

# Walnut Hill Quarterly

October 2008

*Produced by the Walnut Hill Homeowners Association*

## Autumn Edition

### *From the President*

Dear Fellow Neighbors of Walnut Hill:

I hope this finds each of you rejuvenated from a relaxing summer and looking forward to the changing color of the leaves and the dip in temperature that signal the advent of the Fall. Despite the recent dry conditions, it appears that remnants of the various hurricanes will help us recover from the current drought conditions. We had a tough spring and early summer due to some violent storm activity. We were forced to spend a significant portion of our landscape and common area maintenance budget on removal of two large trees damaged in the storms and related cleanup efforts. Hopefully we will enjoy calmer Fall and Winter seasons.

The Board would like you to know that we meet on a quarterly basis, as necessary, and that homeowners are welcome to attend our meetings. Please feel free to contact a Board member if you are interested in attending one of our meetings or have an issue for the Board to address. We welcome your feedback and encourage you to get involved in your community!

Please be sure to review the article submitted by Dave Deal, chair of our Covenants committee. As a reminder, the Covenants Committee should review and approve any project that substantially impacts your home's exterior or grounds. This includes a change in exterior paint color or removal of a tree on your property. Karen Conroy, who serves as our representative from Capitol Property Management, will

#### **Property Management Contacts**

Should you have any concerns regarding Walnut Hill, contact **Karen Conroy** CMCA, AMS  
Senior Community Association Manager  
at Capitol Property Management:  
3914 Centreville Road, Suite 300  
Chantilly, VA 20151  
phone: (703) 707-6404; fax (703) 707-6401; email:  
[kconroy@capitolcorp.com](mailto:kconroy@capitolcorp.com)

help ensure that all projects are considered in a timely manner. Karen can be contacted at [kconroy@capitolcorp.com](mailto:kconroy@capitolcorp.com) or (703)707-6404.

Among our goals as your community Board are to be good stewards of our community's shared assets, to be responsive to your needs and desires, and to foster a warm, caring and welcoming neighborhood. We need your help to accomplish each of these. Get involved and make a difference!

Take care and keep in touch!

Yours in service,

Tracy Carney  
[carneys@cox.net](mailto:carneys@cox.net)

### **Newsletter Format and Crew Changes**

The original Newsletter crew has been creating this publication for the past two and a half years. Although we have enjoyed the work, we believe it is time to pass the torch and possibly change the format. This will be Valerie Mawdsley's last edition as format member. The Newsletter crew and the WHHOA Board will be meeting in October to determine in what format the Newsletter will continue. As usual, we welcome your input into the Newsletter. Please contact Charlie Errico or Dennis Williams if you would like to participate on the Newsletter crew.

*Our Community*

**WHHOA**

Board of Directors

Tracy Carney, President  
Valerie Mawdsley, Vice-  
President and Secretary  
Charles Errico, Treasurer

Newsletter Crew

Valerie Mawdsley,  
[mawdsley1@cox.net](mailto:mawdsley1@cox.net)  
Lee Foreman,  
[vggold@cox.net](mailto:vggold@cox.net)  
Dennis Williams,  
[williamsdl@aol.com](mailto:williamsdl@aol.com)  
703-289-1654  
Denise Errico,  
[PYE11@aol.com](mailto:PYE11@aol.com)

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 January Newsletter should be sent by December 10.

**Grounds Committee News**

*By Charlie Errico*

The recent storms severely damaged two old and very large trees that had to be removed. One Walnut tree at the intersection of Walnut Hill Lane and Walnut Hill Court was well over one hundred years old and was a sad loss for our community. To keep these damaged trees standing would threaten the homes nearby. At the same time, even with competitive bids, removing those two trees cost over \$5,000. Most of our trees are healthy and we have been doing our best to replace those that die with heartier and more colorful trees. In addition, the flowering annuals at our entrance circle continue to thrive and will last until our first hard frost. We are planning an English garden next spring near the Walnut Hill Court and Lane intersection that will add more color next year and will contain perennials that do not need much maintenance. We on the Board hope that you enjoy the beauty of our neighborhood and are always open to your ideas as to how we can improve it.

**Social Committee News**

*By Denise Errico*

Hopefully, by the time this newsletter has been published we will all have enjoyed our annual Walnut Hill Fall Barbeque on the afternoon of September 28th. Once again we would like to thank our wonderful neighbors on Walnut Hill Court for their generosity in providing tables and grills, (and much more!), and to the Board for providing drinks, paper products and condiments. At this time the Social Committee is planning another Winter Progressive Dinner. We are looking at dates in January, and would like to hear from those of you who would like to volunteer to host and/or provide appetizers, salads, main dishes or desserts. Please contact Denise Errico at [Pye11@aol.com](mailto:Pye11@aol.com) or 703-204-1958, or Joni Ryder at 703-560-7812.

In Community News, we have had a couple of very talented members of our community in the news lately! Kaitlyn Budney, daughter of Mike and Susan Budney at 7513 Walnut Hill Lane, performed with the Heimlich Dancers at the International Children's Festival at Wolf Trap Park on September 13th and 14th. Kyla Carney, daughter of Clay and Tracy Carney of 7526 Walnut Hill Lane performed in "George Burns Meets Harry Connick, Jr.", singing with George Burns (played by Carl Crimm), on September 19th at the Shepherd's Center of Annandale-Springfield. We are sure that both young women were amazing in their respective performances!

We would also like to welcome our two newest members of Walnut Hill. Congratulations to Kathy and Adam Lindsey of Walnut Hill Lane on the birth of their son, Nicholas, who was welcomed home by big brother, Luc, and to Andre and Tara Sabbagh of Silver Maple Place on the birth of their daughter, Juliet, who was welcomed home by big sister, Sophia, and big brother, Christopher. We are all so happy for you!

Congratulations also go to Rona and Jonni Ryder of Silver Maple Place who have a brand new Great Grand-daughter, Bailey Addison Dawson. Best wishes to all of our new parents and great grandparents!

If you have any news that you would like to share with our neighbors, please contact Denise Errico or Joni Ryder. We look forward to hearing from you!

### Generating Interest, Part Deux By Dennis Williams

This is Part Two of what was intended to be only a two part series on home generators. Of course, nothing is ever that easy and, no, I don't have the generator I wrote about in the last Newsletter. A factory-discovered flaw – this is a newly introduced unit – stopped all production and all shipments. The flaw was corrected and shipments were to have begun a couple of weeks ago. So, I do not have an installed whole house generator to tell you about.....

Of course, ever since we made the decision to install a whole house generator, there have been no power outages. No a flicker. Not even a blink. Clearly the mere statement said out loud that “we are going to get a generator” is the amulet necessary to ward off the evil spirit of power outages.

So let's talk about something related – yeah, as you can tell, I committed to fill this space. Let's briefly discuss portable home generators. They are ubiquitous, and you have seen them at Home Depot, Lowes, Sears, and maybe even Costco. Why not consider one of them for the occasional outage? In one word: GASOLINE. Let me come back to this.

Portable generators are inherently limited in their ability to help during a power outage. You can run a refrigerator or two, computers, TV and DVRs, some lights – of course, not all at the same time. You cannot run your washer, dryer, heat/air, electric range, and other major power hogs. You do have to use large gauge extension cords (I found a 10 gauge, 100' power cord specifically for this type of use for, gulp, \$230.90!).

I also found some interesting things when I researched 3KW (3000 watts) and 5KW (5000 watts) units. First, these units are heavy – about 90 lbs. for the non-wheeled 3KW unit and about 180 lbs. for the wheeled 5KW unit. The 3KW unit had a half-gallon gas tank and used that much gas in about an hour. The 5KW had a generous 6.5 gallon tank and at half generator capacity (and the engine running slower) the engine consumed about 2/3 of a gallon an hour. Increase the load (and engine running speed) and gasoline consumption per hour rises considerably – not unlike driving 40mph and 80mph – there is a hefty gas penalty at 80. Then there is the storage of all that gas, potentially many gallons. How much is enough and where do you actually store the gas? And where do you physically locate generator? Do you run it in the garage by the garage door opening (and out of the rain or snow)? I don't really know the correct answers, if there are any. The two units I looked at on the Internet, the 3KW and 5KW, were somewhat over \$700 and \$900, respectively. Makes, models and prices vary wildly.

Conclusion: portable generators like those described above come with huge drawbacks: storage, weight, gas engines, limited run times, noisy, significant gas storage, power cords, and they are just inherently more dangerous. Nevertheless, if the homeowner has little desire for power other than to occasionally recharge the refrigerator or freezer, this might work since it would only need to be run periodically and for limited duration.

Anyway, something to think about. In the meantime, I'll wait for my whole house, natural gas, permanently installed generator...which some day may actually get installed.

N.B. We have had three power outages since writing this piece.

### Cypress Mulch By Christopher Mawdsley

As we all maintain our neighborhood in top condition, give a thought to what mulch we use. Environmental resources such as Waterkeeper, [www.waterkeeper.org](http://www.waterkeeper.org), provide information concerning the cypress mulch industry. Research concludes negative environmental impacts from the clear cutting of cypress trees in coastal Louisiana. While Louisiana is not the only source of cypress mulch, the impacts to this region cannot be overlooked. While the Federal Government invests billions of dollars to restore Louisiana's cypress wetlands, the practice of cypress clear cutting for mulch production continues. Once cut, 70 to 80% of southern Louisiana's cypress will never grow back. This will deprive the region from flood protection otherwise provided by this natural resource. Hurricane protection is lost in this process.

Fact or myth, is cypress mulch superior to other alternates? Fact – cypress mulch from young trees is neither rot nor termite resistant. Fact – pine bark mulch is a better choice that will help stop the destruction of Louisiana's irreplaceable cypress wetlands. If you would like to know more about cypress mulch logging, the link, [www.saveourcypress.org](http://www.saveourcypress.org), provides access to information, interactive maps and photos of sites in operation. One site at French settlement near New Orleans, LA, under investigation by the Army Corps of Engineers reveals that with the tree canopy removed, sunlight dries up the water allowing other plants to grow. These plants will take over and be part of what prevents the cypress swamp from regenerating into its former state.

## Community Recommendations

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

### Important Reminder From Your Covenant Committee

Walnut Hill homeowners are members of the Walnut Hill Homeowners Association and subject to the "Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, Restrictions and Reservation." Article V of the Declaration describes the Covenants Committee and outlines the process for review of plans and specifications for certain improvements. Article VI addresses several topics and, as Chair of your Covenants Committee, in this article I offer you some suggestions to help you satisfy the covenants applying to two particular home improvements, outside repainting and tree removal, that are increasingly frequent and greatly affect the character and physical appearance of our community.

Outside Repainting. Article 6.03 requires that the "architectural character of all structures, or alterations, additions, or improvements thereof . . . shall be, in the opinion of the Covenants Committee, harmonious in terms of type, size, scale, color and material." Article 6.03 does not affect inside repainting, but does require for outside repainting further that "no structure shall be painted, stuccoed or surfaced with any material until approved in writing in accordance with objective, performance-oriented guidelines established by the Covenants Committee."

***If you are contemplating repainting, please contact me first. I will undertake Covenant Committee review of your request promptly and share with you a color wheel recently purchased by the Association, which you can use to select a color in keeping with the community's standard color palette.***

Removal of Trees. Article 6.11 deals with landscaping and requires in general that "existing trees shall be retained" although in our mature community the Covenant Committee often grants exceptions. For example, where some construction has been approved, removal of a tree within an approved building area would be included in the approval.

Outside an approved building area, Article 6.11 further states that "no tree larger than four inches in diameter. . . shall be removed without express written authorization of the Covenants Committee." However, Walnut Hills homeowners have routinely obtained approval for the removal of trees that are damaged by storm or disease or because their size or condition poses a real threat to property or safety. To avoid the proliferation of unsightly bare spots in our community and meet the county's environmental commitment to trees, however, the Fairfax County arborist recommends that replacement trees be planted.

***If you are contemplating tree removal, please contact me first. I will undertake Covenant Committee review of your request promptly. I can offer you arborist information to help you assess the options and, if necessary, offer tree replacement information for your use consistent with the character of our community and reflective of our extensive experience with specific tree species.***

Covenant Committee Approval Process. Homeowners contact me regularly and the process is quite simple. Before doing anything formal, I suggest you contact me personally. Many intended improvements plainly satisfy the Association's covenants and no approval would be required at all.

If approval is required, I will give you a simple one-page form on which the project can be described and its projected timing specified. Although most improvement projects require no county permit, many construction projects do require a permit and you would need to obtain one and attach a copy to the Association's form. The completed form is then mailed to our association management firm: Walnut Hill Homeowners' Association, c/o Capitol Property Management, P.O. Box 5058, Herndon, VA 20172; to expedite handling, I suggest you send me a copy as well.

Once I get the completed form I would commence review as soon as possible, contact you and make a site visit if necessary, and make my recommendation to the Board. The review process generally takes just a few days.

I welcome any questions or comments.

Dave Deal  
Chair, Covenants Committee  
703-750-3188  
dtdeal@cox.com