

WESTERLEE COMMUNITY NEWS



Westerlee: A Proud Covenant Controlled Community



www.westerleenews.com

Editor & Designer: Bob Propper

September 2011

8/11

Dear Neighbors,

While summer might seem hot and lazy as always and our yards go through the seasonal draught/flood cycles the nation as a whole seems stuck in self doubt and serious questions where to move from here. As business consultants never tire to say: when you stand still you are sliding backwards, especially if others are forging ahead.



Even though, our metro region is comparably well positioned and neither Baltimore County nor Catonsville or even Westerlee are not standing still. Some may ask themselves whether the change we see is progress but certain changes are welcome to almost everybody: Frederick Road finally seems to have become again a real Main Street with new restaurants and new businesses opening up, bringing local services to those of us who long have been looking for alternatives to the ubiquitous national chains and superstores. It seems these days that folks in the County point to Catonsville when they want to show success while it was just recently all about Pikesville, Towson or government infusions into Essex and Dundalk. The university of Maryland at Baltimore County under its new and very active President and has achieved a great reputation as a first rate school. It could be used as an engine for Catonsville to infuse even more energy. The merchants, developers and property owners that used to be the "Catonsville 2000" group have formed a 2020 group trying to define a prosperous future. A consensus on what Catonsville should be has still to emerge. Meanwhile too many projects are suggested in the wrong places or in a manner that does not add up to a bigger picture (The Y facility, the Thistle Road homes and many others). If the 2020 group came up with a solid strategic plan for the next 20 years, it would certainly help to guide developers, investors and the communities facing new development.

Although Westerlee largely looks like it would have in its founding days in the fifties and sixties with just the trees being much bigger, below the surface there is an aging infrastructure (bursting water pipes) and occasional unwelcome unkempt yards or even home auctions. And then there is a different demographic profile of Westerlee's residents. We have become home to many

WESTERLEE COMMUNITY, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Klaus Philipsen
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Vice President: Wanda Richardson

Secretary: Fred Hickok

Treasurer: Chris Goatee

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Bob Hoffman

Bob Propper

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Chuck Sprague

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PLEASE CHECK

cultures, we have tenants and owners, we have original owners and we have third generation families. This reflects the demographic changes of the metro region and the nation as a whole. I wish that everybody could embrace this as an opportunity to learn and widen the horizon rather than focus on the differences of the other. Those of us who are older know that much of what we believed to be right once has since proven wrong, or at least, is not embraced anymore as the "cat's meeow". This makes me think that the more different views go into the forming of a consensus, the better and more stable such a consensus should be. However, as we can see, consensus has also become more difficult to achieve and more elusive in many areas. Thus many projects don't get done, many decisions are not made and that gets us to the already mentioned standstill.

The neighborhood is the perfect place to get to know each other and see each other as what we are, share views. As a result, neighbors are looking out for neighbors and this is still the best way to live in peace. The knowledge that somebody else is paying attention, whether a burglar stalks the property or one falls unexpectedly ill and needs help. There are times where no internet, no e-mail and no Facebook can substitute for the real life person showing up and lending a hand. For this to happen, we need to who how our neighbors are. Let's meet at our Westerlee community picnic and find out!

Greetings from house to house,

Klaus Philipsen

Hurricane Preparedness

As everybody has freshly imprinted in their memory, Westerlee was not spared the impact of the most recent tropical storm. The most severe result was the power outage lasting four days. In our community this means not only darkness and spoiled food in refrigerators and freezers, it also means failing sump pumps and the risk of flooded basements. A gasoline generator is a good source of back-up power, but it requires to be home to start it and requires frequent refueling. It also presents the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning if it operates near windows or doors. Several residents in our community have gone to the next level: A natural gas fueled hard wired generator that starts itself and provides power directly into the house wiring system. These come in various sizes, depending how much of your electric system you want to provide with power in an emergency. Most would want to connect some lights, the pesky sump pumps and the refrigerator. If you have an electric stove, hot water heater or you want to run your washing machine or AC, you need to pick a quite large and expensive generator to do that. Selecting gas hot water heaters, gas stoves and gas dryers as well as gas furnaces instead of electric ones saves you a lot of trouble in an electric outage. These stationary hard wired generators set you back anywhere between \$3000 and \$8000 depending on the size. If it saves you a flooded finish basement, it might be well worth the expenditure. One more thing: If the power goes out, call BGE even if you can assume that your neighbor did this already. They count how many reports they get and assign urgency accordingly. When I inquired about our power situation with the appropriate contacts it turned out that BGE was not aware that our entire community was out (except, miraculously, four houses in Cedar Circle Court), they apparently

had only nine reports although I had logged this into a MEMA map already on Sunday via smart phone. Thanks also to our Councilman for his help in getting information to BGE. If you have power lines on or at the back of your property, keep an eye on your trees and keep them from growing into the lines. If pruning is too dangerous because of the lines, call BGE for preemptive pruning. However, as we all know, they are not very good at prevention or keeping their system in top shape. With the juice flowing again, we tend to forget quickly. However, storms are a certainty and as citizens and customers we can insist on BGE investing in their grid to make it more reliable. However, until this happens, you might look into the option of a hard wired generator.

Klaus Philipsen

It Can Even Happen in Westerlee

There was an attempted burglary at 1:00 am on 7/14 at Lou Yingling's house. The glass was broken on the front door and there was a forced entry. When the alarm went off, Lou investigated and the suspect took off. Nothing was taken. Police came and secured what could be secured, but found no particular evidence. It appears that the suspect arrived in a car and boldly pulled into the driveway. This brazen attempt at a robbery in our neighborhood perhaps indicates an increased activity by criminals responding to the poor economic situation that we find ourselves in at this time. An alarm scared off the burglar which might suggest that an alarm system is a very good investment. Unfortunately, often what starts out as a burglary can go bad and people can get hurt—or worse. Our police department has a service that will send an officer to your house and make suggestions how you can improve the safety of your house and—most of all—you. Don't put it off and wait until something happens.

Heads of Westerlee Committees

Social Committee: Karen Straughn

Architectural Review Committee: Klaus Philipsen

Code Violations Committee: Klaus Philipsen

Block Captains Committee: Karen Straughn & Wanda Richardson

Welcoming Committee: Bob Propper

Advertising Rates in Our Newsletter

We welcome your advertising in our Newsletter. You'll find it's a very good bargain in advertising your services to 164 Westerlee families—plus their friends and family relations who see the newsletter or hear by word of mouth what you do and what services you can provide to home owners.

Our rates are very low for the advertising exposure you receive in our Newsletter. Plus there are a range of ad sizes to fit any advertising budget.

Our rates are listed below:

Business Card Facsimile Black & White: \$15.00

1/4 page Black & White: \$30.00

Color (back page): \$45.00

1/2 page Black & White: \$50.00

Color (back page): \$75.00

1 full page Black & White: \$95.00 either in the newsletter or as an insert: \$95.00

Color (back page): \$140.00

Color Insert Both Sides Color: \$200.00

Contact: Bob Propper at: rapropper@hotmail.com

—Notices—

Westerlee's bylaws are in the process of being revised.

We will keep you advised of the changes.

Westerlee's dues are being increased to \$25 per year.

This is the first increase in a long time

Next board meetings: Oct 20, Jan 19th 6:30 – location to be determined

We Need You Now

Our newsletter means it's for everyone in Westerlee. This means You We need your contributions about your thoughts, celebra-

TREASURER'S REPORT

Period beginning June 1, 2011 and ending June 30, 2011

Beginning balance

\$4682.33

Income:

Dues Received:

\$45.00

Other Income -Interest

\$.03

Total Income

\$45.03

Expenditures

Newsletter

\$204.10

Total

\$204.10

Ending Balance:

\$4523.26

(Beginning Balance+Total Income- Expenditures)

2011 Dues

Westerlee Community Association
Dues for 2010 and 2011 (\$15.00) can be sent to:

Chris Goatee, Treasurer
2118 Cedar Circle, Dr.
Baltimore, Maryland 21228

Many thanks to those who have already paid their dues

Westerlee Community Association, Inc.
July 21, 2011

The board meeting was called to order at 6:37 p.m.

Present were officers Klaus Philipsen (President), Wanda Richardson (Vice President), Chris Goatee (Treasurer) and Fred Hickok (Secretary) and board members Fred Kirk, Bob Propper, Chuck Sprague and Karen Straughn. Absent were board members Joan Goudy, Al Holder and Rosemary Snyder.

Bylaws: Klaus announced that a law firm has offered to compose an engagement letter that would be sent to a homeowner who has not paid dues. A lawyer with the firm would send the letter, file a lien if necessary, tag on a fee and return the fee upon payment. Klaus hoped that the threat of filing would lead to greater compliance. Fred K. moved that negotiations with the law firm be pursued. Chuck suggested that Klaus report back to the board and a vote by e-mail be held.

Traffic: Klaus reported that the traffic count on Cedar Circle Drive from Rolling Road to Fernglan Way was insufficient to justify traffic calming measures. Karen asked about possibly testing the section of Dlong Road from Nuwood to Chantilla or the section of Cedar Circle Drive between Fernglan and Dlong. Chuck remarked that residents along the dead end section of Chantilla should appeal directly to the board if they find getting off their street too difficult. Klaus reported meeting with the County Planning Director, who is interested in traffic calming and pedestrian and bicycle issues. Chuck urged that an appeal for trimming overhanging bushes along the roads appear in the newsletter.

Board: Wanda determined that the next board meetings should be on October 20 and January 19. Karen offered to host the first one and Chuck the second one. Chris said that she will contact Woodbridge Valley Elementary School about arrangements for next April's annual meeting. Klaus said that Paul decided to resign so he asked Chris, Wanda and Joan to seek a replacement, preferably an African-American, and report at the next board meeting.

Issues: Klaus said that residents along the dead end section of Chantilla have complained about dumping at the end of the street. Karen suggested asking about a No Dumping sign. Fred K. added that a Neighborhood Watch sign might help deter crime. Chris said that such a sign would give people an unjustified impression that our community is a dangerous place. Chuck said that the sign is not needed and that immediate neighbors should be encouraged to watch each other's property. Fred H. commented that a regular patrol is probably required to

go along with the posting of a Neighborhood Watch sign. Karen said that she will look into the requirements.

Newsletter: Bob announced an August 20 deadline for submitting items for the next newsletter. Chuck offered to take over distributing newsletters for a block captain who is unable to do that job.

Community Party: Karen offered her backyard. Wanda mentioned the possibility of a resident setting up a Moon Bounce. The date of Sunday, September 18, was picked and Wanda volunteered to compose a flyer.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Fred Hickok

What Westerlee residents can do to avoid breaking the law, the covenants or Baltimore County Code and make life more pleasant for all (this is from a "hit list" of the most common infractions) :

1. Maintain the speed limit on our local roads (25 mph!) and respect the STOP signs.
2. Do not park unlicensed motor vehicles on your property (no sticker, the vehicle has to go).
3. Do not park commercial vehicles (trucks, box vans with commercial logos, ladders or the like) on private property
4. Submit changes to your property that alter the appearance to the Westerlee Architectural Review Committee. These changes would also typically require a Baltimore County permit.
5. Pay your dues to Westerlee Inc. (currently \$15, was due in January. Starting 1/2012: \$25 annually)
6. Do not dispose of your yard waste or any other waste except on your property and in permitted trash cans or composting containers everything else is illegal dumping.

For information or for reporting code violations, see this web site: <http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/contact/codecomplaint>

Disclaimer

Westerlee Community Newsletter is not responsible for the accuracy or errors in any of the ads in the Newsletter, nor do we necessarily recommend any services or products provided by our advertisers. Any questions about ads should be addressed directly to the advertisers.

Westerlee Community News is published by the Westerlee Community Association, Inc., and is edited by Bob Propper.

For further information or to submit articles for publication, contact Bob at rapropper@hotmail.com

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How to Submit Material to Our Newsletter

DO NOT submit text files in pdf or in any other file except .doc files. All text must be in Times Roman typeface, Microsoft Word files. All photos must be in JPEG files. Send me the files as attachments to your email. Send to me, R.A. Propper, at: rapropper@hotmail.com

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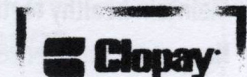
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We Need Your Input

We need your input. Sometime or other, many of you will want the Board to know about a concern of yours. The best way to do this is to come to the Board meetings. Remember—any Westerlee resident is more than welcome to attend any Board meeting and present your concerns directly to the Board. This is the best way of having your voice heard and the best way for the Board to help. Please keep this in mind the next time you want to be heard. WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The next two Board meetings are: **Oct 20th** and **Jan 19th at 6:30PM** – location to be determined.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES AT WESTERLEE

EDITORIAL Never Again!

My family and I were very lucky we decided to install our own generator after the last hurricane, Isabelle, that ripped through Westerlee. We came home from a trip and found three inches of water in our basement because our sump pump wasn't working since the power outage lasted for some days. It took three months to finally get a contractor and get our basement fixed.

Oh yeh, we had a battery back up, but that was good for only six hours. And with portable generators, you have to keep them filled with gasoline or propane every six or eight hours. If you're away, who gets the generator plugged in, running, and keeps it filled with fuel?

Well, neighbors, there's a solution. We found that generators also run on the gas that's piped into your home for cooking, etc. With some research, we found a company that sells a great generator that will keep most things going and can be set up so electricity only goes to those rooms and equipment like refrigerators, etc., that you want. No air conditioning, since that uses a lot of power. It ain't cheap, but it's not way past your budget. And the alternative is what we just went through: no power for days and a nasty cleanup.

I hope none of you suffered in this hurricane what we suffered before we installed our generator.

If you're interested in getting one of these machines, please contact me and I'll be happy to pass on the information. Email me at: rapropper@hotmail.com

R.A. Propper, Editor

A Friendly Neighborhood By Chuck Sprague

A friendly neighborhood is one where community residents lookout for each other, share in joys as well as sadness, help each other where they can, and maintain a positive attitude in dealing with local and community-wide issues.

If you're going to be away for a few days do you let your neighbor know and ask them to collect your paper or mail while you are gone? You should, because it removes an obvious signal to the bad guys, that might wander through the neighborhood, that someone is gone for a spell. It also alerts your neighbor to beware of any unusual activity at your residence while you are away.

There is another indicator of a friendly neighborhood we too often forget about. And that is how diligent we are about keeping our sidewalks clear of bushes and tree branches. If you have to duck down to walk under a tree branch over the sidewalk, or step off the walk to avoid bushes that have overgrown and cover part of the walkway, You certainly form an opinion of that resident which isn't friendly. We have a lot of walkers in our neighborhood and it will be much appreciated if you make the effort to be a good neighbor and keep your sidewalks clear.

PLEASE—PLEASE—PLEASE

**Cut bushes on corners so motorists can see oncoming traffic and prevent accidents—
and along sidewalks to keep them clear for pedestrians. This is a serious problem for all of us. Please help.**

Protection for you and your home 13 Things Your Burglar Won't Tell You:

1. Of course I look familiar. I was here just last week cleaning your carpets, painting your shutters, or delivering your new refrigerator.
2. Hey, thanks for letting me use the bathroom. While I was in there, I unlatched the back window to make my return a little easier.
3. Love those flowers. That tells me you have taste ... Those yard toys your kids leave out always make me wonder what type of gaming system they have.
4. Yes, I really do look for newspapers piled up on the driveway. And I might leave a pizza flyer in your front door to see how long it takes you to remove it.
5. If it snows while you're out of town, get a neighbor to create car and foot tracks into the house.
6. If decorative glass is part of your front entrance, don't let your alarm company install the control pad where I can see if it's set. That makes it too easy.
7. A good security company alarms the window over the sink. And the windows on the second floor, which often access the master bedroom and your jewelry.
8. It's raining, you're fumbling with your umbrella, and you forget to lock your door; understandable. But understand this: I don't take a day off because of bad weather.
9. I always knock first. If you answer, I'll ask for directions somewhere or offer to clean your gutters. (Don't take me up on it.)
10. Do you really think I won't look in your sock drawer? I always check dresser drawers, the bedside table, and the medicine cabinet.
11. Helpful hint: I almost never go into kids' rooms.
12. You're right: I won't have enough time to break into that safe where you keep your valuables. But if it's not bolted down, I'll take it with me.
13. A loud TV or radio can be a better deterrent than the best alarm system. If you're reluctant to leave your TV on while you're out of town, you can buy a \$35 device that works on a timer and simulates the flickering glow of a real television. (Find it at faketv.com.)

8 MORE Things Your Burglar Won't Tell You:

1. Sometimes, I carry a clipboard. Sometimes, I dress like a lawn guy and carry a rake. I do my best to nosy neighbors.
3. I'll break a window to get in, even if it makes a little noise. If your neighbor hears one loud sound, he'll stop what he's doing and wait to hear it again. If he doesn't hear it again, he'll just go back to what he was doing. It's human nature.
4. I'm not complaining, but why would you pay all that money for a fancy alarm system and leave your house Without setting it?
5. I love looking in your windows. I'm looking for signs that you're home, and for flat screen TVs or gaming systems I'd like. I'll drive or walk through your neighborhood at night, before you close the blinds, just to pick my target.
6. Avoid announcing your vacation on your Facebook page. It's easier than you think to look up your address.
7. To you, leaving that window open just a crack during the day is a way to let in a little fresh air. To me, it's an invitation.
8. If you don't answer when I knock, I try the door. Occasionally, I hit the jackpot and walk right in.

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