



# A Condo News

September 2011

Courtesy of:  
A Condominium  
Management Co., Inc.

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### Cut Costs: GO GREEN

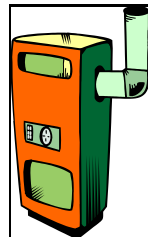
Many stores offer a discount if you bring your own shopping bags. Consider investing in the canvas bags or even better go to IKEA and grab some of their big blue bags, they hold a ton and have two convenient handle choices!

## Another One Bites the Dust...Goodbye Summer 2011

by Brandi Lane

As we approach yet another day where the leaves are beginning to fall, and the apples are beginning to ripen; I can't help but feel a little sad. Even though the temperatures are still in the seventies and eighties, I can't help but cringe that snow flakes are just around the corner.

I know we have done this before, but let's review some great things for both your home and your family in the next few months.



First, it is a great time to have your furnace repairperson out to check your system. It is better to catch any issues and have the furnace cleaned now than realizing something is awry when it is ninety degrees below zero. Temps are dipping into the fifties soon, so there will be a need.

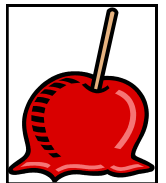
Second, check the expiration dates on your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. That isn't a joke, some models are only rated for five years or ten years. Also while you are checking, replace the batteries.



Third, now is a great time to try and plan an association event. How about all the parents get together and go to a cider mill? Kids love the farm animals, picking out their pumpkins, and riding on a hay wagon! Or why not do a progressive dinner? What is a progressive dinner you ask? Well it is where a group of friends in a neighborhood have a multi-course dinner spread over several homes. One hosts the appetizers, one the salad, one the entrée, and one the dessert. It spreads the responsibility and you get to

really know people when you visit their home.

Fourth, now is the time to take advantage of completing projects. Such as: (1) Make sure your perennials are cut back so they will grow back stronger next year. (2) Make sure you check all your outside bulbs. If there is one out and it is an association item, it is easier for us to get them replaced now. (3) Have your dryer exhaust pipes cleaned out. (4) Make sure you bring in your seasonal outdoor items.



We will all miss the ninety degree days we had all June and July (ok maybe not all of us) but nothing beats the color



## 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!



## When a hot water tank goes bad...foreword and conclusion by Brandi Lane. Article courtesy of [www.eHow.com](http://www.eHow.com) and authored by Ciele Edwards

*Ahhh...the joys of home ownership. Your own space, painted and decorated whatever way you want. Sounds great until you go to take a shower and the hot water tank spits out black, stinky water., or no hot water at all. So what are the signs that you may be soon taking only cold showers? I visited [www.eHow.com](http://www.eHow.com) for some answers...*

A hot water tank is the instrument that stores hot water for use in your [home](#) after the water is heated by the hot water heater. The amount of hot water available to you depends on the size of the tank. Some hot water heaters are available without tanks, but these are typically more expensive. A traditional hot water heater and tank can cost anywhere from \$100 to \$1,000, depending on size, and whether you use electricity or gas. If your hot water tank goes bad, you will need to replace the entire apparatus. Watching for signs that your hot water heater is going bad will help you to prepare in advance for the cost of replacing it.

1. Consider the age of your hot water heater. The average lifespan for a hot water heater is ten years . If your hot water heater is close to or over ten years old, it may cease to function at any time.
2. Pay attention to any changes in water temperature. If your hot water tank produces a very limited amount of hot water, or ceases to produce hot water at all, this may mean that heavy sediment [deposits](#) have built up in the tank. If this occurs, the tank and heater need to be repaired or replaced.

3. Listen for banging noises coming from your hot water tank. A periodic banging sound may be a "water hammer" and is caused when valves in the system shut off without warning. If you hear these occasional banging sounds from your hot water tank, it may be beginning to go bad.

4. Check the bottom of the hot water tank for corrosion. Corrosion begins inside the hot water tank due to impurities in the water eating away at the metal over time. A hot water tank that is corroded has exhausted its life span and needs to be replaced.



5. Watch for any water pooling up underneath the hot water tank. Pools of water around your hot water [heating system](#) usually indicate a leak. Hot water tanks that leak will not function properly for very long.

6. Consider cloudy water a sign that a hot water tank is going bad. Cloudy water can be caused by calcium and magnesium deposits that accumulate over time in your hot water tank. If the tank contains too much of these minerals, it will begin to pump them out along with the hot water.

7. Pay attention to your hot water heater's recovery time. If the hot water in your tank builds up much more slowly than it once did, this can indicate that the entire system is wearing out and may need replacing soon.

*As for the black, cloudy, rotten egg smelling water this can be a simple fix and doesn't necessarily require a full replacement. This may as simple as low use (such as in a vacation home) or a bacteria build-up in the pipes.*

*According to a website called [literally www.smellywater.com](http://www.smellywater.com) replacing the aluminum or magnesium anode rod can often solve the issue. Replacing the anode with an aluminum/zinc anode seems to be a more permanent fix than flushing the unit with peroxide. I would strongly urge you to check with a licensed, insured plumber before altering your tank. In some cases this change can void the warranty or depending on the age of the unit it may just be cheaper to wholesale replace the unit.*

**Our office strongly urges you to invest in a catch pan underneath your water heater, with a drain line leading to the floor drain. This can often be the difference between a couple hundred dollar repair, and several thousands of dollars in water damages and repairs to your home (and the home of your neighbor if you live in an attached condominium).**



## “You can’t complain if you abstain” by Brandi Lane

This year I've seen a lot of our Association Board of Directors come under fire for trying to make decisions in their community. Some Board's have tried to involve more members by asking for volunteers for committees. However, very few people choose to take the time to put in the hours as a Board member or Committee member. This lack of participation makes their jobs extremely difficult.

I'd like to take this small space to put out a general thank you to all of our Board members and committee members. Your job is a difficult one and I often notice that your efforts go unrewarded or scrutinized. It is the people like you that make sure your communities move forward instead of backward.

I entitled this “You can’t complain if you abstain,” because I want all of you to adopt this as your mantra. There is no possible

way to make 100% of the people happy 100% percent of the time. If you have the best intentions of your association in mind, you can take pride that your choices, while not always popular, are the best job you can do for the community as a whole.

Contact a Board Member and ask to start or join a committee or throw your name in the ring for a Board position at the next annual meeting.

## It's like they don't even realize I'm next door!! By Brandi Lane

It doesn't matter what the weather is, because with spring and summer comes open windows, open doors, and in fall and winter comes the need to turn up the stereo to drown out the blah weather - and the side affect of these items: NOISE!

It always amazes me how different communities are from winter to summer. In the winter people get home, they pull the car into the carport or garage and they rush inside to get warm. The sites are like ghost towns with the only signs of life are the bumps, thumps, and vibrations from the latest surround sound system.

In the summer it is completely different. There are fresh flowers out, patio furniture sitting on porches invitingly, and then it hits you...waves of rap, heavy metal, and even Beethoven. What is sweet music to one can be grating racket to another.



I often people they saying, "Well its communal living, what do they expect?" I would say common sense should rule this one. First, always check your rules and regulations as well as governing documents to see if there are any time restrictions on noise. Second, walk outside or walk over to your neighbors porch and see if you can hear your music, game or movie.

Third and most important, just because you like "Walking on Sunshine" it doesn't mean your neighbor isn't signing the blues. Pick a volume level that would be least offensive to a person on their worst day. This should help find a happy medium. Also, watch the bass level, as it will carry through walls even at a modest volume.

Respect goes a long way too. If your neighbor approaches you and says they are working third shift and have to sleep until



3:00 PM then I'm sure you'd expect the same courtesy on noise when they get off work at Midnight, as they expect at Noon.

By no means am I saying you can't enjoy your own home or that you can't turn up your favorite eighties song and dance in leg warmers. What I'm saying is that with the perks of condominium living comes some pitfalls.

The definition of association is "a group of people having a common purpose or interest." The common purpose is to live in a space where everyone can work together to provide the most positive and rewarding environment possible. Working with your neighbors means thinking of their feelings too. At they very least, see if your neighbor wants to come over and play air guitar in your air band or watch Freddy Kruger Volume 983 with you!



## The Beginner DIYer's Toolbox courtesy Mary Ferraza

If you've recently purchased your first home or are simply tired of paying professionals to make repairs\* to your home and would like to learn how to "do it yourself," there are some common tools you will need to have on hand. Here are 15 essential tools to maintain and repair your home:

1. **Safety glasses** - because safety always comes first.
2. **Toolbox** - you're going to need a place to put all of your new gear right? A toolbox (or a canvas bag with lots of pockets) is key to keeping everything organized and easy to find.
3. **Hammer** - a 16-ounce steel-shaft version with a vibration dampening rubber grip will be sufficient for most jobs. Choose a model with a straight or "rip" claw, not a curved claw.
4. **Screwdrivers** - you'll save money and get the most use out of a good-quality mixed set that includes 1/4 and 3/8-inch flat heads and No. 1 and No. 2 Phillips head drivers. Screwdrivers with magnetic heads will help you avoid losing screws while you're

working.

5. **Vise grips** - also known as locking pliers, vise-grips clamp to anything that needs viselike stabilizing, typically metal or PVC pipes.
6. **Needle-nose pliers** - the long, tapering, forged head that gives needle-nose pliers their name is particularly useful in electrical work where spaces can get tight. Opt for a pair with a wire-cutting blade near the hinge.
7. **Wire cutter/stripper** - this plier-like tool scores and strips the casing off varying gauges of wire to speed up electrical jobs.
8. **Electrical tester** - you don't have to buy an expensive model with all the bells and whistles, all you really need is on with two probes and a light that indicates an electrical current is present.
9. **Tape Measure**
10. **Level**
11. **Utility Knife**
12. **Chisel**
13. **Pry bar**
14. **Handsaw**

### 15. **Reversible drill with bit set.**

*\*Our office does not condone owners making their own repairs on common elements without authorization, or when not properly qualified to make a repair. Please call a professional or our office if you need assistance.*



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**Mary Ferrazza**  
*President's Council of Excellence*

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**County Events & Sporting Events**

**OAKLAND COUNTY**

**PALACE OF AUBURN HILLS**

- 9/19 Foo Fighters (7:00P)
- 9/24-25 What's Cooking Detroit (Varies)
- 9/30 Enrique Iglesias & Pitbull (7:00P)
- 10/8 Frank Caliendo (8:00P)

**DTE ENERGY MUSIC THEATER**

- 9/1 Vince Neil/Great White (7:00P)
- 9/3 Ted Nugent (7:30P)
- 9/11 Blink 182 (7:00P)
- 9/30 Toby Keith (7:30P)

**MEADOWBROOK MUSIC HALL**

- 9/9 Big Sean/Curren\$y (7:00P)
- 9/17 Steven Wright (7:30P)

**MACOMB COUNTY**

**STONY CREEK METROPARK**

- 9/12 Full Moon Wagon Ride. (7:30P)
- 9/24 Sawyers Run 5K (10:00A)

**WOLCOTT MILLS METROPARK**

- 9/11 Applefest (12:00P)
- 9/25 Mill Antique Vehicle Show (11:00A)

**SPORTING EVENTS**

**DETROIT TIGERS (70-59)**

- 9/2-4 Chicago White Sox
- 9/5-7 @ Cleveland
- 9/9-11 Minnesota
- 9/15-17 @ Oakland
- 9/22-24 Baltimore
- 9/26-28 Cleveland

**DETROIT LIONS (0-0)**

- 9/11 @ Tampa Bay
- 9/18 Kansas City
- 9/25 @ Minnesota

**MSU FOOTBALL (0-0)**

- 9/10 Florida Atlantic
- 9/17 @ Notre Dame
- 9/24 Central Michigan

**U of M FOOTBALL (0-0)**

- 9/3 Western Michigan
- 9/10 Notre Dame
- 9/17 Eastern Michigan

**CENTRAL MICHIGAN (0-0)**

- 9/10 @ Kentucky

**WESTERN MICHIGAN (0-0)**

- 9/17 @ Western Michigan
- 9/10 Nicholls
- 9/24 @ Illinois

**Five Costly Home Improvement Don'ts** courtesy HGTV.com

A little prep on your next project can save money and help you avoid having to do the job over again.

**1) Don't Skip the Primer—**

The key to a successful paint job is always prep. A coat of primer will seal the surface, provide durability and create a solid bond for the paint to adhere. The only time primer may not be needed is when painting latex over latex and the colors have a similar intensity.



**2) Make Sure You Get a Real Pro—**



If you need to hire a pro make sure they are qualified for the job. Never let anyone other than a licensed electrician repair or alter the wiring in your home. The same goes for plumbing — many states also require them to have a license or state certification.

**3) Don't Skimp on Grout Sealer—**

You can spend a lot of time and money installing tile, but if you don't properly seal the grout it can absorb water, dirt and other stains.



**4) Don't Forget About the Subfloor -**



Laminate flooring needs an underlayment/vapor barrier for almost any surface it is being installed upon. Not only will it protect it from moisture, it will also help with soundproofing. Hardwood floors need an even subfloor, so use subfloor compound to ensure a level surface. If laying tile in a bathroom, cement backer board should be used underneath.

**5) Make Sure to Get Necessary Building Permits -**



anyone wants is to spend time and effort building a beautiful deck only to find out it must be ripped up because there was no permit. Find out the rules and regulations for building permits, codes and inspections before you start any remodeling project.



For more tips, tricks, and "how-to-do-it" information you can visit <http://www.hgtv.com>. Please click the link above or the graphic to be re-routed to their website. If you have more helpful article, ideas, or websites that we can use in future please email Brandi Lane at [BLane@ACondoMgt.com](mailto:BLane@ACondoMgt.com)



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



**Contact Jason Carey**

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### Restaurant Round-Up: Apple Orchard Inn by Brandi Lane

Since moving to Michigan in 1991, our family has frequented a restaurant in Washington, MI on VanDyke Rd just south of 29 Mile Rd. It is called Apple Orchard Inn. Now, on the exterior, and even interior, it may look like any other “mom and pop” place. But, there are a few things I can recommend as fantastic. First, the spicy Bloody Mary is wonderful. I don’t know if it is the mix, or the vodka, or what, but it’ll wake you up on a Sunday. The next dish isn’t even on the menu but, maybe if we all order it enough he will put it on permanently. It is the Chicken Rockefeller, and let me just say it isn’t on the weight watchers menu! Tender fettuccini is topped with a thin, crispy breaded chicken cutlet and then topped with an ooey, gooey, spinach and bacon cream sauce. It is quite possibly a perfect bite. The prices are very reasonable and they have excellent cuts of prime rib, steaks, and chops. If you are looking for something a little southern, let me recommend the honey pecan chicken which is tenders dusted with a pecan crust and served with homemade mashed potatoes and a vegetable. If you need a good server, ask for Anna, and tell her the Lane’s recommended her. She’ll treat you like a star. And, if there is something you don’t see, ask for Georgey, the owner’s son. He’s the chef and very talented. *62840 Van Dyke Rd, Washington, MI 48094 (586) 752-2188.*



### Our Final Word...

Well it has been several months since our last edition. With the summer comes many, many outdoor projects and given the small window of warm weather we have in this state, it leaves everyone in our office very limited on time to do much of anything else. I hope all of you have enjoyed your summer, and noticed improvements to your common areas, lawns, and landscaping. I also hope that I get the chance to write another one or two of these newsletters before the snow flakes begin to fall. I do need your suggestions though! After two years of writing this, I feel like I need fresh material. Do you have any good suggestions to make your community closer? What are relevant topics that all of your neighbors can benefit from? Do you have a favorite recipe you would like to share? Please send your requests or suggestions to [BLane@ACondoMGT.com](mailto:BLane@ACondoMGT.com). Also, if you wish to contribute an article to this newsletter, please feel free to send it to us as Mary Ferrazza of Real Estate One has done this month. Thanks Mary! And thanks as always to my faithful readers. I’m looking forward to a wonderful fall and winter!!

