

Walden Woods News

September 2005



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WALDEN WOODS NEWS is a monthly publication produced and distributed by homeowner volunteers for the edification and enjoyment of all Walden Woods homeowners. Questions, ideas and news contributions may be submitted to any member of the Communication Committee: Bob or Polly Ellis (688-5949), Ruth Johnson (688-5128), or Joe Sikora (219-0713).

NEWS FROM THE CONSERVANCY BOARD

ELITE MANAGEMENT REP

In an effort to streamline communication and avoid misunderstandings, we now have one representative from our property management company, Elite Management, to serve as our point of contact. If you have any problems or questions regarding any common property or service in Walden Woods, you need only contact Frank Goeckler, frankgoeckler@snet.net or 860-678-8300.

KNOLL FENCE REPLACEMENTS

Because of a 10% discount offered by the vinyl fence contractor, the Board considered having all the fences on the Knoll replaced this year. It was determined, however, that replacement of all 48 fences, even with the discount, would also mean total depletion of the Village reserve fund and the need for a heavy special assessment. A more prudent approach of replacing 12 fences a year for the next 4 years was decided upon. Impatient homeowners can still make arrangements for more immediate replacement of their fence, temporarily at their own expense, by contacting Elite.

BYLAWS

A revised set of Bylaws was approved by the board at their August 24th meeting. These are the "statutes" that define how the community is governed within the broader framework of the new Declaration that was approved by homeowners in June. The Bylaws were updated to reflect the changes made to the Declaration due to the Walden Woods expansion and the assumption of Conservancy control by the homeowners. Every homeowner will be receiving a copy of the new Bylaws in the near future. In the meantime, you can access them on the Walden Woods website (waldenwoodsct.com). •

Poser of the Month

What do Alexander the Great and Kermit the Frog have in common?

Answer on page 4

TRIBUTE TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

by Bob Ellis



To celebrate this first anniversary edition of the Walden Woods News, I'm writing my first (and probably last) editorial. I'm doing it basically in response to comments I've been hearing (and have said myself) about the seemingly bureaucratic

methodology and autocratic use of power employed by the Standards Committee. Listen up.

Walden Woods is known throughout the Windsor area as a desirable community in which to live. Those of us who live here know it's not perfect, but it does provide a sense of pride at some level to know we were able to buy a home here and that efforts are made to ensure our neighborhoods are well maintained and continue to be aesthetically pleasing. Nobody is going to buy the house next to you and paint their house purple with orange shutters. Nobody is going to put an old refrigerator on his or her driveway with a "for sale" sign and leave it there for three weeks. And nobody is going to put a seven-foot satellite dish on his or her front yard. In essence, we know that the community we liked when we decided to buy our homes here is going to remain "likable." We know this because we are able to enforce standards we all agreed were necessary to retain the aesthetic values of our community.

Unfortunately, as with many standards, rules or laws made with good intentions, the results of enforcement are often annoying. The problem is that in order to prevent the extremes identified above, we have to set up near-zero tolerances. Otherwise, we could have the falling-domino syndrome of lessening values over a period of time that could someday result in your neighbor having orange shutters on his purple house.

Obviously, what someone considers good taste, another may consider an eye-sore so we can't have one individual - whether it's a homeowner or someone else - making the decision as to what's acceptable. In Walden Woods, we have a Standards Committee composed of volunteer homeowners who were willing to accept the obligation of enforcing the standards. It's not an easy task. Requests from

homeowners wanting to make external changes to their property don't always relate to a specific standard and the committee members must apply some subjectivity. They don't enjoy making unpopular decisions that affect their neighbors, but they do the best they can by simply applying logic that asks "how will this impact my community?"

This summer, while everyone else was off on vacation or splashing in the pool, committee members had to resolve more than a dozen issues regarding the enforcement of standards. Most requests from homeowners wanting to make external changes to their property were approved; a few, including mine, were not.

For those of you who feel the Standards Committee needs revamping or the standards need to be relaxed to permit more flexibility, I would suggest you respond to the committee's ongoing appeal for help and become a volunteer. Or you can express your opinion to your Council Director. Homeowners are now in control of the conservancy and we can make new rules if we don't like those by which we now live. Just be careful what you wish for. •

Street Signs for Village on the Knoll

It's always been difficult for visitors to find their way around the Knoll because the street identities and directions are barely visible on weathered stone markers. The Board of Directors decided that the time has finally come to install street signs not only as a convenience but as an aid for emergency responses.

With Elite's assistance, the Standards Committee has reviewed design and location alternatives to resolve the problem without adversely impacting the motif of our village-style community. The committee selected green street signs with reflective white lettering that are in keeping with other Windsor street signs. Following the Board's input, post locations were selected that will readily identify Village streets and provide direction. •

It should be noted that even without better signs, residents have no excuse for driving the wrong way on the one-way Knollwood North and Knollwood South streets. With the lack of available sidewalks, this is a high-risk area for pedestrians and pets. Do the right thing.

MEET KAREN MACHAMER



If you had to select one word to describe Karen Machamer, you might pick "nomad" - and that would not be totally inaccurate. Her home in Walden Woods is her 40th and Connecticut is her 12th state of residence. As a child,

she was in almost a constant state of transition, moving every time her father, a GE sales manager, changed positions or territory, from Florida to Iowa, Alabama, Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, Michigan and Tennessee. An annual holiday expression in her household was "where are we going to be next Christmas?" So ingrained was the nomadic life that when she graduated from Tennessee Tech in 1982 (BS in Psychology), she kept on moving - to Kentucky, then Chicago, back to Tennessee, back to Texas and finally to Connecticut.

To describe Karen as simply nomadic, however, would be misleading, and unfair. There's a lot more to this quietly confident and dynamic woman. She knows what she wants and does not move to a new home without purpose. Starting out in the retail business, she once ran her own bake goods business (cheesecake, cookies and candy) in Nashville after discovering a love and knack for cooking. She found her true niche, however, in the insurance industry 10 years ago. Beginning in a clerical position, Karen quickly climbed the corporate ladder to become Director of Compliance for St. Paul Travelers, managing a staff of 13 responsible for making sure the independent agents used by the company are qualified and competent.

She and her staff constantly check statistics and investigate the backgrounds and performance of all agents to ensure they are in compliance with the insurance regulations of their applicable states, meet the character and professional standards set by her company and continue to provide the right services and products needed by St. Paul Travelers clients. In other words, if you're an incompetent, unqualified or maybe even unscrupulous agent, she's going to find you. It is a position very much in demand within the insurance industry and Karen has reached such a level of excellence that she is the target of many corporate "head hunters."

In some cases, she's able to work with an agent to correct their "deficiencies" and that's the part of her job she enjoys most. Despite the auditing or "policing" nature of her job, Karen is a people person and hopes that someday her job will lead into a full-time teaching role. She already conducts compliance-related presentations at industry meetings held throughout the country several times a year. If her next presentation had been scheduled a month earlier, it could have been her last. The industry has moved the September 18th meeting from New Orleans to Dallas.

At home in her Knollwood North home, Karen is leading a "too quiet" lifestyle while she makes an unhurried search for the right person to share her life with. She is, however, quite content with the company of her 13 year old cat, Mindy, and the occasional party with friends where she can show off the cooking skills she nurtured back in Tennessee. If you are fortunate enough to meet her, be your usual charming self. Hopefully, the friendliness she encounters here will help convince Karen that Walden Woods is the place to end her "nomadic" journey. •

HEADLINES FROM THE YEAR 2029

- Castro finally dies at age 112; Cuban cigars can now be imported legally, but President Chelsea Clinton has banned all smoking.
- George Z. Bush says he will run for President in 2036.
- Postal Service raises price of first class stamp to \$17.89 and reduces mail delivery to Wednesdays only.
- 85 year, \$75.8 billion study reveals diet and exercise are the keys to weight loss.
- Congress authorizes direct deposit of formerly illegal political contributions to campaign accounts.
- IRS sets lowest tax rate at 75 percent.

TAG SALE A SUCCESS

From early indications, our community tag sale on September 10th was a big success and the Social/Recreation Committee, led by event coordinator Cori-Lynn Webber, should be congratulated for a great effort. Committee members will be gathering feedback to consider if this should be an annual event and if any changes in the format or venue would provide even more favorable results. More to come in the next issue of this newsletter. ●



Buyer Alyce Lacey negotiates with seller Susan Atwater



Jennifer Deemer, Deb Giampolo, Cori-Lynn Webber and friend with toddler do a little socializing in between sales.

PERSONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

If any Walden Woods homeowner would like to use this newsletter to announce a family event that they may be especially proud of (graduation, marriage, new offspring, release from Attica, etc.) or just some news they'd like to share, please notify Bob or Polly Ellis, pollyandbob@sbcglobal.net or 688-5949. We'll do our best to squeeze the news into our next issue. ●

GAME NIGHT TO RESUME

The popular Game Night, halted for the summer, will resume Friday, September 30, 7:30pm, at the Meeting House. Interested participants should bring their own refreshments and any favorite game they'd like to play. All homeowners are invited. Contact Dick Armstrong (285-0803) for further details.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Unless otherwise indicated, all events are held at the Meeting House

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| Mon, Sept 19th
@ 7pm | Council Meeting for all Woodmoor homeowners - to discuss 2006 budget and elect a Director |
| Wed, Sept 28th
@ 7:30pm | Conservancy Board of Directors Meeting |
| Fri, Sept 30th
@ 7:30pm | GAME NIGHT (call Dick Armstrong, 285-0803) |



Best mailbox presentation of the summer belonged to Richard and Catherine Frechette of 626 Thoreau Circle.

Answer to Page 1 Poser

Their middle names