

WHISPERING
HEIGHTS

COLLINGWOOD

Whispers

WHISPERING HEIGHTS / COLLINGWOOD / SHALOCH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2009, VOLUME 18, ISSUE 1

WWW.WHCCA.ORG

4957 LAKEMONT BLVD SE, PMB 342, BELLEVUE WA 98006

Inside this issue:

<i>The Hot Sheet</i>	1
<i>Rants & Raves</i>	2
<i>Financials</i>	2
<i>Crime, continued</i>	3
<i>Odds & Ends (Cougars!)</i>	3
<i>Board of Directors News</i>	4
<i>Dues payment form</i>	4

Economy down, Crime up

Over the past six months, residents of WHCCA and the surrounding area have seen an increase in the number of property crimes occurring. These include day-time break-ins and burglaries as well as car prowls. The increase in these crimes just happens to coincide with the worsening economy, and it is logical to think that the two are linked in some way.

A house in Lakemont was entered from a back sliding door during the day when the owners were at work, and thousands of dollars of goods were stolen. A home in Whispering Heights had its front door kicked in during the day, but a home alarm scared off the would-be thieves. Several owners in Collingwood were victims of car prowls with some goods stolen.

This is not to say that we live in an unsafe neighborhood, but we want residents to be aware of incidents that have occurred recently. Hopefully if more people take steps to

(Continued on page 3, Crime)

The Hot Sheet! For more information, go to www.whcca.org

UPCOMING 2009 WHCCA EVENTS

We hope you can join us at one or all of the upcoming events put on by the WHCCA!

Coffee Social (7pm Wed. March 18th)

The Board will be hosting the 3rd annual Coffee Social for Whispering Heights & Collingwood neighbors to come and mingle. The event is at the Lewis Creek Park Visitors Center (see whcca.org for map) at 7pm on Wednesday March 18th. In addition to chatting with your neighbors, we'll have a speaker there to briefly discuss police activity and crime in our area. We hope to chat with you there and thanks to our neighborhood Starbucks for donating the Joe.

Egg Hunt (11am Sat. April 11th)

This event gets better & better every year! Heather McCrone has kindly offered to manage the hunt again this year so we know it'll be fabulous. The Egg Hunt occurs at Lattawood Park at 11am on Saturday April 11th. We'll have sections separated out by age group and thousands of goody-filled eggs will be ready for hunting! If you'd

like to help out with egg stuffing or hiding, please contact Heather (hansli@juno.com). Come rain or shine!! *Dog owners* – please do your part in helping us make this event poop-free. The week of the egg hunt, we'd appreciate your help in scooping (even in the bushes).

Spring Clean-up (9am Sat. April 18th)

As the sun comes out, it means Spring Clean-Up must be here! This annual event is a great chance to get involved with the community, visit with friends, and beautify our neighborhood at the same time. All residents who are big enough to pull weeds are encouraged to join us as we spiff up Whispering Heights & Collingwood. The goody wagon will be traveling around the neighborhood with hot & cold beverages as well as sweets to keep everyone energized. Wear your work clothes and bring a rake, shovel, wheelbarrow, and/or weeding tools if you have them. Show up to one of the project sites listed below and be ready to work – rain or shine!!

We strongly encourage you to notify Michelle Cash (425-401-8517) if you will be participating so she can organize the effort.

Michelle has been doing this for several years and we couldn't do it without her. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Michelle. Be sure to leave your name & number if leaving a message.

Target cleanup/planting areas for 2009:

- Collingwood Park
- Gravel trailhead (located on SE 47th Place)
- The ravine on SE 46th Way
- The Heights trailhead Lower (located at 3-way stop on SE 46th Way)
- The Heights trailhead Upper (located at top of lower trailhead on SE 47th Place)

Future WHCCA events in 2009

- Whispers Summer edition, late June
- July 4th Parade (10:30am Sat. July 4th)
- Annual Picnic – More info on this fun event will be available in the next issue of the Whispers.
- Garage Sale (9am Sat. September 26th)
- Whispers Fall edition, late October
- Annual meeting, Nov 5th (Wed)

Rants and raves! Selected compliments and complaints from the 'hood

By *Howdy Neighbor*

Home repairs gone bad

I contracted with **Home Curb Appeal** last Fall to have a new driveway installed and to do some carpentry work on the house. The driveway went in as planned. The bid was reasonable, the work completed quickly and expertly. However, the carpentry work, to fix a leak between the deck and the house, has been unsatisfactory. The initial bid of \$5100 was escalated to \$50,000 after a small section of water weathered wood was uncovered. After a long series of events, and consultations by other repair people, I concluded that the proposed increase was not needed. Subsequently it was quite a battle to get the contractor to finish the original job.

I understand that the contractor, John Muliniski, has left business cards at other houses in the immediate area. I would like to share my experience with other people in the neighborhood. I would not recommend Home Curb Appeal for any repairs. BTW- the references all gave "rave" reviews so stupidly, I did not check with the BBB, which listed the contractor as "unsatisfactory" and unwilling to mediate disputes.

Older and wiser

Paintball jerk(s)

Last Fall (October 31st, actually) our house on 46th Way in Collingwood was hit by someone shooting a paintball gun from a

motorcycle about 2:30 am. I was up at that time and heard the motorcycle go by at the same time that I heard something hit the house. I did report it to the police.

A neighbor's child on her way back from the bus stop saw another house on 158th Ave SE in Horizon Crest splattered with five green paint splats as well. It looks like this person made a tour of the neighborhood on his/her motorcycle.

Hopefully whoever did this has the decency to feel bad in hindsight for having vandalized homes in the neighborhood.

Sleepless in the neighborhood

Slow down when the roads are icy!

Recently we woke up to an unexpected spate of snow and icy roads on a weekday morning. With 2 or 3 inches of snow and barely freezing temperatures, the roads were especially slick and icy. As usual our fine city had not managed to get a sand truck into our neighborhood. It was so icy on the hill at the ravine that one sedan spun out while cautiously descending, coming to rest inches from a parked car and blocking the Westbound (downhill) lane.

A good samaritan (me) with 4WD and snow tires came along soon afterwards and parked off the road behind (uphill) from the other cars in order to help the first driver. Shortly thereafter, another sedan appeared at the top of the hill, heading in the same direction (down the hill) at a

speed way too fast for the conditions.

Needless to say, bad things happened, though they could have been a lot worse. The speeding car skidded on the snow but almost managed to stop before bouncing off the side of my car, and came to rest inches from the other two cars. No one was injured, though a car hurtling down the hill out of control could have caused severe injuries to those standing on the hill.

The driver of the speeding car felt (justifiably) like an idiot, and his bumper may require a little paint. My car will require body work, covered fortunately by the fast driver's insurance. Of course having to get body work done on a car is always a huge nuisance for which insurance never compensates.

Hopefully a lesson was learned by the speeding driver. For those still tempted to drive fast through the neighborhood the next time we have snow or ice, please don't do it. It could have been a lot worse!

An irritated good samaritan

Submitting future Rants or Raves

*If you see something in the neighborhood that warrants a Rant or a Rave, mail a **brief** note to our WHCCA mail box. Attn: Howdy Neighbor Rants and Raves, PMB 342, 4957 Lakemont Blvd SE, Bellevue, WA 98006.*

Or email it to the Whispers editor. We will do our best to publish all comments (at least those which don't get censored!) in the next Whispers.

Yours truly, Howdy Neighbor

Treasurer's report and WHCCA dues status... Thank you!

We understand that with today's economy, times are tough. But we still hope you will be able to support your community association. The WHCCA board uses voluntary dues contributions and volunteer labor to carry out approximately six neighborhood events every year, plus occasional bigger neighborhood enhancement projects. The activities and projects initiated and managed by the WHCCA help maintain and even increase our property values.

At this time, the board is looking for your ideas for the next neighborhood upgrade project. Last year, for example, we took on the renovation and improvement of our three entrance areas for Whispering Heights & Collingwood. The project included professional landscape design, installation of the giant rock name monuments, ripping out old foliage, planting new shrubs, and adding new bark. This was all made possible thanks to neighborhood dues, combined with lots of volunteer hours, plus matching funds from the city of Bellevue.

We encourage you to pay your WHCCA dues for 2009 and help keep our neighborhood the best it can be! You'll find a dues payment form on the back page of every *Whispers* issue. If you have any questions, feel free to contact one of our treasurers, Jeremy & Keri Kiefer (their contact information is on the back page).

(Continued from page 1, *Crime*)

discourage thieves, fewer problems will occur.

For more details on what types of crimes are occurring and where, you can refer to the City of Bellevue's Crime Map: <http://www.bellevuewa.gov/crimemap/default.aspx>.

Crime speaker at Coffee Social

In an effort keep our neighborhood as safe as possible, the WHCCA Board of Directors has invited a speaker from the Bellevue Police Department for our **Coffee Social**. This event takes place at Lewis Creek Park Visitor Center on **Wednesday evening, March 18th** (see front page for details).

Detective Michael Chiu will speak on Bellevue's Block Watch Program starting at 7pm. The meeting (sponsored by Starbucks) should be very interesting and we hope to see you there!

Merrick Van Dongen
WHCCA President

New Whispers masthead

We now have a new masthead on our **Whispers** front page which incorporates the new stone markers on our entrance islands. Thanks are due to Heather McCrone for her the initiative and artistic talent in creating the new artwork. I'm sure readers share my sentiment when I say, "Thank you, Heather!"

Will Hargreaves
Whispers Editor

Kids' Korner

Get published for the first time! We would like to establish a *Whispers* column for younger WHCCA residents. Topics could include a perspective on what they like (or don't like!) about living in our neighborhood, how we can work to improve our neighborhood from their perspective, or any other topic of interest from a younger person's point of view.

Anyone 18 or younger can submit a short article by email to a Board member and it will be considered for inclusion in the next *Whispers*.

Will Hargreaves
Whispers Editor

2008 WHCCA Annual Meeting

The association's annual meeting was held November 5th, 2008 at Lewis Creek Park Visitor Center and was exceptionally well attended. Detective Richard Chinn from the Bellevue Police Department took advantage of the crowd to talk about identity theft

It was definitely eye-opening to hear and see the myriad ways in which individuals' personal information is stolen and used to impersonate, access bank accounts, and steal funds. One common method is stealing mail, since the combination of credit cards, bank statements, and other personal information received by mail could allow a clever thief to access to your deposits or credit line.

We have had instances of mail being stolen from unlocked mailboxes in the WHCCA neighborhood in the past. If you are concerned about this issue, consider getting a locking mailbox for your mail shelter. You can find more information on our website by clicking "The Neighborhood" button and selecting the Landscape & Garden page (<http://www.whcca.org/garden.shtml>).

Odds & Ends (but important ones!)



Cougar reports

We are very fortunate to live close to nature in this neighborhood. We have opportunities to view wild animals that people living elsewhere might have to visit a zoo to see. In addition to deer, bear, raccoons, mountain beaver, quail, bobcats, and coyotes, our local native wildlife mix includes the occasional cougar.

Cougar attacks of humans are *extremely* rare. However, because of nearby sightings in February 2009, October 2008 and September 2008, parents with small children and solitary joggers should be cautious at our wooded parks or near green-

belts, especially near dawn or dusk.

Recent sightings in & near our neighborhood

In mid-February, an unconfirmed sighting of a cougar occurred on the outskirts of Lewis Creek Park (the edge nearest Lakemont Shopping Center) about 4pm on a Saturday afternoon.

While that animal could possibly have been a large bobcat, Lewis Creek Park *is* located on the flanks of Cougar Mountain. When the park was being built several years ago, workmen reported seeing a cougar in the park at dawn or dusk. A mature male cougar may defend a territory of 100-150 square miles, but within that territory there could be a few additional juvenile and female cougars.

Another cougar sighting occurred on a Saturday evening in early October, 2008. Longtime WHCCA resident Paul Senio saw one in his yard on 155th Place SE. The big cat returned to the greenbelt behind his home.

WDFW website lists cougar sightings

You can track "officially-reported" cougar sightings at the state department of fish and wildlife web site (<http://wdfw.wa.gov>). These online reports include records of when and where cougars have been reported, and are listed by county. A reported Bellevue sighting of what was probably a young cougar is listed for late September 2008 on (appropriately!) Cougar Mountain Way. The street is only ~1/2 mile from Lewis Creek Park and less than a mile from Paul Senio's house.

Call 911 to report a cougar

From these recent reports, we know at least one cougar is living nearby. If you see a cougar in a residential area, or to report any dangerous wildlife incident, call 911, then also call in the information to the WDFW at 877-933-9847.

To be prepared if you have an up-close personal cougar encounter, search the web for "cougar safety." The general theme of these articles is:

- Don't run
- Look big
- Fight back hard if attacked.

2009 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers —

President: Merrick Van Dongen
vandongen@earthlink.net, 425-644-7676,
4660 159th Ave SE

Vice Presidents: Jon & Michelle Smith
Jonlsmith@gmail.com, 425-945-0524, 16200
SE 46th Way

Secretary: Gretchan Lindsey
GretchanL@hotmail.com, 425-644-4580
15422 SE 47th Street

Treasurers: Keri & Jeremy Kiefer
Keri.kiefer@comcast.net, Jeremy@
brightonjones.com, 425-747-2447, 16208
SE 46th Way

Board Members at large —

Bob Blaisdell, rgblaisdell@att.net, 425-746-
3346, 15911 SE 47th Court

Christina Dolkiewicz, gjkotsenas@comcast.
net, 425-502-7876, 4550 157th Ave SE

Will Hargreaves, willhagr@aol.com, 425-
643-0549, 15438 SE 47th Street

Hua Liu, hualiu2001@yahoo.com, 425-373-
9224, 4542 157th Ave SE

**Meet new board member
Hua (“Kwah”) Liu**

My family moved to this neighborhood from Nashville Tennessee in 2001. During our eight years here, my son Ming Xia graduated from Newport high school and finished his undergraduate studies at UW.

My husband Yiping Xia and I enjoy hiking, doing yoga, and taking photographs of Northwest beauty. Often we take a walk in our community to capture images of beautiful flowers in spring, spectacular views of mountains in summer, and colorful leaves in autumn. We always feel fortunate to live in such lovely area with great neighbors.

Hua Liu



We also warmly welcome our newest board member, Tina Dolkiewicz. The board is very happy to have her insights and participation and is looking forward to getting to know her .

Will Hargreaves, the current Whispers editor, has also formally rejoined the board after serving in an adjunct capacity for the past couple of years.

WHCCA ADJUNCT FUNCTIONS

Communication: Al Patterson,
allenp@cryptosafe.com, 425-643-
1905

Emergency planning, blockwatch: currently unassigned (any volunteers?)

Landscape liason: Michelle Smith,
michelle.belle@comcast.net, 425-
945-0524

Residents database: Steve Sanford,
steve.sanford@comcast.net, 425-
649-9042

Web site: Gretchan Lindsey ,
GretchanL@hotmail.com, 425-644-
4580

Whispers distribution: Lin Sanford,
lin@linsanford.com, 425-649-9042, &
Judy Matthew, jpmatt1013@aol.com

Whispers editor: Will Hargreaves,
willhagr@aol.com, 425-643-0549

WHCCA EVENT COORDINATORS

Coffee social: Merrick Van Dongen

Spring cleanup: Michelle & Rob Cash

Easter egg hunt: Heather McCrone

July 4th Parade & picnic: Jon &
Michelle Smith

Summer picnic: WHCCA board

Garage sale: Natasha & Wade Vorley

Board members old and new

The board extends a warm “thank you” to departing members Laura and Bruce Warren. As any past board member can attest, getting to know other community members through this forum is very rewarding, and the Warrens always brightened the many meetings and activities in which they participated. We appreciate their many contributions over the past several years!

Two veteran board members have asked to become temporarily inactive due to family or business constraints. Patt Sellen and Natasha & Wade Vorley have been valuable (and enjoyable!) participants in WHCCA activities but have had to put their board activities on hold temporarily. We look forward to their return to active status when their busy lives permit!

Please send your dues today!

The suggested amount is \$30 per household...

Cover art by Heather McCrone



COMPLETE & MAIL this form with check payable to “WHCCA”. Send to:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS FOR OCCASIONAL WHCCA MAIL _____ (NOT SHARED OUTSIDE WHCCA)

Dues enclosed \$ _____ (\$30 suggested) I am also enclosing an additional donation of \$ _____

WHCCA Treasurer, PMB 342
4957 Lakemont Blvd. SE
Bellevue WA 98006

I'd like to help on these neighborhood activities: WHCCA Board of Directors __, Annual Picnic __, Egg Hunt __, Newsletter editing or distribution __, July 4th Bike Parade __, Emergency Planning __, City liaison __, Block Watch __, Garage Sale __, Spring Clean-Up __, Membership Drive __, Other interest/expertise (please describe) _____

So that we may realistically assess the role our website (www.whcca.org) can play in helping keep you informed, please tell us:

Do you have internet access at home? YES __, NO __. How often do you use the internet at home? DAILY __, WEEKLY __, OTHER __?