

Walnut Hill Quarterly

Produced by the Walnut Hill Homeowners Association

July 2008



Summer Edition

From the President

Dear Fellow Walnut Hill Neighbors:

I trust this finds you looking forward to the slower pace of summer! May your travels be safe and pleasant!

The Walnut Hill Homeowners' Association 2008 annual meeting took place in April, during which time the following Board members were elected:

Tracy Carney – President
Doris Newcomb – Vice President/Secretary
Charlie Errico – Treasurer

Valerie Mawdsley stepped down after two years on the Board and Doris Newcomb graciously agreed to run in her place. We thank Valerie for her two years of service and welcome Doris to the Board. Other community leadership roles will remain as follows: Charlie Errico has agreed to continue to head the Grounds Committee; Dave Deal will head the Covenants Committee; Valerie Mawdsley will continue her work on the Newsletter Committee; and Denise Errico will lead the Social Committee.

Other matters related to grounds, social activities and our community newsletter were addressed at the meeting and are communicated elsewhere within this newsletter.

As a reminder, the Covenants Committee should review and approve any project that substantially impacts your home's exterior or grounds. Karen Conroy, who serves as our representative from Capitol Property Management, will coordinate the Covenants Committee's review and approval of your project and will help ensure that all projects are considered in a timely manner. Karen can be contacted at kconroy@capitolcorp.com or (703)707-6404.

We welcome your ideas and suggestions as to how we can improve and enhance our community. And, we welcome your help and involvement in making Walnut Hill a better place to live.

Yours in service,

Tracy Carney
carneys@cox.net

Property Management Contacts

Should you have any concerns regarding Walnut Hill, contact

Karen Conroy CMCA, AMS

Senior Community Association Manager

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Chantilly, VA 20151

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Our Community

WHHOA

Board of Directors

Tracy Carney, President
Doris Newcomb, Vice-
President and Secretary
Charles Errico, Treasurer

Newsletter Crew

Valerie Mawdsley,
mawdsley1@cox.net
Lee Foreman,
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Dennis Williams,
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Denise Errico,
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The Capitol Management website includes a community web page at: <http://www.capitolcorp.com/index.htm>.

WHHOA Newsletter Submissions

If you would like to submit something that is of general interest, please do so by email or by personal contact with one of the Newsletter staff. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit any submissions or not print a submission if it is not in the Community's best interests. Please, no anonymous submissions. Submissions for the July Newsletter should be sent by September 12.

Grounds Committee News

By Charlie Errico

The wild weather this past month sent high winds and downpours through Walnut Hill on several late afternoons and evenings. It resulted in many downed limbs and major damage to several trees, including one of the old Walnut trees that dates back to over a century ago. The community has invested hundreds of dollars to keep these old trees alive, but at least one must be removed for fear that the next storm might result in it falling on one of our neighbor's homes.

In June, our tree service company trimmed a number of trees and planted a few others, three crape myrtles, three Leyland cypresses, and about a dozen hollies around utility boxes in the neighborhood. Annuals now brighten our entrance circle and two erosion problems have been resolved. The summer heat and anticipated dry weather always threaten new plantings. Please water the new trees if they are on the common ground near your home. The community does pay for a water truck to occasionally water our annuals near the entry, but the cost is too high for the service to extend elsewhere in the community. The Grounds Committee hopes that you will enjoy your strolls through our beautiful community.

Social Committee News

By Denise Errico

Activities

A great big thank you to all of our friends and neighbors who came out on May 4th to assist in our first annual Walnut Hill Clean Up Day. Seen busily filling up large green trash bags were, Mike Budney, Carol Hagerling, Joe Akkara, Gabe Goldberg, Chuck and Mary Field, Charlie Errico and several others. Because of their efforts, Walnut Hill looked even more beautiful that day.

After the clean-up crew finished their work, it was time for our Spring Barbeque! The gas grills, picnic tables and chairs came out once again at the bottom of Walnut Hill Court, and we all enjoyed great food and friendship that lasted well into the evening. The Social Committee is looking forward to organizing our Fall Barbeque this October. More information will come in the next newsletter.

People News

Walnut Hill would like to welcome our newest neighbors, Anne Field and John Doyle. Anne and John recently moved here from Potomac, Maryland and are now the proud owners of 3424 Silver Maple Place. John, a history buff, works for Fairfax County Public Schools as a social studies teacher, and Anne is a counselor with Washington Metropolitan Airport Authority. We are all happy to have Anne and John as new neighbors, but no one is happier than Chuck and Mary Field, of Walnut Hill Court, who are thrilled to have their daughter and son-in-law within walking distance!

Another Silver Maple Place neighbor, Lee McClary, is in our thoughts and prayers as she is recovering from a bad fall last month.

The summer months bring graduations, weddings and visits from friends and relatives. Congratulations and best wishes to all of our Walnut Hill neighbors who have something to celebrate this summer!

The Social Committee would love to hear your ideas for activities, book groups, discussion groups, etc, and any social news that you would like to share. Please contact Denise Errico @ 703-204-1958 or email PYE11@aol.com.

Citizens Policy Academy by Gabe Goldberg

I just finished the interesting and informative Fairfax County Police Department Citizens Police Academy (CPA), a 35-hour program designed to provide members of the public a unique "glimpse behind the badge."

Quoting the CPA Web site: Attendees learn about departmental resources, programs and, most importantly, the men and women who comprise an organization nationally recognized as a leader in the law enforcement community. Students learn more about the breadth of resources involved in preventing and solving crime and the daily challenges faced by police officers. Class locations rotate to various police facilities. Courses are held on nine Thursday evenings from 6:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., with the exception of the final class. This final class is held on a Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

It includes visits to and presentation on multiple resources and specializations, including:

- * Police training
- * Animal control
- * Police helicopter capabilities
- * Gangs
- * Narcotics-related issues
- * Major crimes
- * Explosive ordnance team
- * Tactical team
- * Crime scene investigations
- * Criminal investigations
- * Neighborhood patrol units
- * Crime analysis
- * Crime prevention programs
- * Traffic management
- * 911 call center
- * Station level programs

The final day involves firearms instruction at the police firing range and learning skid recovery and high-speed driving at the police driving facility.

The CPA is open to individuals who live or work in Fairfax County and are at least 18 years old. Due to the popularity of this class, participants must attend at least eight of the ten weeks.

To apply, visit

http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/citizens_police_academy.htm and download and complete the application form. You can contact CPA staff by phone at 703-280-0713 or by email through <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/contact/mailform.asp?ref=902080>.

Generating Interest, or an Interest in Generating?

Dennis L. Williams

After living here for slightly over six years, and experiencing *more* power outages than living in Jamaica and Egypt, my wife and I finally decided to look into a house generator. Well, probably more correctly, in our division of labor I was the generator researcher. She gets a vote on the money thing. And many of you will recall that we have had an outage, long and short, each week for three weeks.

Now I don't like living in the dark. But worse, I don't like trying to sleep in the summer without air conditioning. Too spoiled to change now. Not to mention the possibility of having to throw out hundreds of dollars worth of spoiled food from two refrigerators and a freezer.

There are probably a few reasons we have problems. First, while Walnut Hill has below ground utilities, virtually everything coming to us is above ground. If a tree or tree limb falls on a neighborhood power line, our power is gone, such as what fatally happened a few weeks ago. Second, just based on the number of outages recently, Northern Virginia's power infrastructure just seems to be very fragile. And third, we are probably pushing the power capacity of the region, with little elasticity for mistakes or problems. For whatever reason, our power goes out a little too often and I suspect it may continue or worsen.

So, I started looking at whole house generators, via Google searches, of course. These are not the gasoline driven generators you can buy at Home Depot, Lowe's, Costco, and other places. Rather, these are permanently mounted outside, weighing several hundred pounds and typically integrated into your home power system. When the power goes out, the automatic transfer switch (ATS) – you typically have a choice between automatic and manual power transfer – will sense the outage, start the generator and switch power to the generator and away from the municipal source. These generators will operate with natural gas or liquid propane gas (LPG). Given our natural gas connections already, most of us would use the natural gas option. After the municipal power comes back on, the ATS senses that as well and automatically switches you back to municipal power, subsequently turning off the generator.

(continued on next page)

Community Recommendations

This is purely *caveat emptor* and members should make individual decisions.

NEW GIANT

A new Giant Supermarket recently in Loehman's Plaza on Route 50 wide aisles, friendly staff, good selection, and (drum roll) apparently better computer/checkout equipment than the dreary/dumpy Giant in Annandale.

There was some email traffic in the last quarter in the Walnut Hill Discussion Group regarding donating blood. Following is a website you can research to learn more about the criteria for donating. <http://www.inova.org/blood_donor/eligibility.jsp>.

Denise and Charlie Errico highly recommend John Harrison (703-338-8683). John can do all types of home repairs from painting to remodeling and always has done a superior job for them.

The www.electricgeneratorsdirect.com site was a good place to begin gathering information. I won't take you through all the permutations, but fairly quickly I settled on Generac generators (www.generac.com), which are also sold for residential use under the Guardian label. I learned Dominion Virginia Power did an installation for a friend of mine and used Generac/Guardian, a testimonial of sorts, and everything I read seemed to support that this is a big time company, and that they sell their own products, and they sell stuff to other companies for their own branding.

Now, a word about talking to generator dealers. They all seem to assume that you know nothing about power, that in a power outage you will turn on every A/C, oven, microwave, dishwasher, washer/dryer, light, TV, and computer – *ad infinitum, ad absurdum* – that you own, and that you cannot understand or know how to manage power. If you do not disabuse them of this concept, they tend to push for bigger and bigger generators. Once they understand that *you do understand* that in a power outage you must frugally manage the available generator power, they will back off. Of course you must scale back power usage, especially when you have an A/C that you want to work as intended. The A/C seems to be the major power hog of concern, by far, and when it is running on generator power, the remaining generator capacity has to be parsimoniously used. Lights, TVs and computers, used in absolute moderation, present no problem above and beyond the core A/C and the refrigerator/freezer requirements.

In our situation, we contacted two Generac/Guardian dealers (www.generac.com), one in Burke and one in Manassas. After a lot of use discussion (see the paragraph above concerning establishing reality), i.e., how and what do you intend to use if the generator were running, both recommended the same generator. The recommended generator was the Guardian model 5506, a 20 kilowatt (KW) generator that on natural gas actually puts out 18KW, that is, 18,000 watts (voltage X amperage = wattage). Having done my own research, I had already reached my own conclusion that this was the best overall candidate. Now, this is where things got fascinating. One dealer visited the house and gave us an on-the-spot estimate of \$12,500. Since I knew the generator and the ATS could be ordered online and delivered for \$5000, I had some push back room. I basically told him the price was too high, and I was not interested. Two days later I got an email that said "\$11,000." The answer was still "no." I talked to the second dealer. After a telephone interview of our needs, the physical layout of the gas meter (they have to tap into the outside gas meter) and the location of our circuit breaker box, he gave me a finished, turn-key price of \$7800. Same unit, same everything, except for the concrete pad the first dealer wanted to install (the unit comes with a 2½" composite pad), which I can live without, the concrete pad that is, or so as the second dealer said, "why put a pad on a pad?" Breathtaking disparity. I invited the second dealer to visit my house, which he will do shortly, to ensure no surprises for either of us. By the way, the unit automatically powers up weekly and self-exercises – the sign of a serious generator.

Extended warranties and expensive service plans are available. No concrete thoughts on these yet.

So there it is...the generator journey or perhaps the generator follies. I will tell you how this ends in the next edition. I would be happy to share more details with anyone who wants to give me a call. That way I can deny everything... No, really, give me a call if you want to discuss.

Legal disclaimer: Everything I said above is based on my research and discussions. Do your own research and draw your own conclusions. None of this is easy...

We will keep a light on for you...maybe... Your Newsletter Crew.