



Westerlee Community News



www.westerleenews.com

**A Proud Covenant Controlled Community
October, 2006**

A Message from the President...



Dear Neighbors,

When this newsletter reaches you the elections will likely be over and you will have had your experiences with the Diebold electronic voting which eliminated the paper voting with scanning that we were used to in Baltimore County. I wished we could have kept our previous voting system which was relatively fail-safe and so much cheaper. The fully computerized voting is too reliant on electronic equipment which will fail at times, as we all know, and will become obsolete in short order. Please report any irregularities or problems that you encountered while voting to me (archhips@aol.com) or Chuck Sprague, who is an election judge (ChuckSprag@aol.com).

The voting system is just one example of how we become ever more vulnerable and dependent on complicated systems in a time when there is much talk about the need for disaster preparedness.

Just when I write this, strong winds have once again thrown a tree over the electric lines behind the houses on Cedar Circle and some neighbors have been without power for over 24 hours. It seems that the Westerlee community is especially prone to power outages since both lines coming from Rolling Road string through thick foliage. Just as BGE has no long-term strategy for additional power generation it also relies on the patch and fix approach for its many overhead lines instead of a long-range plan of putting these lines underground.

We can't fix these large problems on the neighborhood level, and yet, preparedness starts at each house and at the smallest unit.

There are many things we can do.

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Power generation: In my house, we resorted to a natural gas powered emergency generator recommended by one of our neighbors. Like we, he had had several floods due to power outages in heavy storms when failing sump pumps sent water gushing through the basement. Now the generator will kick in and feed the pumps, the refrigerator, the furnace and some lights when BGE's power fails. A solar power back up would also be a possibility after solar cells became cheaper
(Continued on page 6)

Natural Gas Rates

(the following article was written by Ronald Steinberg, a Westerlee resident. We thank him for his interest and help.)

If you have a contract with BGE HOME , WGES (Washington Gas Energy Services) or any other natural gas supplier providing a guaranteed fixed rate, (presumably to protect you from price increases), please be aware that it also "protects" you from price DECREASES.

About two months ago, I received a letter from BGE HOME notifying me that if I did nothing, my contract with them for natural gas would automatically be renewed at a guaranteed price protection rate of \$1.299 per therm that will not fluctuate.

Since receiving the letter, the price of all commodities, including natural gas, has decreased very sharply; the current rate from BGE is \$0.6037 per therm. Now, while this rate is not guaranteed and may fluctuate down as well as up, I find it difficult to believe it would average anywhere near \$1.299 per therm.

It appears that the only  protected from price fluctuations is the natural gas supplier!!! I strongly recommend that all contracts be cancelled immediately.

Please note that in phone conversations with both BGE HOME and WGES (\$1.25 per therm), they claim they cannot lower the price because they are "locked" in a contract with their supplier.

Identity Theft



The flier attached to this newsletter was obtained from the State's Attorney's Office, courtesy of Assistant State's Attorney Steve Bailey. At a recent meeting at the 2nd Precinct in Woodlawn, he spoke on the important subject of Identity Theft.

AnnualCreditReport.com is the official government-sponsored site to help consumers obtain their free credit report.

This central site allows you to request a free credit file disclosure, commonly called a credit report, once every 12 months from each of the nationwide consumer credit reporting companies: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.

You won't have to enroll in any program that costs money, as you do at some "free" credit report sites.

For your own peace of mind, you can stagger your credit reports from each of the three reporting agencies, so that you can receive three per year.

Baltimore County Noise Laws

It has come to the attention of the Westerlee Community Board that some people do not adhere to the noise laws of Baltimore County.



During the hours of 11PM to 7 AM the law is in effect in reference to the amount of noise that is acceptable,

including loud parties, basketball games, working on vehicle repair and lawn cutting, etc..

If this occurs during these hours on a continual basis please call 911 to request an officer to come out.

(The preceding article was submitted by Ed Hasty, a Westerlee resident and board member.)

Pets Roaming Free

Here in Westerlee we've had several instances of pets roaming free and causing frightening experiences for neighbors. We thought you'd like to know some of the current laws covering the care of animals in Baltimore County. Please pay special attention to the leash laws, and to picking up after your pet.



ANIMAL LAWS: BALTIMORE COUNTY CODE TITLE 6

1. When off the owner's property, all dogs and cats must be walked on a leash. If chained outside, chains must have swivels. Chain collars may not be used, except when training.

2. All dogs and cats over three months of age must be vaccinated against rabies.

3. All dogs and cats must be licensed at four months of age. New pets and all animals moving into Baltimore County must be licensed within thirty days.

4. All animals must be provided shelter for protection from wind, snow, rain, cold and the sun; plus daily food and water, in untipplable bowls.

5. Owners of female cats and dogs "in heat" must not leave their pets outside unattended. (Although spaying female or neutering male animals is not required, it is highly recommended.)

6. It is a violation of the law to allow dogs to bark excessively.

7. If an animal bites someone, the owner and the bite victim must report the injury to the Police Department. You are responsible if your pet bites or

injures another person or animal, or menaces people in the community.

8. Owners are responsible for the removal of pet waste on public and private property.

9. Do not abandon or neglect pets you cannot keep. Instead, call Animal Control for assistance.

10. Maryland law requires that any puppy or kitten sold or given away be at least eight weeks old. Baltimore County law requires anyone selling or giving away a puppy, kitten, dog or cat to provide a health certificate, signed by a licensed veterinarian, along with a statement indicating date of sale or transfer of animal, description of animal, and immunizations given. The name, address and phone number of buyer and seller must also be provided.

11. Inadequate provision of food or water, unsanitary conditions, animal combat, cruelty and neglect are all considered animal abuse.

Westerlee Community News is published by the Westerlee Community Association, Inc., and is edited by Marilyn Maxwell. For further information or to submit articles for publication, contact her at

2006 Westerlee Dues

The last page of this newsletter provides you with an easy way to pay your 2006 dues if you haven't done so already. It's really amazing – our association dues are an obligation that we have – but one that only about 45% of us take seriously. Most association dues for the neighboring communities are much higher. Ours is only \$15.00. Do we not appreciate our community enough to pay this meager amount?



Abridged Board Meeting Minutes

Board Meeting 10/12/2006

Some Highlights:

It was agreed that we need to urge homeowners to pay their association dues. To that end, on the last

page of the October newsletter we will put a form for paying dues.

Shirley Smith updated us on current code enforcement efforts. To show what work the board members are doing, it was decided that we should report some of these incidents in the newsletter:

- a resident had rabbits and chickens in yard. When told that this was a violation of the Westerlee covenants, the homeowners were very receptive and the violations were corrected.
- another had improperly disposed of bulk trash in the back yard. The residents were given contact information to Baltimore County Bulk Item Collections. The trash had been cleaned up.
- at another home, all the household furniture had been placed on front lawn/driveway. Since the homeowner no longer resided there, it was reported to code enforcement. Resolution: furniture was removed.
- trailer parked on the street not hooked to a licensed vehicle. Homeowner was notified that this is a violation of County Code. Later, rechecked; the trailer was attached to a licensed vehicle.
- an old taxicab with no tags, and flat tires was parked at the side of a house. It has since been removed.

Action taken - reported to code enforcement/citation was issued Resolution- car has been removed,

---old red car had 3 flat tires, tags expired 9/04.

Action taken- the residents were issued a citation on 9/22/06 to appear on 10/16/06 before a hearing officer. Car has been removed.

– a vehicle with four flat tires in driveway. Action taken: citation issued to repair or remove vehicle by 10/16/2006; tires have been inflated.

The issue of street sweeping was addressed. In Baltimore County, it is no longer done automatically several times a year. Chuck volunteered to find out what procedures to follow to get our streets swept. It would resolve some of the issue we now have with weeds and even small trees growing out of the gutters. Klaus stated he would contact Sam Moxley about this.–

Research was done on the definition of “Single-Family Dwelling”. According to County Code, a single family dwelling must have no more than two unrelated adults.

At a previous board meeting it was proposed that a “Welcome to Westerlee” sign be erected at the Cedar Circle Drive entrance. Chuck Sprague has done some preliminary investigation into this. In order to accomplish this, we need to get the written

permission of the owners of the property where the sign will be erected.

Again, the topic of block captains came up. It was decided that we ask for volunteers at the general meeting in March. At that time, we should be able to present a clear job description for block captains.

Bettye reported that the following properties are now for sale: 2112 and 2105 Fernglen Way.

A suggestion was made that we publish an official welcoming book (three-ring binder) with all the covenants, bylaws, welcoming card, a history of the community, for the new residents. It will include the map of Westerlee, the directory and possibly some other useful information.

Your Ideas Needed and Welcomed



You know who you are – yes, YOU! If you’ve lived here a long time and know some of the long history of Westerlee, even if it pertains to just your immediate neighborhood – we need you! For this welcoming booklet that we would like to publish, we need your valued input. Put on your thinking cap, recall some of the events, funny or serious, and call or write to one of the members of the board who volunteered to help put together the welcoming book alluded to in the board meeting minutes above. They are:

Klaus Philipsen, 2018 Cedar Circle Drive, 410-747-5351; Charles M. King, 2001 Fernglen Way, 410-747-0970, and Marilyn Maxwell, 2018 Cedar Circle Drive, 410-744-3449

The three volunteers, among them, will know some of the history, but not all of it. Please help.

Some Recipes for Fall...

Fall’s a great time for soups and stews!

Chili

Who doesn’t love a good chili?

- 1 lb. ground sirloin
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 1 sweet pepper, finely chopped
- 4 tbsp. chili powder
- 1 tbsp. cider vinegar
- 1 tsp. cumin



½ tsp. salt
 16 oz. crushed tomatoes
 1 16-oz. can red kidney beans, with liquid
 ¼ tsp. allspice
 ¼ tsp. coriander, dried
 ½ cup water

Cook beef, garlic, onion and green pepper in a heavy skillet over medium-high heat, stirring frequently to break up meat. Cook until onion is soft and meat has lost its pink color. Add remaining ingredients. Cover and reduce heat. Simmer the chili for 45 minutes, stirring frequently. Makes 6 servings.

To make the chili hotter, add cayenne red pepper or Tabasco sauce.

Pasta E Fagioli

This is a wonderful, hearty Italian soup. Perfect for cooler weather!

1 ½ lb. ground sirloin
 1 medium green or red pepper
 1 medium onion, chopped (½ cup)
 ½ cup thinly sliced celery
 3 medium carrots, grated
 4 oz. ditalini
 ½ cup dry kidney beans
 ½ cup dry navy beans
 1 tsp. salt
 ¼ tsp. cayenne red pepper
 28-oz. can crushed tomatoes
 5 cups water
 1 clove garlic, crushed
 2 bay leaves, crumbled
 1 tsp. dried rosemary
 1 tsp. basil leaves
 2 tbsp. fresh oregano, chopped

Soak beans overnight. Drain off water. Cook ground beef with onions, garlic and green pepper, in a large dutch oven until cooked through. Add remaining ingredients, except for ditalini (ditalini looks like a small version of elbow macaroni, but without the "elbow"). Bring all ingredients to a boil, then simmer for about an hour. Add ditalini, and cook for about ten minutes longer, or until ditalini is "al dente." Serves 8.

Our Website



Try to make it a habit to check our website frequently. It contains items of interest to all of us, and is updated whenever we have new information. It's the only way we have of getting this information disseminated in a timely way. It's easy to remember: www.westerleenews.com. And, if you

have any information you think should be there, please call or e-mail the webmaster. You can click on the link on the website, or call 410-744-3449.

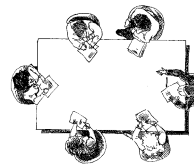
Homeowners Dues

This article was submitted by Bettye Gray for a previous newsletter

FYI: When a house is sold in Westerlee, the Title Company is going to check to see if the Homeowner's dues have been paid. We are a Covenant Community, and the covenants go with the deed. So, at settlement, any unpaid dues will be deducted from the seller's proceeds.



Board Meetings for 2007

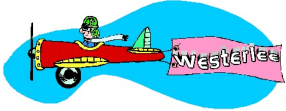


Do you know that you are welcome to attend all board meetings? The board members would love to see you there. This is your neighborhood, your association. If you want to see something done, or if you have a concern, this is the venue to use. The board meetings for 2007 are scheduled as follows: January 11, April 12, July 12, and October 11. Put the dates on your calendar!

An Opt-Out Option

Are you tired of receiving unsolicited credit card and insurance offers in the mail? There's now a way to opt out (similar to the Do Not Call registry). At a recent Police Precinct meeting, Stephen Bailey, currently the Deputy State's Attorney for Baltimore County, gave us this information to put an end to most of these unsolicited offers. Either go to www.optoutprescreen.com or call 1-888-567-8688. On the website you will have to print out a form and mail it in. It won't stop all offers, but it will stop most of them! Pass this information to your friends. I'm sure they'll appreciate it.

Advertising in Our Newsletter



Advertising in our newsletter reaches many of your neighbors who might need a service performed that you do professionally. It's a good way to spread your message, and allow us to give our business to our neighbors. At the same time, it will help defray the cost of the newsletters. All advertising in the newsletter is paid advertising, and does not reflect the views or recommendations of the Board of Directors or the editor of the newsletter.

Fees are as follows:

A quarter page ad	\$10.00
A half page ad (vertical or horizontal)	\$20.00
A full page ad	\$40.00

You will be responsible for creating the artwork and layout (I will be glad to help) and can bring or send it, with your check, to

Westerlee Newsletter, 2019 Cedar Circle Drive
Baltimore, Maryland 21228

The deadlines for 2007 for placing an ad or article in the newsletter are as follows (generally 10 days after a board meeting):
Jan 21, April 22, July 22, and October 21.

Construction Plans must Be Submitted For Approval



Our covenants state that all external changes to our homes or lots must be approved by the Board of Directors, in order to maintain the integrity of the architecture and landscaping in Westerlee:

"No garages, outbuildings, fences or other structures shall be erected without prior permission of Westerlee Community, Inc., its successors or assigns, or its duly appointed agent, and no building shall be built closer to the front street than forty (40) feet, no closer to the side street than twenty-five (25) feet."

For that reason, an Architectural Review Committee studies all plans and submits their findings and recommendations to the Board only at the regular quarterly meetings. That means that you must plan ahead if you wish to add an addition, a shed, or even a fence. Architectural plans must be submitted four

weeks before a board meeting to give the Architectural Review Committee and the Board adequate time to review the plans. The dates for the upcoming Board of Directors meetings are listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

The committee requires a full set of architectural drawings for any changes to the exterior of your home. If you have plans you wish to submit, contact one of the Architectural Review Committee members:

Klaus Philipsen at (410)747-5351
or by e-mail at kphilips@aol.com
Shirley Smith at (410)744-4141
or by e-mail at ss@westray.net
Richard Maxwell at (410)744-3449
or by e-mail at rmaxwell@comcast.net

(message from the President (cont. from p. 1.)
and batteries better. There are also small portable solar-powered systems on the market which can run a radio, laptop or some lights.

Heat: Furnaces rely on electric fans to work, even when they are gas fired which means we should have alternative heating sources in the house for the winter.

Small items: At least one corded phone should be installed in the house because the cordless phones need power to operate. I don't need to mention flashlights, small gas camping style burners or other such small items of preparedness which will make a day without power so much more tolerable.

Beyond technology we can help each other neighbor to neighbor. I have seen electric cords strung across the street, just one of many ways how we can help those stranded in a powerless house.

These thoughts hopefully have their practical side but also supposed to address the larger need for a review of our dependencies. Simpler solutions and systems are often not only less vulnerable but might also be better for the environment. If the predictions of heavier and more frequent storms prove correct, we will need to become more self-reliant and at the same time reduce our contributions to the degradation of the environment.

Let's hope our newly-elected state and local representatives will understand and respond to these challenges, electronic voting or not.

Klaus Philipsen
President, Westerlee
Community Association.

For more information on preparedness see

<http://www.familyfirst.md/>

<http://www.prepare.org/>

<http://www.redcross.org/>

Information about alternative power sources:

<http://www.utilityfree.com/>


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Solar water pumps:

<http://www.utilityfree.com/solar/waterpumping/etapump.html>

You can also direct questions to my wife, Nayna Philipsen, a Red Cross trained "disaster response nurse". (410-747-5351).

N.H. Philipsen



- ☒ 1 car in the shop
- ☒ 2 kids in college
- ☒ 4 late bills
- ☒ 8 days til payday

- ☒ Life before the FNA

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