



NEWS AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Spring 2011

2011 Board of Directors

*Joe Arias, President
Jay Popp, Vice President
Rita Stopper, Secretary*

*Ralph Flens, Treasurer
Dave DeYoung, Director*

SPRING, OH SPRING, WHEREFORE ART THOU

After an eventful winter, with a blizzard to remember, to say the least, we are so ready for Spring weather to arrive. The calendar says it arrived March 20th, but it must have missed us.

We, however, can't afford to wait for Spring weather to arrive. We have already been busy sorting out the little details to prepare our vendors and the homeowners on what's coming. The Landscaping & Beautification Committee is starting to plan to put the finishing touches on last year's project. The Spring activities are further detailed in this Newsletter. We're planning to install a night lighting system to deter the geese. Signs are scheduled to be posted around the pond and waterfalls in an effort to meet Insurance requirements.

The board is also planning activities of their own. We have a full plate of "things to do." In addition to finalizing the survey, we're working on Committee guidelines, a guidebook for future incoming Directors; we're scheduling special workshops to assist the transition of a homeowner into the role of a board member. The finished product will be available on the Website for the homeowner to view. It will be back to the classroom for the board members. We'll be introduced to "A Guide for Volunteers for Leadership." We're also preparing a Code of Ethics which will outline ethical standards for our Board of Directors. We're pleased to say that by adopting a Code of Ethics we'll be the only homeowners association in our area to do so. The Code

of Ethics is meant as a guide for the Directors in the performance of their duties.

Now here's what's going on in the neighborhood:

Next Board Meeting

Due to scheduling conflicts, the quarterly April board meeting had to be rescheduled to Wednesday, May 11, 2011, 6:30 p.m., at the Lake County Public Library, Dyer-Schererville Branch, 1001 Lincoln Highway.

Recap of Rules Survey

"RULES, RULES, RULES, we love them, we hate them, we need them", that was the opening sentence in the January's Newsletter concerning the survey. This time around it's "SURVEY SAYS".

Thank you to the homeowners that returned the surveys. We appreciate the time taken to give us your comments. We received 128 responses, which represents a little less than 50% of the homeowners. The focus is on the surveys received as being representative of the homeowner's opinions. The first question of the survey indicated that homeowners wanted the board to consider reviewing the rules. The task now at hand is to review the survey to decide how to interpret the comments.

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The survey comments ranged from “Some people don’t know when enough is enough” to “Thank you for considering our changes” another asked “Will the results for each item be put on the website”. Yes, we do intend to share the comments with the homeowners; however the one question we failed to ask was, if your comments could be published on our Website. If you wish that your comments NOT to be published, contact the board at briarcoveboard@yahoo.com or contact Peter Bylen (pbylen@1stpropertymanagers.com or 800-990-3536 extension 310) to remove your comments. No names or addresses will be published. In about 3-4 days after you receive this Newsletter, the survey comments will appear on the website.

Included in this Newsletter is a percentage page. It’s a percentage breakdown of the questions asked. The Survey page has 3 columns. There is an “ALLOW, and DO NOT ALLOW. The 3rd column is marked BLANK. Those consist of homeowners that did not give an opinion on the question. We can only surmise that the homeowner felt no interest in that particular question.

What’s next with the survey? We’re working on an Amendment Guideline for the outdoor items that will clarify each rule change that is approved. The board is working out the details, and when it’s confirmed that it meets all legal requirements it will be drafted into an Amendment. The proposed Amendment will be presented for approval by the board and incorporated into our Rules and Regulations. It will be sent out to the homeowners along with the rule guidelines for each rule change.

Poop, Poop, and More Poop!

Picking up after one's dog is part of the responsibility of owning one. Nobody wants to step in dog **poop**. We don’t want our children to step in it, and we don’t want to send it flying when our lawns are mowed. We’ve had many complaints about people walking their dogs and letting them **poop** on other people’s property and not removing the **poop**. There are town ordinances requiring that your dog be on a leash, and that you must pick up after your dog promptly. There are also Association rules requiring the same, but there is still **poop**. If we

continue to have a problem, the board will have to consider fining the offenders. Here are a few suggestions for pet owners:

- ◆ Confine your pets to the sidewalk or parkways only, not your neighbor's yards.
- ◆ Walk your pet on a short leash for better control.
- ◆ Let your pet **poop** in your back yard before you take your pet for a walk, and pick it up promptly so your neighbors don’t have to see it or smell it. This will also eliminate **poop** in your neighbor's yard.
- ◆ Immediately pick up after your pet and you won't have to read about **poop** in every newsletter.
- ◆ Just be a good neighbor and clean up your pet's **poop**.

These rules also apply to any guests who bring their dogs for a visit to Briar Cove. Please be sure that your guests are aware of the rules if they are going to walk their pets in Briar Cove.

Lake County Reassessment

The process of home reassessment is now in progress. If you were not home when the assessor came by, a card was left in your door with a phone number to call. Please be sure to call. You will only have to answer a few questions.

Window Warranty

One of our homeowners had moisture between the panes in one of her windows. She called Olthof and found out that there is a lifetime warranty on the replacement glass, but it does not cover installation. The lower windows can be removed and re-installed easily, but the upper ones are more difficult and likely require an expert. Her lower window replacement was completely free of charge and she had the option of picking it up at Kirsch in Frankfort or directly from the factory from Silverline in Lansing. If you are having a problem with your windows, you should call Shawn at Kirsch Builders (who originally installed our windows). His number is 815-469-3200. Apparently you need to know your lot number when you call. If you don't know it, you

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can call Becki at Olthof first at 219-558-8080, ext. 316. Thank you to the homeowner for sharing this info!

Water Spots/Ice Dams

Water spots are possibly due to ice dams where the freeze cycle lifts shingles and melted snow/ice makes its path. A roofer is the right person to inspect and repair any damage; damage related to ice dams is not covered by warranty and would be at the homeowner's expense. Once the outside is taken care of, and depending on the size of the stain, you might only need to touch the spot up with paint. Ask the roofer if they feel that the insulation might be saturated and need replacement. The roofing subcontractor used by Olthof is Eenigenburg Roofing (219-365-8879). The same homeowner who had her window replaced said that Eenigenburg came out the same day and fixed her problem for a very reasonable charge. 1st American Management also recommends Korellis Roofing in Hammond (219-844-1400).

Moles

We are addressing the mole problem, but please remember that after the bait is applied, the moles have to consume the bait in order for the poison to work. Furthermore, baiting doesn't correct the problem. For the bait to be effective, the mounds need to be left undisturbed (leaving people the impression that nothing is being done). **Please do not disturb the mounds!** The product being applied is Talpid. You can get additional information on this product by going to www.talpid.com

Snow Storm Summary

Every season has something that is memorable. Most of the memories are of a personal nature, however, the winter of 2010/11 is a memory that we will all share.

The first and second of February produced more snow, more pictures, and more acts of neighborly interaction than any other event in Briar Cove's history. Mastercut, our snow removal service, did an extraordinary job in those 48 hours. They as-

sembled extra manpower and equipment and started moving mountains of snow to keep our driveways and front sidewalks and doors open. Some of Mastercut's crew worked around the clock clearing areas that had drifted over after they had been cleared at least two times in that 48 hour time frame.

Because of the magnitude of the snow that had to be piled on the parkways, it was decided early on that no attempt would be made to clear the neighborhood sidewalks. Several days after the storm, when everyone had rested up, it was decided to hire some heavy snow removal equipment and push the piles of snow away from the street intersections to enable cars and people walking to see one another as they approached the intersections. Several weeks after the storm, Mastercut, at their own expense, brought in their own "Bobcat" and cleared any snow that had remained on our community sidewalks.

Many residents were kind enough to contact Peter Bylen at 1st American or the board to pass along their appreciation for the hard work Mastercut personnel performed in those two days. Each and every comment was indeed passed on to Todd Dykstra, owner of Mastercut.

Snow Storm Cleanup

As you noticed, some of the grass was torn up from the plows after the blizzard. As you probably also noticed, Todd's crew came back and cleaned up debris and did some grass repairs in mid-March. During the couple of nice weather days we had in March, homeowners were also out putting torn up sod back in place. Thank you to Todd's crew and the homeowners for pitching in to keep our community beautiful!

Phase 3 Painting

Phase 3, the final phase of our painting project, should begin in late May or early June, depending on the weather. There are 36 units left to paint on Charlevoix Way, Mackinaw Place and Traverse City Court. The painting will include all the exterior wood and caulking of the home, mail boxes,

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fences, shutters, and the house address numbers will be moved over the garage door. If you choose to have your front door painted, you must make arrangements to leave the front door open until completely dry. The address numbers for all homes must be the same or similar (4" black numbers). If you have replaced your numbers and they are not similar to the original numbers, they will need to be changed. This will finish the three-year project.

Irrigation Valves

To the homeowners who have these valves in their homes, please turn on the valves during **the week of April 18**. Full activation by Schererville Irrigation will be based on weather conditions, but will probably occur mid-May.

Fertilization Schedule

The first round of fertilization will begin the week of April 18th, weather permitting. The second round will take place around the middle of June.

Sealing of Driveways

After all the plowing this winter, and there was a lot of it, it appears that the rubber blades used have exceeded our expectations. This means that we will not need to schedule the next re-sealing of the driveways until the spring of 2012.

Community Perimeter Trees and Evergreens

Our fertilizer contractor was asked to provide their Arborist to inspect and make recommendations about the condition of the trees and evergreens that surround our community. They were to give consideration to type of trees or evergreens in place: whether water, disease, crowding, or lack of nutrition was a problem. To help organize the various scenarios some trees or evergreens have had ribbons attached. **Please do not disturb the ribbons.** Once all the data is reviewed suggestions will be made as to the most cost effective method to maintain the health of the trees and evergreens in our community. Please note this program is to address only trees and evergreens planted by

Olthof. It will not apply to native trees or trees and evergreens planted by homeowners.

Briar Cove Pond

We have been instructed by our Association insurance company that we are to post signs around our pond warning of dangers associated with a body of water. Therefore we are having signs made that will be placed around the pond on Association property.

After much discussion and research it has been decided to install a night lighting system that has been very successful deterring the goose population. This system will in no way disturb residents around the pond at night, but it really disturbs the geese. Basically it will be two solar lights that pulse on and off. The system requires little or no maintenance.

Another reminder: Please don't make any attempt to feed the geese in the area, because if they start to nest the problem becomes even greater trying to get rid of them.

Spring "Greening" Tips

The warmer weather is bringing out more walkers around our neighborhood. For an easy, free mini massage that stretches and soothes your arches, slip off your shoes and roll each foot over a tennis ball, golf ball, or soup can for a minute or two. To cool throbbing feet, roll them over a bottle of frozen water. Both of these actions can help prevent and alleviate pain from plantar fasciitis.

It's time to open the windows and freshen our homes. Harsh chemicals are toxic to the environment and can cause breathing problems; airing out your home whenever possible will replace the contaminated air.

Vinegar is an inexpensive, natural cleaning substitute which does not rely on harsh chemicals that pollute the environment or your breathing space. These simple ideas can help you have a "greener" spring cleaning experience. Also included are a couple of homemade cleaning agents, and even though they contain ammonia (a harsh chemical),

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they are green in the sense that the environment is spared separate packaging and shipping and will eliminate cluttering up your cleaning closet with a myriad of cleaning agents.

Instead of spraying air fresheners, (aerosol cans, yikes!) set out small dish of vinegar to eliminate odors in a room.

Make your own scouring cleanser by combining 1/4 cup baking soda with 1 tablespoon liquid detergent. Add just enough white distilled vinegar to give it a thick but creamy texture.

To clean a grease splattered oven door window, saturate it with full-strength white distilled vinegar. Keep the door open for 10 to 15 minutes before wiping with a sponge.

Remove stains from coffee and teacups by scrubbing them gently with equal parts of salt (or baking soda) and white distilled vinegar. Rinse clean.

Easily clean your mini blinds by wearing pair a of white cotton gloves. Dip gloved fingers into a solution of equal parts white vinegar and warm tap water, and run your fingers across both sides of each blind.

Wipe grease off exhaust fan grids, the inside of your oven, or anywhere grease gathers with a sponge soaked in white distilled vinegar.

Clean grout by letting full-strength white distilled vinegar sit on it for a few minutes and scrubbing it with an old toothbrush.

Clean shower door tracks by filling them with white distilled vinegar and letting it sit for a few hours. Pour hot water into the tracks and wash and scrub away the scum with a toothbrush.

For an economical and environmentally friendly floor cleaner, mix a solution of 3 drops dishwashing liquid to 1/3 part white distilled vinegar, 1/3 part alcohol, and 1/3 part water. Spray sparingly and mop for a fast clean-up.

For a great no streak window cleaner combine 1 cup water, 1 cup alcohol, and 1 Tbsp ammonia. Spray on windows and wipe off with a lint free cloth.

For really filthy windows left over from winter, make a solution of $\frac{3}{4}$ gallon of water, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ammonia, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white vinegar, and 2 Tbsp cornstarch. Dry the window with newspaper (black and white pages only).

Clean and freshen a mattress with a white distilled vinegar and water solution. Then sprinkle the area with baking soda and let dry. Brush or vacuum the residue after it is dry to the touch.

www.briarcovehomeownersassociation.com

Survey percentages rounded off
EXHIBIT 1

Total Surveys received 128

	Yes	No	Blank	Total
I would like the rules to stand as provided in the "Second Amendment to the Declaration" paragraph 14 Exhibit D.	31 24%	77 60%	20 16%	128 100%
	Do Not			
	Allow	Allow	Blank	Totals
1 Bird Baths or Bird feeders in mulch area only	56 44%	48 38%	24 19%	128
2 Decorative animals, 24 inches or smaller in mulch area only	69 54%	36 28%	23 18%	
3 Vinyl fencing around concrete patio in back yard, 3 ft. or	65 51%	39 30%	24 19%	
4 Miniature water fountains in back yards on patio or mulched area	80 63%	29 23%	19 15%	
5 Decorative plaques attached on house	55 43%	50 39%	23 18%	
6 Boulders 24 inches or smaller in mulch area only	72 56%	30 23%	26 20%	
7 Vinyl/plastic storage bins on concrete patio in back	81 63%	24 19%	23 18%	
8 Hanging flower bags attached to front of home	75 59%	36 28%	17 13%	
9 Sun Globes in mulched area only	70 55%	37 29%	21 16%	
10 Thermometers in front of house	35 27%	66 52%	27 21%	
11 Wind Chimes in front of house	43 34%	62 48%	23 18%	
12 Wishing wells in front of house 24 in. or smaller in mulch area only	47 37%	59 46%	22 17%	
13 Flower boxes attached to front of home	60 47%	44 34%	24 19%	
14 Other general decoration items	46 36%	35 27%	47 37%	