

From the President's Corner



There has to be a deep, primal satisfaction that we get this time of year from all the lights on display. Thank you to all of you who have put up lovely Christmas lights. Luckily we seem to have avoided the blow-up Santas! The wonderful snow we had a week ago provided the perfect touch. And the Garden Club has once again worked their magic at the Spring Forest entrance with wreaths, bows, and magnolia leaves. Thank you to all who came out to help! Would you believe – when I lived in Illinois, I paid big money to the florist for magnolia leaves to add to my front door decoration at Christmas time, and then of course they quickly froze and turned black. So – it's not really as cold as you think it is!

We have new neighbors who have moved in at 1729 Falls Church and 5903 Sentinel. I haven't made it over to introduce myself and get their email addresses, but do find an opportunity to stop by and welcome them to Whitehall.

Have a happy and safe holiday season!

Toni Cambier
President



HOA Board Agenda Posting

Beginning in January, the HOA Board Agenda will be posted on the WH website. Please visit the website to see the agenda details. Special thanks to David Shogren for posting our news items to the WH website for our community!

Leaves, Leaves, & More Leaves

We really are trying to please everybody, so I apologize to those residents who had concerns. Here's the protocol we tried this year: several mini-blow round-ups, with one big push during the last week to get all the leaves gathered and trucked out of here.

Most of the trees did cooperate by shedding in one fell swoop, and we have been able to use a minimum of collection areas. With the assistance of the city-wide leaf pickup service, we are pretty close to finishing up. Due to the number of complaints in the past, I asked the landscaping crew to be sure and clean the back yards. OOPS! Some naturalized areas were cleaned out by mistake. Not only that, but some cables that should have been buried were cut by accident.

Let me repeat the apologies, please. We'll try again next year. And let me suggest to all of you, call Time Warner (red cables) if you see any lying on the ground around your home or in common areas. Perhaps if enough people bug them, they'll get out here and re-bury the lines. I understand that AT&T has left some above ground also! Never a dull moment...

Submitted by Toni Cambier



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WH Community Garden Takes Shape

The layout for the Whitehall Community Garden was recently completed. The garden will be comprised of a series of garden beds that are generally 5 feet wide and a variety of lengths. All beds will be two feet in height. This height and width will allow for easy gardening: the center of each bed will be no more than 2-1/2 feet from its edge and will be at a height that is comfortable to work. The bed height will also allow access for any gardener confined to a wheel chair.

The length of most of the beds will run in an east/west orientation which will allow for optimum solar orientation for the rows of crops. The sun arcs across the summer sky from the south and all the plants lying in rows running north/south will be directly exposed to its rays. Flower beds will also be included in the garden. A new bulk area for soil and mulch will be constructed near the back of the Pool House. A pavilion (with barbecue!) has been proposed for the southeast corner of the garden in the heavy shade of the existing trees.

Construction of the garden will be phased as funding allows. The first beds to be constructed will be those comprising the herb wheel. Participants in the garden collective will be required to donate two hours of labor a week in order to partake in the harvest. The garden steering committee surmises the majority of beds will be managed in this fashion though there will be a few plots available for those folks who are committed to tending their own plot from March to October. Details of the organization and structure of the garden's management have yet to be fleshed out. Volunteers are needed to construct the garden and make this venture fly.

Submitted by Lynn Sullivan

WH HOA

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Correction on Water Leak Phone Number

Thanks to one of our many sharp residents, we were notified that the daytime number listed in the October-November newsletter was no longer correct. We spoke with the City of Raleigh and the number listed below is the one they suggest we use 24/7 to report a water leak. Thanks!

Water Leak Emergency Number 24/7
829-1930

WH Newsletter Community Bulletin Board Idea

Are you interested in a Whitehall Community Bulletin Board for posting classified ads which would include items you'd like to buy or sell without the hassle of driving somewhere and meeting with strangers? Would you like to find someone in your neighborhood who can provide a service for you? Do you have a product or service you would like to offer to the Whitehall community? If so, please email marya@mnetivier.com. Examples of possible Bulletin Board ads:

For Sale

Treadmill, excellent condition, used only 3 times, digital programs, built-in fan, \$100. You pick up. Call/email: (919) 234-5678 or couchpotato@nc.rr.com

Wanted

Pet sitter for holidays, experienced only, references required. Call (919) 555-5555 or email doglover@yahoo.com

Walking partner, early mornings preferred, 2-3 miles/day. Email walker@yahoo.com

Services Offered

Seamstress specializing in formal and wedding dresses, draperies, home décor. Call (800) 555-5555 or email seamstress@msn.com

Submitted by Marya Metivier

Sidewalk and Speed Bump Update

Precision Sidewalks has done an excellent job of grinding down all the hazards in Area A. In addition, we have found them to be a terrific business with which to work. Both the manager, Gail Leighton, and the crew supervisor, Aaron Hester, went out of their way to stay in constant communication with frequent emails and phone calls. Plus they are always polite and cordial, and go out of their way to be accommodating. We would not hesitate to recommend them. Within the next two budget years we should be able to finish the sidewalk hazards in the remaining areas of Whitehall.

After hearing many moans and groans about money spent on automobile suspensions, we decided to remodel the speed bumps on Sentinel on the north-east side of Falls Church Road. Precision Sidewalks shaved about 1" off the top of each speed bump. They charge by the linear foot, so in order to save money we elected to have a single lane cut down in the middle of the bump instead of doing the entire width of the bump. This is still effective as cars must slow down in order to slot their car into this lane. As soon as possible, this lane will be painted with black paint so as to be more visible.

Submitted by Toni Cambier

Caring For Your Crawl Space Vents

If you are a fairly new resident, you may not be aware of the open vents into the crawl space under your home. Or perhaps you have just been ignoring them, as I have, for the last 10 years!

They have a purpose: to provide enough ventilation to dry out the area beneath the house. During the cold months of the years, it will really help your heat bills if you do close the vents. If they are in working order, there is a lever mechanism that opens and closes the grilled window. If the lever has been lost (or perhaps the entire cover) sometime in the past, there are alternative ways to cover them. This can be done with some magnetic covers (Lowe's?) or by stuffing the opening with insulation, or . . . ? Be creative!

Submitted by Toni Cambier

What About Our Pine Straw?

As reported in the last newsletter, the City Council has exempted single family and duplex developments from the edict banning pine straw within 10 feet from a residence. However, the Council and the Fire Chief have both strongly advised us to consider using an alternative. Many of you have gone to considerable expense to put pine straw around your homes, and the HOA has also used it in the past to mulch areas at the entrances and along Sentinel Drive. And of course, at this time of the year, much of the pine straw is blown away along with the leaf collection! Several residents have expressed concerns about the pine straw near their fences, especially in dry weather.

We'd like to suggest an alternative mulch. Last year, my neighbor and I took advantage of a BOGO offer from the Wake County Yard Waste Center and got two pick-up loads of composted leaf mulch for the huge sum of \$16! We spread it in the common area in our cluster, and we have been very pleased with it. It conserved moisture this summer, kept all our plants alive without watering, has a beautiful dark brown color, and does not blow away with the leaves. The only drawback initially was a slight yeasty smell (like a brewery!), but that quickly dissipated.

The Board has discussed using this, as well as making some available to residents. By way of a pilot project, the landscapers will bring back several loads and put them in the area in back of the pool house. This is an area that the Garden Club has targeted as a place to build containers for soil and mulch. After the mulch has been spread in the areas where we usually put down pine straw, we will be able to consider the cost of transporting and spreading it and decide whether this type of mulch will be economically feasible. In the meantime, you are all welcome to come and get some of the mulch and experiment with it yourself.

Submitted by Toni Cambier

