

Condo Care Suggestions from past *Quail Runners*

1. Household Improvements

- a) If the sun beats in through your storm door making your front door very hot try **Gila Heat Control Window Film**. This comes in a variety of sizes and tints and is available at various building supply stores. After installing it, your front door knob no longer burns fingers.
- b) Have you installed a **lazy susan** in the lower corner cabinet (A units)? You can get them through Home Depot and/or order them through HomeDepot.com. MillPride makes them, and they run about \$100. The pattern for the carousel needs to be slightly adjusted.
- c) **Skylight window shade** (A units) is available through Home Depot and made by Velux. The window number is inside of the upper left part of the frame. The shade is a bit tricky to install.
- d) **Improve Cable Reception** – check the cable box in the basement and unplug any cables that go to unused cable outlets. This should improve the signal reception. The unused room outlets can *leak* signal. (**Vinny Graceffa** vows that he's not pulling our leg!)

2. Calendar Reminders

- February -- Built-in Vacuum** —This is a good time to empty it. Once or twice a year should do the job.
- June**
 - i. This is a good time to empty the built-in vacuum. It probably needs it once or twice a year
 - ii. Time to switch your overhead fans to the summer setting with the button down.
 - iii. Check your dryer's lint filter. Even if you clean it after every load (recommended), it may still not be clean. To test this, remove the filter and run some hot water on it. If the water does not quickly run through, you have a build up of invisible gunk left from the dryer sheets. If needed, clean with soap and an old toothbrush. This is generally just a problem for gas dryers, but some of our electric dryers here at Quail Run have had a problem.
- October**
 - i. Time to switch your **overhead fans** to the winter setting with the button up.
 - ii. This is a good time of year to replace the two AA batteries that run the LuxPro PSP511 **thermostat**. If the batteries die, according to the LuxPro tech, the thermostat defaults to about 40° and will continue to turn the furnace off and on. You have 30 seconds to swap the batteries before your program is lost.
 - iii. It's a good idea replace the 9V batteries in the **smoke detectors** once a year. They are at the 2 bedrooms, dining/living area, loft, and the often forgotten basement.
 - iv. Next are your **carbon monoxide detectors** 9V batteries.
 - v. Some of us have **garage door openers** that have a key pad outside the garage door. Don't forget to replace the battery in the key pad.
 - vi. Check your smoke detector-- push the button, perhaps with a broom handle, and make sure they are still functioning.
 - vii. Turn-off outside water faucets
- December**
 - i. Storm Door Reminder – Don't lock the storm door while you're away. In an emergency if the association has to gain entry to your unit, they may have to break the door to get in.
 - ii. This is a good time of year to change the batteries in your thermostat and smoke detectors
 - iii. As the snow season approaches, you are reminded to leave your carriage lights on all night to facilitate the plowing operation. The more light our snow elves have the

better for cleaning up the white stuff. Since these lights are on for hours, they are good candidates for compact fluorescent bulbs.

3. Home Maintenance

- a) **Marilyn Hoffman** suggests making a **Flexible Vacuum Attachment** to get something out of a heat register or under the fridge by adding an empty paper towel roll or empty gift wrap roll to your vacuum. It can be bent or flattened to get in narrow openings.
- b) The **vent at the top of the microwave** can be removed for cleaning by taking out the right-hand Philips head screw. The screens over the intake vents on the bottom will pop-out with some tugging. (Note: Not all the units have the same model appliance so check before you pull too hard.)
- c) Run that **upstairs shower** occasionally to keep the parts in good working order.
- d) **Carpenter Ants** A variety of ants have been spotted, including carpenter ants. If you see unexplained sawdust, you should be suspicious. Check out the information from the Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet at <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/2000/2063.html>
- e) **Energy-Saving Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFLs)** (save on your light bill)
 - * Swapping out just one standard 100w bulb for a just-as-bright CFL reduces global warming pollution by more than 1,300 pounds!
 - * Changing a light bulb makes a difference. If every US household replaced three 60-watt incandescent bulbs with CFLs, it would be like taking 3.5 million cars off the roads!
 - * CFLs save you money. A 20-watt CFL, which screws into an ordinary light socket, is just as bright as a 60-watt incandescent.
 - * Today's CFLs are dramatically better than a few years ago. You won't miss your incandescent bulbs.
- f) **Florescent bulbs** can be used in most lamps and fixtures and save a lot of energy dollars. They use 75 percent less energy and last 10 times longer than most normal light bulbs. These are sometimes available through Hudson Light and Power at a reduced cost.
- g) The local Whirlpool maintenance person recommends only using 1 tablespoon of **dishwasher** detergent per wash unless you are using the pots and pans settings. Mike says the water here is very soft and the second cup containing detergent isn't needed most times.
- h) **Slow running drains.** If this is a problem, remove the plastic cap at the back of the drain pipe that the controls the plunger. Pull the plunger out, noting which way it is installed. Use a long, thin brush to clean out the pipe.
- i) **Sluggish Sink Drain?** If the bathroom sink drain is slow, remove the white, nylon nut that connects a slim metal bar to the drain pipe. The bar can be pulled back and the sink plug lifted out. Clean off the guck and replace. An alternative, though not as good is to remove the cap on the plug and use a very small brush to clean inside. The cap is removed by turning it to the right (not left, as you'd expect) and lifting up.
- j) **Peggy Kunz** writes, "A couple of weeks ago, I got caught with a washing machine full of what were white clothes when I put them in what turned out to be brown water and when I took them out they were a muddy brown. If this happens to you, Do not add any bleach, this makes it worse, and do not dry your clothes. Go to the Hudson DPW on Cox St. and Municipal Dr. and they will give you three packets of Special Bleach especially for removing rust. Call first and they will give you directions on how to get to the DPW. Telephone Number is 978-562-9333. Their hours are 7AM to 3:30 PM. The bleach works wonders
- k) **Disposal Jammed?** The **Ebens** disposal locked up on a piece of peach pit. Rich got it working again by inserting a 1/4" Allen wrench in the hole at the outside bottom of the disposal and twisting to loosen it. Be sure the power is off! Alternatively, call the 800# on the instructions. A nice man talked **Terri Kilshaw** through fixing it with a broom handle!

- l) Shut off water taps for the **washing machine** when it is not in use. Most rubber fill hoses are not meant to withstand constant water pressure and can burst causing flood damage. Within the close quarters of the laundry room, they may also leak for quite a while before the water becomes apparent. For information on household appliances try appliance411.com with links to 30 manufacturers and online appliance repair manuals.
- m) Have you followed the **hot water heater directions** and drained some water out of the bottom of the tank? You may want to with the brown water we've had the last few months. The process is not hard: just get a flat-head screwdriver and a small bowl. The outlet is near the floor. You don't need to drain much. In connection with the same brown water – check the toilet tank to see if it needs cleaning too, especially if you're getting brown stains in the bowl.

4. Safety

- a) **Carbon Monoxide detectors** — have you installed yours yet? Plug-in ones are available at local hardware stores and run about \$30.
- b) **Check your smoke detector**-- push the button, perhaps with a broom handle, and make sure they are still functioning.
- c) **Storm Door Reminder** – Don't lock the storm door while you're away. In an emergency if the association has to gain entry to your unit, they may have to break that door to get in. An unnecessary expense to you
- d) **Don't Get Locked Out**—Install a *KeySafe* between the storm and front door, or any other outside spot. This very small box holds an extra key and uses a number code to open. Available at Robinson's Hardware on Washington St. Hudson for \$35.
- e) **George and Kareen Shaw**, 3 G Strawberry ask that we think about the keeping the outside porch light on during the night time hours for everyone's safety. Porch lights also would act as a security measure.
- f) Home Depot now carries *Carpet Gripper*, pads that go between wall-to-wall carpet and area rugs to keep the top rugs from *walking*. The **Bradbarbs** report that it works fine.
- g) **Smoke Alarm Information** – our units have hard-wired smoke alarms, but there is also a battery back up in each one. **Shirley and Wally Howard** report that their "C" unit has 5. They've been at Quail Run for just over 18 months and the batteries have started chirping.
- h) Have you found the **key to the bathroom** doors – over the door frame on the outside (for when grandkids lock themselves in!)