

Winter 2008

Church Point Post

Homeowners Association Quarterly Newsletter



Church Point Manor House To Reopen As Bed and Breakfast

The historic Church Point Manor House was recently sold, and the new owner is planning to reopen it as a B&B this spring. Long-time residents will remember that a B&B operated in the Manor House in the late 1990's. The property, located at the corner of Church Point Road and Meeting House Road, was eventually sold and has been a private residence for the past several years. The new owner met with the Board of Directors in December to discuss his plans. He has pledged to keep the B&B a first-class property, with a low-key operation. He does not plan any advertising to generate a lot of traffic, and the only sign will be a restored "Church Point Manor House" sign where the old sign hung. The owner is active in Virginia Beach charities and historical preservation. He said his objective in purchasing the property is to keep it as a reminder of Virginia Beach's heritage; he does not plan any new construction or renovation on the property.

One of the exciting plans the new owner mentioned is that he would like to make the B&B a special place for Church Point residents. He invited the Garden Club and Board of Directors to hold their meetings at the Manor House, and he may reopen the small wine and beer cafe in the basement for B&B guests and Church Point residents to enjoy. Stay tuned for more details as his plans develop.

President's Corner

By Neal Curtin, HOA President

One of the unique and appealing aspects of Church Point is the amount of common land throughout the community. We have three sizeable parks – Mews (or Gazebo), Commons, and Quays (or Riverfront) Parks – as well as numerous trails and open areas. Many homes abut this common land, and some residents have landscaped and improved the common land adjacent to their property. You can see this especially along the Carriage Path by the golf course and in the area back by Thoroughgood between the Gazebo Park and Bishops Court. Some residents have even installed irrigation and landscaping lighting to enhance the common land. While those types of improvements are welcome when they result in attractive areas, owners should bear in mind that these areas remain common land, open and available to all Church Point residents. Anything that would restrict access or passage in the common land is prohibited -- it is private property that belongs to all HOA members. While on the subject of common land, please remember, too, that everyone can help keep these areas looking good – if you see litter, please pick it up and dispose of it properly; if you walk your dog on common land, please "scoop the poop"; if you see fallen trees or branches, let Select know so we can schedule tree removal. Do not dump trash or yard debris on common land. In these simple ways, all of us can help maintain our valuable common land asset.

The annual Spring Egg Hunt is scheduled for March 16; see the short article on page 2 of the newsletter. I would like to encourage residents to help out with this event. Kristen Carter has taken the initiative to keep this going, and she could use more help. Give her a call (363-6111) if you can help out on this always fun event. We would like to see more events like this in Church Point, especially some type of community picnic in the summer or fall. If you would be interested in helping organize an event like that, please contact me or any of the Board members. I think it could be a good way to build community spirit -- and have some fun!

Neighborhood Watch – by Neal Curtin

Instead of LaTanya Cole's usual Neighborhood Watch column, I thought I would use this space to fill you in on the private security company that we employed over the holidays to patrol Church Point. This was the first time we have contracted with a private firm for extra security, and the Board has treated it as a pilot project to see if we want to use this approach in the future.

First, a little history. You may recall that we had a series of incidents in 2005-06 that prompted some worries about security in the neighborhood. The Board started looking at options for beefing up security, and for the first time put money in the budget specifically for security. The first action, working with LaTanya Cole and the Neighborhood Watch, was to work with the VB Police to have them provide some extra patrols in the neighborhood. The police were quite accommodating, but their resources are limited and there are many more dangerous areas in the precinct that they must concentrate on. Then, over the holidays in Dec. 2006, we were able to hire off-duty VB policemen to conduct patrols at random times. The City offers this service to communities that are willing to pay the costs of the patrols, and through the efforts of local resident Bob Whipkey, a former VB policeman himself, we took advantage of this extra security for several evenings during the holidays.

This year, the Board decided to try another approach. We received proposals and interviewed officials from three private firms to see what kind and level of services they could provide to our neighborhood. The Board selected the firm Citywide Protection Services. We found that Citywide could provide more coverage for the price than with off-duty police or the other firms. And their representatives seemed most in tune with the types of issues we deal with in Church Point. They use professional security vehicles and uniformed officers, and while most of their patrols are in the vehicle, they also did some foot patrols in parts of the neighborhood. They can handle many incidents themselves, and if necessary could contact VB Police quickly.

Patrols began Dec. 20 and continued 7 days a week through mid-January. I won't give details on how long each of the patrols lasted or the times they were here, but in general they were at random times and in random patterns and covered the entire development on each patrol.

I received a written patrol report (Incident Report) each morning which summarized the patrols of the previous day. If a serious incident needed immediate attention, they could contact me at home or Select Group through its emergency number for guidance or HOA involvement.

The Board is now considering if, when, and how often to use Citywide in the future. Our budget will not support 12-months of patrols every year, but we think there will be benefit to conducting some sort of future patrols on an occasional, random basis. This will provide some visibility to the extra security that Church Point has, and may discourage bad elements from targeting this neighborhood. We will be working with Citywide, and considering other options, to develop an affordable approach that will help us get the best value for our security spending.

Spring Egg Hunt Coming March 16

Sure, it's the middle of winter, but spring is right around the corner! That means it will soon be time for the popular Spring Egg Hunt in Church Point. Kristen Carter and her team are already underway with the planning for this annual event. Details are still being worked out, but go ahead and mark your calendar for **Sunday, March 16 at 2 pm** for this year's fun. If you need more info or want to help out, contact Kristen at 313-6111.



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Church Point Garden Club

By Joan Curtin, 1st Vice-President of the Garden Club



We hope you enjoyed the new holiday decorations at the front entrance this year. After more than 10 years, the old decorations were getting a little worn. Our thanks to the Church Point residents for their participation in our **poinsettia sales** and donations made at the annual **Santa at the Gazebo** event, as those funds, along with some support from the Homeowner's Association, helped with the purchase of the new decorations. The original design was a hard act to follow, but the simpler look of wreaths and garlands seemed to survive this first season pretty well.

Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived at the Gazebo promptly at 1:00 p.m. on December 8th to visit with the children of Church Point. Parents were able to take pictures of their children with Santa and Mrs. Claus, and enjoy cookies and warm apple cider provided by members of the Garden Club. The Garden Club sends their thanks to Santa and Mrs. Claus for taking the time from their busy schedules to visit us here every year.

The Garden Club has a full agenda for the next few months. There will be a presentation to the Club from the **Lynnhaven River Now** conservation group in February, a floral workshop in March, a visit to an historic home in April, and the various Council of Garden Clubs sponsored activities.

Landscape of the Month Award recipients:

October – The Mews

Tom & Mary Violette

4680 Church Point Place

November – The Commons & Bishops Court

Gary & Eileen Gower

4077 Timber Ridge Drive

The **Landscape of the Month** award will resume in April. Judges evaluate seasonal interest and color, lawn and plant maintenance, along with overall harmony and balance. Perfection is not the goal, but neatness does count. With so many enjoyable landscapes to choose from, it is an honor to receive this very special award of recognition.

Scenes from Santa's Visit to Church Point Gazebo



Board Establishes Advisory Committee To Plan Landscaping Improvements Along First Court Road

The HOA Board of Directors has appointed four Church Point residents to form an ad hoc committee to study the landscaping needs along First Court Road and make recommendations to the Board on the best ways to proceed. This is the first step toward implementing the Board's new responsibility for this property, following the approval of an amendment at the October annual homeowners meeting. That amendment clarified responsibility for the area between the fence line and the road, giving the HOA authority and responsibility for maintenance of the landscaping. Improvements in this area are necessary because the photinia bushes have become infected with a disease that has killed many of them and will eventually claim all of the photinia. There are also dead, missing, or broken crape myrtle trees in some areas.

Members of the committee are Paula Larkin, Doyle Quisenberry, Gene Hamrick, and Board member Edie Schlain. The membership represents a cross-section of the community, including two residents living in the affected area and two from other parts of Church Point. They began meeting in January and will continue throughout 2008. Board President Neal Curtin has asked them to present their recommendations at any time throughout the year as they deem advisable, with a final report at the end of the year.

The committee's charter, as approved by the Board, lists a number of questions which the committee is to consider, including such things as:

1. What are the most urgent problems in that area that should be addressed promptly?
2. Are Nellie Stevens hollies the most appropriate replacement plant for the photinia or are there other options that would be more cost-effective? A key consideration in the choice of plantings should be heartiness and ease of maintenance. We want something that is disease- and insect-resistant and does not need much pruning or other maintenance.
3. How and when should dead photinia and crape myrtles be removed? What contractors could do this work and at what cost? Can the Sheriff's Dept. provide free labor for removal?
4. Where can we obtain the best prices for whatever replacements are decided on?

The committee recommendations will help guide the Board in making decisions about the landscaping in that area. The Board will have to weigh budget priorities along with other needs throughout Church Point, including landscaping in other parts of the development.

The committee's charter has been posted to the www.churchpointline.com website under the "Report" tab. Also, please see a related article on p. 5 of this newsletter concerning the maintenance of the fences along First Court Road.

Attention to Home Maintenance Can Pay Dividends for Entire Neighborhood



As Church Point nears "middle age" as a development, many of our homes are 12-15 years old. While the development and most individual homes still look great, many of us are noticing that some fix-up and preventative maintenance may be in order on some homes. Now would be a good time to plan for work to be done this year. Here are some things to pay special attention to:

- o Mildew on brick or stucco siding and on roofs
- o Fences with rot or mildew or in need of power-washing or painting
- o Window frames rotting or paint peeling
- o Loose or broken gutters or downspouts
- o Trim that needs painting
- o Landscaping getting over-grown or damaged by storms (leaning, broken, etc.)

Let's make 2008 the year to do some things we may have been putting off. If we all try to consider how our property looks from our neighbor's perspective, the entire neighborhood can continue to look as good as new!

First Court Road Fences Remain Individual Owner Responsibility

The amendment passed at the annual meeting made it clear that individual lot owners along First Court Road are responsible for maintenance of the fences on their property. This includes the responsibility for power washing dirty and mildewed fences and repairing any damaged fences. As landscaping improvements are made, it will be important for owners to have the fences power-washed, otherwise the benefits of the new landscaping will be negated by the poor condition of the fences, most of which are green with mildew. Besides power-washing, some sections of the fence need other maintenance, such as replacing rotting boards.

The Board will be contacting owners to have the fences power-washed as appropriate. Fence areas that have crape myrtles by them can be power-washed now; for fences that are currently hidden by photinia, it probably makes sense to wait until new bushes are planted before power-washing them, although owners who want to go ahead right away are certainly welcome to.



Some owners have already completed power-washing, and the difference is quite noticeable and amazing. The photos here printed in black and white don't really show the difference very well; check them out in color on the web site version of the newsletter, or better yet, go out and see them in person. If you drive along First Court Rd., you'll notice the areas that have been power-washed. Thanks to those who have completed the fix-up, and we hope everyone cooperates to make this area – Church Point's "front yard" – attractive and welcoming.



Before Power-Washing

After

Time to Clamp Down on Vandalism in Church Point

Did you know the Board has budgeted over \$1,000 in 2008 for repairs caused by vandalism? Cost in some years has been less than that, but in some years it's been even higher. Vandalism in Church Point is not at the point of being an "epidemic," but it continues to be an annoying – and sometimes expensive – problem. Over the past couple years, we have had numerous incidents -- signs damaged or removed, graffiti painted in the newly refurbished gazebo, light bulbs broken or stolen from the gazebo, mail boxes destroyed (a Federal crime, by the way), a home "egged," fences damaged on the walkway to the shopping center. While the cost of most of these individual incidents has been minimal to the HOA (although fixing the walkway fence cost over \$2,000 a couple years ago), it does add up. It is certainly money that could be better spent elsewhere.

And it's really not so much the cost -- it's the waste, the nuisance, and the underlying attitudes that are most troubling. If left unchecked, minor vandalism can escalate into more serious damage and maybe even personal injury. If these vandalism incidents are being done by Church Point residents, parents need to pay attention and make sure their children aren't involved. If it is done by outsiders, we need your – and your kids – help in identifying the culprits. We notify the VB police when vandalism occurs to common land, and I encourage all homeowners to do the same. These are crimes, and by reporting these incidents, we give the police more reason to increase patrols in the neighborhood, which in turn can be a deterrent to future problems.



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Church Point Community Bulletin Board

- There were no recommendations for contractors' services this quarter, and no nominations for kudos for residents with noteworthy achievements. If you have items for future newsletter, please send your recommendations to npchurchpoint@cox.net.
- Want to advertise your business to your Church Point neighbors? We accept ads as small as a business card up to a full page. If you are interested in placing an ad in a future newsletter for a nominal fee (to help defray the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter), please contact Ali Mercer at Select Group or email npchurchpoint@cox.net. We'll send you a form with prices and other information you'll need. The form is also available at our website, www.churchpointonline.com in the "Ads" section. Newsletters are currently published around the end of January, April, July, and October.
- Past issues of the *Church Point Post* are available on-line at the Church Point web site (www.churchpointonline.com). You can get a PDF version in color.

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