



**NEWS
AROUND
THE
NEIGHBORHOOD**

November, 2009

It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Thank you to all that have helped and are helping to make Briar Cove a wonderful place to live. The holiday season is fast approaching and as you know, it is a special time to enjoy family and friends. If by chance there is a family member or friend you have lost contact with, this is the perfect time to invite them into your home. The holiday season is also a time to share and reflect on the blessings we have received throughout the year. While reflecting on the past, use this time of reflection to project a coming year of positive thoughts and deeds.

Welcome New Board Member!

The Board would like to welcome Patti Jongsma as the newest Board member. Three positions were open and Jay Popp and Elaine Gadomski were re-elected for another term. The roles of the Board members have not yet been determined, but will be posted on our Website when that happens.

The Board would like to thank Denise Warren for her commitment and hard work during her term. Denise will continue to maintain our Website and work

with the Board to prepare the newsletters.

Second Annual Christmas Party

The second annual Christmas party will be held on Sunday, December 6, at the Rockwell Clubhouse, 1821 Great Lakes Drive, at 4:00 p.m. Dinner tickets are \$17 per person and are available on a first-come, first-served basis because we are limited to about 90 people. Please contact Carmen Ware (carmenware@sbcglobal.net) for payment and details, by November 30.

At the party, Cheryl Warshaw will be bringing copies of the 2010 Briar Cove Directory for those who did not receive theirs yet, and for those who do not have e-mail. She will send the updated copies out by e-mail to those who provided an e-mail address.

Annual Meeting

Thank you to everyone who attended the meeting. If you were not able to attend the annual meeting on November 19, here are some highlights:

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- ◆ We are financially sound, and the monthly assessments will not be raised for next year.
- ◆ Regarding scrape marks on the driveways, the conclusion is that it is better to live with the scrape marks than limit the snow removal ability of the snow plows by using blades that have a limited ability to remove the snow and ice.
- ◆ The new rain sensors are already paying for themselves in water savings.
- ◆ In the next couple of weeks Master-cut will be trimming back the brush around the perimeter of the community. As a point of clarification the pine trees in your back yard, for all practical purposes, identify the boundary where the wetlands start, which is like a conservation area. The trimming will involve cutting the brush back about four feet. This is being done for several reasons. As you may have noticed, in many places the brush is killing the pine trees, and as the brush spreads nearer to the homes, a potential fire hazard is created. The trimming will also allow the grounds people to better maintain the area. If you have already trimmed back the brush at least four feet, no further trimming will be done. Because the area of trimming is considered wetland, the brush that is cut down will be moved only to other parts of the area which will not be trimmed.
- ◆ The walking trail on Ludington has been repaved. The contractor laid asphalt at the entrance and used larger crushed limestone for the path. This should wear better than the original path. The decision was made to make these repairs because it is required by our governing documents, to take advantage of a \$600 discount offered by the contractor, and to avoid any material cost increases that could have occurred if the work was delayed until next year
- ◆ With the proxy/ballot mailing from Peter, a consent to amend our By-Laws was included. We have 100 signed consents and need 80 more. This amendment will arrange the terms of office of the Board of Directors to minimize the Board turnover each year. Our by-laws currently state that three of the five directors will have terms of one, two and three years, respectively. The terms of the other two directors are one year, per Indiana law. This amendment proposes changing the one-year terms of the two directors to two and three year terms, respectively, and after the initial terms of all directors expire, their terms will be changed to three years. This will eliminate the election of five directors in any year. When you administer a \$350,000+ budget, work with 272 households and interact with various service contractors, an extraordinary amount of history and knowledge is referenced to make sound and fair decisions. Please support this amendment to change the directors' terms

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of office by signing and mailing the consent to Peter Bylen. A copy is enclosed for your convenience, and you can mail it with your monthly assessment payment.

- ◆ As has become tradition, Tom Schmitt, our Town Councilman, attended our meeting and brought three additional guest speakers: Daniel Smith, Schererville Chief of Police, Kevin Connelly, Schererville Commissioner of Police, and Hal Slager, Councilman for Ward 2 and Town Council Vice President. The Board would like to thank Tom and each of these special guests for attending and for speaking and answering questions regarding the recent break-ins and other questions relative to the community, town, and railroad. Daniel Smith suggested leaving lights and radios or TVs on when you are not home to simulate someone being home. For more tips on protecting your home from break-ins, please visit their Website, www.schererville.org. You can also follow them on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/ScherervillePD>).
- ◆ A question was raised about the wood and caulking above the garages when they are being painted. If any of the wood is damaged, or contains mold, it is the homeowner's responsibility to repair or replace the wood and remove any mold (Article IV, Section 1, item i, page 7, of the Declaration). The painting contractor can only make minor repairs, and will notify a Board member if any wood needs to be re-

placed. The Board will then notify the homeowner.

Vendor Contracts

After meeting with several vendors, the Board negotiated new contracts with the following vendors: Mastercut (lawn maintenance), Forever Green (fertilization), Schererville Irrigation (sprinklers), North American Pump (pump maintenance), Aquadic Weed Control (waterfall maintenance), and 1st American Management Company (management company). In some cases, the Board was able to negotiate lower prices without reducing the quality of services.

Update from Sue Arias, Landscaping & Beautification Committee Chair

Next year's Spring projects will include landscaping the front entrance and finishing the landscaping around the new Ludington sign, which will include a solar spot light. Sue would like to thank all of the committee members for their time and energy this year, and the whole committee is looking forward to next year's projects.

Alerts

Please check the Alerts section of our Website often for important news and updates. If you have a neighbor that does not have internet access, please advise them of these alerts.

- ◆ **Break-ins.** As you are probably by now aware, there have been two break-ins in our community. A home on Pentwater Lane was broken into

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on the morning of October 16. A second home was discovered broken into on Manistee Avenue in the same fashion (possibly in the same time frame as the first break-in). Nothing was found missing in either case. No one was home during the break-ins, the home of the first break-in did not have a storm door, and the second home had a storm door but it was not locked. Practice vigilance in the neighborhood. Use the dead bolt when you leave the house. Lock your storm door if you have one. Be alert to strangers in the neighborhood. And, most importantly, get to know your neighbors!

- ◆ **Pet Safety Concern.** A resident's small dog experienced a near attack by an owl after dark while being walked by their owner. In light of this near attack and coyotes in the area, please do not leave your pets unattended.

Seasonal Tips

- ◆ **Hoses.** Don't forget to disconnect your hoses from the outside of your homes (failure to do so can cause pipes to burst over the winter), and to remove pots and decorations from porches to permit snow removal.
- ◆ **Street Parking.** Vehicles should be removed from the street after two inches of snowfall to allow for city snow removal. Possible tickets and/or towing may result.

- ◆ **Fire Hydrants.** If you notice that a fire hydrant in your area is obscured or covered when the snow is plowed, please advise Peter Bylen immediately at 800-990-3536, ext. 310.

- ◆ **Back Door.** Be sure to keep your back door clear of snow, as this is your second exit in case of an emergency.

- ◆ **Salt.** Use only calcium chloride salt for melting ice, it's the safest for asphalt/cement. Please be sure to read the packaging label, as some products claim to be less harmful than others, and note that the instructions state to clean the slush before it refreezes.

- ◆ **Frozen Pipes/Heat.** If you are going to be away from home for more than a day or two, you should turn off your water to prevent freezing pipes, and set your thermostat to 60 degrees. But even if you leave your heat on, the power can go off for an extended period of time and a substantial amount of damage can occur if a frozen pipe bursts, not only to your home, but to your attached neighbor's.

Damaged Mailboxes.

The Association will not absorb the cost for the repair of damaged mailboxes. If your mailbox is damaged by a contractor, you must contact Peter Bylen immediately. If it was not damaged by a contractor and just needs to be repaired or replaced, you will need to get together with your neighbor and arrange

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for the repair. The replacement mailbox must remain uniform. Peter Bylen has recommended two contractors that would be able to replace or repair mailboxes: 1st American Management's maintenance department (800-990-3536 extension 309, or use the contact link at www.1stpropertymanagers.com); or Caporale Posts, the contractor that originally installed the mailbox units (317-883-3725 or www.mailboxposts.net). The costs are comparable and both contractors are fully insured.

Recreational Vehicles.

The Board is considering changing the rule regarding parking recreational vehicles in driveways, however, until the rule is changed, no boats, campers, etc. are permitted in the driveways. If a situation arises and you must temporarily park a recreational vehicle in your driveway, please be proactive and alert Peter Bylen.

Classifieds.

You may also not be aware that we have a Classified section on our Website. There is currently one item listed for sale. Items are restricted to

Briar Cove homeowners, so if you have something to sell, or are looking for a service or something to buy, e-mail the Board for posting on the Website.

On-line Assessment Payments.

In order for the Association's bank to accept online payments, the Bank requires that at least 20 homeowners sign up. There is a monthly administrative fee of \$20 per drawn date, which the Association would cover if we can get 20 people to commit. Please notify Peter Bylen if you are interested in this service (pbylen@1stpropertymanagers.com). Depending on the response, if the association implements this service, there would be a small administrative charge for this service.

Next Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be on Thursday, December 17, 2009, at 6:30 p.m. at the Schererville Public Library, Schererville-Dyer Branch, 1001 West Lincoln Highway.

www.briarcovehomeownersassociation.com