the first snowfall.

So, it never fails that a rash of calls comes in about when the clean-ups will be completed. Well, the biggest asset we can all have is patience. Some of your vendors are new to your community so they are unfamiliar with how the community likes things done or even how

the last contractor did things. It is also important to remember that you live in a large community so the contractor may be in a different part of the community working their way towards your home.

We also need to all help them to help you. This means when you know a storm is coming, try your best to have your driveways free of vehicles, and your porches, courtyards, and walkways easily accessible for their equipment and blowers. If you see that the road and guest parking has been plowed, you can help by moving your car out there to make the driveways or carports easier to clean properly. Plus the more you drive and walk on the snow the more packed it gets and the harder it is for the contractor to get your surfaces clean. The contractors are not responsible for coming up and hand shoveling the driveways so their ability to be able to plow or blow the areas requires all of our cooperation and assistance.



All of the snow vendors work for multiple communities. No one is less important than the other so they will often rotate their starting points so that all of you

receive as equal of service as possible. This means sometimes your driveway may be done by 4:30 A.M. one storm and the next maybe at 7:00 A.M. The timing is also dependent on the storm itself. The specifications sent out include timings for plowing based on factors such



as depth and if it is a blizzard. For example, if the snow started at 4:30 A.M. and didn't reach the required depth to plow until 9:00 A.M., the work may not be completed until lunch time or a little later.

Be assured that during every snow storm our office is onsite to see how your vendors are performing. Both your contractor, our office, and the Board has the safety of all residents in our minds. It is not the intention of anyone to inconvenience you except good old Mother Nature. Bare with us and the vendors and we will make sure that your home is safe and clear this winter season! If not, please feel free to call our office at (248) 650-8983 and we will be happy to speak with your association's snow vendor.

Decorations Oh Decorations! by Brandi Lane

Most communities allow for some holiday decorating to be done. However, you must always check your Bylaws, Rules & Regulations, or other governing documents for restrictions.

Items to consider:

- (1) **Are real trees allowed?** In some communities, no because of insurance liability.
- (2) **Are lights allowed on the buildings?** In most cases they are limited to certain
- locations and cannot be directly affixed to the buildings.
- (3) **Are there time limits I can be decorated?** In most cases yes, this is to insure that holiday lawn ornaments aren't getting a tan in the summer!
- (4) **Can I use any color lights I want?** It all depends, some communities restrict to only white lights.
- (5) **Do I have the coolest decorations ever?** Let us be the judge! Send us a

picture of your home decorated for the holidays. The winner will be announced in January and will receive a fabulous prize!! Also, we will give a prize to the person who finds the most hideous house in Metro-Detroit. PLEASE DO NOT USE YOUR OWN NEIGHBORHOOD WE DON'T WANT TO OFFEND ANYONE. Have fun! Entries must be in by December 22, 2011!!



I Don't Care About Snow...I'm In Florida By Brandi Lane

If you are one of the people that is fortunate to go to a warmer state while we in Michigan suffer a deep freeze, well, I'm jealous! However, there are some things you should consider when you will be gone for a long period of time:



(1) FORWARD/HOLD MAIL AND NEWSPAPER:

Nothing says you aren't home like a full mailbox or pile of waterlogged newspapers on your driveway. The best defense against theft is not to advertise!



(2) SET THERMOSTAT APPROPRIATELY:

Unless you full have winterized your home, you have to leave your thermostat at a reasonable level to avoid frozen pipes. We've seen breaks when set at 55 degrees. So make sure you leave it up or if we have a very harsh cold spell, send a friend or loved one over

to open cupboards and bump it up a degree or ten.



(3) INFORM THE MANAGEMENT COMPANY THAT YOU WILL BE GONE:

By leaving us with your contact number will allow us to get a hold of you in cases of emergency and if you provide a forwarding address we can make sure there is no disruption of important association information.



(4) LOCK WINDOWS AND DOORS:

Sure this seems obvious to all but lock your interior garage door and all windows no matter what floor.

There are so many legitimate vendors coming and going that it may be hard for someone to spot a thief before its too late.

(5) HAVE SOMEONE ROUTINELY CHECK YOUR HOME:

Leaks and



issues can happen at any time no matter the age of your home or how routinely it is maintained. You should have someone you trust walk through the home on a regular basis to prevent long term damages.



(6) USE SUNSCREEN:

I've found that your neighbors are less likely to be jealous if you don't come back with a deep, luxurious tan. They are also less likely to laugh if you come back the color of a cooked lobster. So use sunscreen!

Ok, the last one was just a joke, but all kidding aside, please make sure you secure your unit and have an emergency person in the area that has access to your unit. This will save you headaches and heartaches. It isn't a bad idea to contact your local law enforcement to let them know you'll be gone so they can keep an eye out too!

Winter Survival Kit by Brandi Lane

It never fails that ever year you hear of someone in the neighborhood that was stuck for hours in a snow bank or hear on the news about someone who is lost in a snow storm or blizzard or even worse long term power outages in homes. We always think it won't happen to us but it could, so here are some items that could save your life when the unexpected happens:

EMERGENCY IN THE CAR

- Water** - The body cannot survive without water. Having a few bottles in the car is crucial.
- Protein bars**- They may taste horrible but they provide the body with concentrated nutrients that is needed to survive.
- Blanket, Gloves, and Boots** - All these items are necessary to stay warm especially if the heat in your car goes out.
- Flares/Emergency Flashers** - The key is making it easy for people to spot you even in inclement weather. Emergency flashers



or flares will last for hours and warn other motorists of your location to prevent further damage or injury.

- Compact shovel** - If you can safely dig yourself out, then a compact shovel helps you get down below the ice and snow to ground.
- Spare Cell Phone/Cell Battery/Hand Charger** - They now sell very inexpensive non-contract cell phones. You can just charge it every once in a while and use it only for emergencies. If you still have a phone where you can swap a battery, having a spare one that is charged can work too. The least expensive way to go is to buy a hand charger that will do a one time battery boost or allow you to crank a handle and recharge your battery.

EMERGENCY IN HOME

- Contact Utility Company** - Use a cell phone to call the utility company and let them know your utilities are out. If you have downed wires or smell a gas leak, they will tell you what to do and they need to know about these matters

immediately to prevent injury.

- Candles/Flashlights** - Having a working lighter and candles or flashlights can turn a dark night into a fun night. At least if you have a little light you can play board games, cards, or tell ghost stories.
- Generator**: Always check for restrictions on a generator's usage but for really long outages, these can help run a few items in your home to make the conditions bearable.



CHECK OUT OUR NEW & IMPROVED WEBSITE

<http://www.ACondoMGT.com>

We've overhauled our site to make it more user friendly.

Let us know what you think!

County Events & Sporting Events

OAKLAND COUNTY

PALACE OF AUBURN HILLS

12/10 UM vs. OU Basketball
 12/15 Every Christmas Story Ever Told
 12/17 Trans-Siberian Orchestra
 12/26 Harlem Globetrotters

MEADOWBROOK HALL

11/25 - 12/22 Holiday Walk
 12/12 Dinner with Santa

MEADOW BROOK THEATER

11/19 - 12/23 A Christmas Carol

ROCHESTER BIG BRIGHT LIGHT SHOW

11/28 - 1/1 All of Downtown A Glow!

MACOMB COUNTY

STONY CREEK METROPARK

12/10 Lunch with Santa
 12/25 Christmas Appreciation (Free Entry)

WOLCOTT MILLS METROPARK

12/9-12/10 Heritage Holidays
 12/16-12/17 Heritage Holidays
 12/25 Christmas Appreciation (Free Entry)

OCTAGON HOUSE (Washington, MI)

12/10 Tea with Santa

SPORTING EVENTS

DETROIT LIONS (7-4)

12/11 Minnesota
 12/18 @ Oakland
 12/24 San Diego
 1/1 @ Green Bay

DETROIT RED WINGS (15-7-1)

12/6 @ St. Louis
 12/13 @ Pittsburgh
 12/17 vs. Los Angeles
 12/30 @ Chicago

MSU FOOTBALL (10-3 (7-1 Conference))

1/2 Outback Bowl vs. Georgia

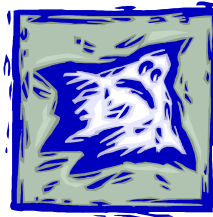
U of M FOOTBALL (10-2 (6-2 Conference))

1/3 Sugar Bowl vs. Virginia Tech

DETROIT PISTONS (0-0)

12/16 vs. Cleveland Cavaliers

Don't Become A Ghost Town by Brandi Lane



It's Michigan so that means for the next few months we will be stuck somewhere between chilly and REALLY COLD! Undoubtedly this means that we want to stay indoors and tucked away somewhere warm. It also means that with the way the world is now that even head bobs while passing on the street disappear.

You have a benefit, you live in a community with a common purpose and goal. More than anything you should be striving for better communication. There are many things you can do to stop the slid into blah, arctic Michigan Winter and also help nurture a feeling of community. For instance, why not offer to hold a euchre tournament with several neighbors or your building? This will give you a chance to inexpensively get to know the people around you and have a fun evening.

How about having a progressive dinner or have a community breakfast or dinner club. You can meet talk food, talk community, and maybe even meet some people with things in common.

Do you play Bunko, Gin, Scrabble, or some other game? See if there is interest in starting a group and rotate the homes you meet in. In large communities such as yours, there are undoubtedly people you share your interests.

Don't like board games or cards? How about starting a book club or even a movie club. You can meet and either discuss chapters and characters or meet up to watch a movie and then chat about the plot twists and even movie goofs! Or even set a date to go to your local movie theater and watch the latest "Rom Com" or mystery.

How about a good old fashioned craft group like sewing, quilting, or knitting. It is the holidays and no matter what you celebrate be it Kwanzaa, Christmas, Chanukah, or other celebration; it is the

handmade gifts which always mean more and become family heirlooms.

You could also organize trips to a civic event like a play. This time of year the arts seem to come alive with enthusiasm and there are many, many choices to attend. Or even coordinate a trip to a Detroit Casino, national concert, or pro sporting event. Often these organizations will give deals for larger groups.



It may be tough at first, because in today's society we'd rather do things over a computer.

However, it's the holidays and people always tend to be in a better mood and willing to try to reach out this time of year. The worst case scenario you at least meet everyone around you. You never know when you need a neighbor. Our office would be happy to help you spread the word of your event in an upcoming newsletter. Just give us advance warning and we will make sure people know. HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO
 BE A REFERENCE?
 DO YOU KNOW A
 COMMUNITY IN NEED
 OF OUR SERVICES?**



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Restaurant Round-Up Has Become DEATROITFOODIE!!

I've received a lot of wonderful feedback on my restaurant review column in our newsletter. So, in lieu of taking up space away from valuable information we can relate to your homes, the review is now under my alias which is DEATROITFOODIE. I love all things related to cooking and my new blog and website have allowed me to do restaurant reviews more often. I have also reincarnated the recipes section that we used to offer the first year of this newsletter. Each review has anecdotes about the cast of characters that are my friends and family and all the recipes have been served to my guinea pigs AKA friends and family.

I update the blog more often than my website, so start there. But, feel free to visit the website too!! I love watching my counter rise with each guest!! I just reached 100 visitors!!

Deatroitfoodie Blog: Deatroitfoodie.myblogger.com

Deatroitfoodie Website: www.Deatroitfoodie.com

If you have recommendations of places I should visit please, please send me an email at HeadFoodie@Deatroitfoodie.com. I sincerely hope you find it funny and informative!



Our Final Word..

Another year is coming to a close. We have added several new members to the A Condominium Management family including Fairview Farms, Trillium Village, and Macomb Village. We here at the office feel blessed to have such a wonderful plethora of home owners and tenants. We hope that you all have a family and friend filled holiday that is safe and happy. We hope that the new year brings opportunities and new adventures for all of us. We thank you for all of your encouragement and support over the past year and hope that we have returned the same to you and your community. I can't wait to churn out the first volume of this newsletter for 2012!!



Please send your requests or suggestions to BLane@ACondoMGT.com. *Also, if you wish to contribute an article to this newsletter, please feel free to send it to us!* And thanks as always to my faithful readers. See you in 2012!!

Brandi Lane