

West Lanham Hills Citizen

2015

January 2015

New Year Edition

Fight the Cold; Safeguard your Home

Winter weather brings a number of challenges. As the thermometer drops, fires increase, due to unsafe heating situations. Broken furnaces can endanger a family's health and safety. Freezing can damage water pipes, causing flooding and damaging the house structure and furnishings. We want neighbors to know some ways to protect their homes this winter.

Furnace dangers. Every year, hundreds of people are poisoned by carbon monoxide due to faulty furnaces. When oil, gas, kerosene, coal or wood is burned incompletely, this gas can be emitted. If a furnace has a clogged burner or cracked heat exchanger, CO gas can be produced, poisoning the air inside the home. Since it's colorless and odorless, most

people would never notice it. They may feel sleepy, have a headache, become nauseated, or even become unconscious. Often, people think they are getting sick, having the flu—yet in hours, they may be dead. You can get a free carbon monoxide detector from the Fire department, (301-864-7233).

Electricity problems. When using heaters, electrical appliances for cooking, the home's electrical system should be checked. If the wall outlet becomes very hot when the appliance is used, the outlet might need replacing or the wiring in the walls may be faulty. A licensed electrician should inspect your home's electrical system to prevent fire hazards and ensure your safety.

Energy Costs. Heating your home may result in a sudden jump in your utility costs. Several programs exist to help.

1. The **Maryland Energy Assistance Program** helps low-income households with heating costs. **301-909-6330**.
2. The **Electric Universal Service Program**, EUSP helps eligible customers with their electric bills. **1-800-352-1446**
3. The **Weatherization Assistance Program** (WAP) helps with free weather stripping, caulking, plastic window covering, or other insulation. **(800) 638-7781**.
4. The **Utility Service Protection Program** (USPP) protects low-income families from utility cut-offs by averaging yearly energy costs into regular monthly payments. **(800) 352-1446**

Fire danger

Prince George's fire officials have warned that fires increase during the winter months; space heaters account for one out of three fires, and 80% of fire deaths. To ensure safety,

- Only use heaters with a UL rating.
- Place heaters on a level, firm surface, such as flat ceramic tile.
- Never put a heater up on a table or furniture
- Keep clothing, blankets, furniture or combustible items away from the heater (three feet, or one meter away.) Never put things on a heater to dry.
- Keep heater out of the way of people walking.
- Avoid using an extension cord or use the shortest length that works which has a cord designed for high current draw (14-gauge or larger wire).
- Only adults should operate the heater; children and pets should be kept away from all space heaters.
- Do not use a heater in damp or wet locations.
- Turn heater off when you are not in the room or when people are sleeping.
- **Free** 10-year smoke detectors can be obtained from the Prince George's County Fire Department; Call **301-864-SAFE (7233)**.

Santa's Workshop

Community Effort Makes Holidays Shine

Nearly 100 neighbors gathered to make gifts, take photos and enjoy refreshments on December 6 at the Park building at the annual Santa's Workshop organized by the West Lanham Hills Citizens' Association.



Volunteers guided kids and parents as they painted, glued, cut, measured and poured the various materials to make wonderful gifts for their families and friends. This year, they made "Gourmet popcorn kits" consisting of unpopped kernels in microwaveable bags, along with chocolate, peanut butter and butterscotch chips. Many kids enjoyed painting and decorating small chalk boards, to create a message board for their families. Jar gifts of cookie mix, or taco

bean chili mix were overseen by Mrs. Charlotte Harris, and her two daughters, Linda and Donna, helped people create lovely holiday greenery to decorate their doors. Even the men enjoyed using fabric markers to create decorative towels for the home.

Santa's arrival allowed families to get instant photos taken; origami frames were being made at a nearby table, to create hanging



photo ornaments.

Fleece scarves—a perennial favorite—were also being cut, and bath salts were concocted.

Kids strung wooden alphabet beads together to make name bracelets. Felt pieces to make stockings or other decorations were provided, in project bags.



Thanks goes to all the volunteers who made the event such a success, including the Hospitality committee: Kay Rager, Charlotte Harris, Wanda Brooks, Michiko Campbell, Kate Tsubata and Sarah Tsubata, as well as youth coordinators Rachel Roche and Molly Rhodes, and the Board members of the Citizens' Association: Gregg McNair, Jim and Margaret Gunther, Randolph Duprey, Will Nathan.

Especial thanks to all the families who willingly helped clean up, singing Christmas carols together; it is truly the spirit of goodwill and giving to our community that makes the event a wonderful expression of the spirit of Christmas. As Tiny Tim says in Charles Dickens "Christmas Carol," "God Bless Us, Everyone!"

Snow Jobs

Some simple preparation can help residents deal with those winter snowstorms.

- Park on the “even” side of the street (in front of the houses ending in even numbers.) This lets snowplows clear two lanes.
- Park in your driveway, if you have one.
- Clear your steps, sidewalk and the public sidewalk in front of your house.
- Clear the path to your mailbox.
- Stay off the roads during a snowstorm, or follow some distance behind a plow.
- Clear your car’s windshield and window as soon as possible, so it doesn’t harden into ice.
- Wait twelve (12) hours after the snow stops before calling to request snow and ice removal services. The telephone number to call is 301-350-0500.

Drinking? Don't Drive!

Driving while intoxicated is a danger to others, and yourself. You can lose your driver’s license up to three years! If you have had any alcohol or intoxicants, don’t risk getting behind the wheel. Call **1-800-200-TAXI** for a **free** cab ride instead.

Notes from the Neighbors:

Bulk Trash Reminder

Some neighbors have mentioned how large piles of large furniture or household appliances are often left at the curb for weeks. This is unnecessary, as our county offers free bulk trash pickup. You can help keep our community attractive by scheduling your bulk trash pickup (Use the County Click number, 311) and then setting out your large items on the night before the scheduled pickup. Thanks for being a great neighbor!

Pet Owners Alert

Many residents have been inconvenienced by dogs or cats that roam the community, leaving unwanted piles behind them. This is a health hazard, and is also against the law. Veteran dog owners advise keeping a pocket full of plastic bags, and being sure to “scoop the poop” from your pet. Also, keep your pets safe and well-contained. If walking with you, they should be leashed, if not they should be kept in a safe indoor situation or in a fenced and gated yard. Your pet is important to you, and good care will help you enjoy them for many more years to come!

Parking Issue

Most of us like to have friends come to visit, but some visitors are unaware that they may be parking in spots residents need for their proper access to their home. We have elderly and disabled residents, young parents, and a lot of people who can’t handle packages and children if forced to park far from their own doors.

If you are having a large number of guests come, please talk to your neighbors to ensure their parking isn’t blocked, or direct your guests to pre-arranged parking locations. A little bit of thoughtfulness and consideration on your part will be highly appreciated by your neighbors, and they will surely show the same consideration towards you.

Recycle your Christmas Tree

Your live Christmas tree can be shredded and mulched to help the environment. Just put your tree at the curb before 6:30 a.m. on the regularly scheduled collection day. Trees must be free of all lights, ornaments and tinsel, and free of plastic wrapping. Thanks for being a caring citizen!

(If you would like to share something of benefit to neighbors, email the editor at: WestLanhamNews@gmail.com.)

Citizens' Association News...

The January Meeting could not be held due to a lack of a quorum. To hold a meeting, we need 10 voting members and two board members. **The next monthly meeting will be held February 4 at 8 p.m.** (the first Wednesday of the month is the date for the scheduled meeting.) Please come and share your ideas!

Andy Arnold has resigned as newsletter editor, and Kate Tsubata has agreed to take on the job. Please send any announcements, news or stories to Kate at the email: westlanhamnews@gmail.com. You can also drop things by her house: 7752 Decatur Road, or call her at 301-577-1094.

Community service hours are able to be earned by helping with WLHCA events and activities. Please contact Mrs. Michiko Campbell to offer your help.

If you do not have a directory from our community, contact Kate Tsubata (above.)

If you wish to contact WLHCA board members: Gregg McNair, President: keytow@verizon.net; Jim and Margarent Gunther, Vice President and Secretary: jimgunther@msn.com; Will Nathan, whnathanjr@yahoo.com; Randolph Duprey, rdupreyjr@gmail.com.

Annapolis Night:

Meet Your State Representatives

Senator Victor Ramirez
Delegate Diana Fennell
Delegate Jimmy Tarlaou
Delegate Will Campos

Of the 47th Legislative District
Monday, Feb. 16, 2015,
6-8 pm

President's Conference Ctr. (West)
Miller Senate Office Building
Light Buffet Provided
Limited Bus Transport Available
For information or to RSVP, call:
301-858-3745

Contact info for our County, State and Federal Representatives:

- **Dannielle Glaros**, County Council Member, Prince George's County District 3, 301-952-3060 or dmglaros@co.pg.md.us
 - **Victor Ramirez**, State Senator, 301-858-3745 or victor.ramirez@senate.state.md.us
 - **Jimmy Tarlau**, House of Delegates, 301-858-3326 or Jimmy.Tarlau@house.state.md.us
 - **Diana Fennell**, House of Delegate, 301-858-3478 or Diana.Fennell@house.state.md.us
 - **Barbara Mikulski**, US Senator, 410-962-4510 or www.mikulski.senate.gov/contact
 - **Benjamin Cardin**, US Senator, 301-860-0414 or www.cardin.senate.gov/contact
 - **Donna F. Edwards**, Congresswoman, US House of Representatives, 301-516-7601 or donnaedwards.house.gov
- (Thanks to Ms. Wanda Brooks for compiling these!)

Community Pick Up Days

Trash pick-up: Tuesdays
and Fridays

Yard waste in paper bags:
Wednesdays

Recyclables: Thursdays

Scholarship News

Residents who are accepted to a 2 or 4 year college in Maryland are eligible for scholarships from the State Senator's offices. Call the office of State Senator Victor Ramirez or go to the website to apply: www.victorramirez.com or (301) 858-3745