



# Kensington Downs Newsletter

## Fort Wayne, Indiana 46815

### January 2009

**Board of Directors:**

**President:** Bill Stiles (749-7114), **Vice President:** Dave Ritenour, **Secretary:** Nancy Louraine

**Other Directors:** Tim Bastress, Werner Dierks, Pat Johnstone, Arlene Klapes, Joan Lewis, Keith Morrison, Sharon Mowrer

**Newsletter Editor:** Sharon Mowrer (493-8803)

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

WELCOME TO 2009!

Another year has passed. I was just talking to people at work about the big Y2K computer scare. It feels like that just happened. I'm not sure where the years go, but every day seems to be busier than the one before.

We have a request from the snow plow truck drivers. Please don't park cars on the street when there is a chance of 2 or more inches of snow. The cars make it very difficult for them to complete their job. They need to be very careful to not damage cars and that usually means they have to leave considerable snow on the roads.

I know warm weather is a long way off, but soon the outdoor work will begin. That means garage doors will be open and tools will be out in the yard. Remember to keep an eye on your belongings and what's going on around you. Noticing unusual activity at a neighbor's house may help you prevent a crime. Being aware is one of the best security measures you can take. Also, if you leave your car on your driveway overnight, remember to lock the doors. Making it hard for vandals or burglars to get at your things will help discourage them.

### A PERSONAL ITEM FROM THE BOARD

In December, our Association Treasurer, John Ivins, succumbed to the disease that he had been fighting so well. We will all miss John and the huge amount of work he did for our neighborhood. John worked long hours to do an excellent job of maintaining the financial books for the Association, as well as dealing with neighbors' problems and vendor issues. John worked hard for us, and his efforts will be missed. Thank you, John.

## BUDGET REVIEW

For those of you who weren't able to attend the annual meeting, I'd like to give you an overview of the budget. Based on the 2009 dues of \$116.60 times 235 homes, we have a dues income of \$27,401. Sounds like an awful lot of money! The association is responsible to maintain the common areas: lawns, trees, and pond. That takes a lot of money.

Without listing every single line item, I'll try to sum up the anticipated expenditures. Based on 2008 costs, we budgeted \$11,500 for yard maintenance of the common areas. That amount includes mowing, trimming, fertilizing, and some cleanup. Pond maintenance is budgeted at \$3,800, chemicals, fountain removal in winter, etc. Snow removal is \$3,500. We had several large snow falls in early 2008. The city plows actually came through our streets a few weeks ago. I received several calls complaining about the poor job they did. At least it didn't cost us anything out of our funds. Tree trimming and removal are set at \$2,000. I&M fees for various electrical uses are estimated at \$1,550. Sprinkler maintenance is \$1,500. The sprinklers have been in the ground for a long time and parts fail. Sign maintenance is \$1,200. Insurance is \$2,000. A storage unit for salt barrels, signs, and Christmas lights costs \$612.

I'll lump together the general expenses for newsletters, postage, bank fees, and various general office type expenses total to \$795. We budgeted \$700, in case we need some legal advice. We hope to not use the item, but we should be prepared. It seems like we get challenged every year by someone.

\$220 was spent in 2008 for liens on properties not paying their dues. Taxes on interest income were \$475. Light maintenance was set at \$550. Advertising for the annual garage sale is \$75. \$500 is budgeted to publish an annual handbook, containing directories, by-laws, and other information.

There is an active committee looking at the drainage, land usage, etc. of the Kensington Downs area. A \$2,000 line item for Ecological Improvements is in the budget, but there is no specific plan for that expense, at this time. An Ecological consultant is budgeted at \$500, but again, there is no contract or agreement in place at this time.

Okay, back to the beginning. An income of \$27,401 and budgeted expenses of \$33,477 creates a difference of \$6,076.

With that much deficit, it is doubtful that we'll spend the Ecological amounts. We can hope for light snow in early 2009 to hold down the snow plowing costs. If we're lucky on the other maintenance amounts, we'll hold those costs down. By the end of 2009, we might be dipping into the savings a little.

This year, we'll be forming a group to review costs vs. income and project needs into the near future. We'll try to come up with a balanced budget in the near future. The answer is not just in slashing costs or in continually raising dues. It's in finding a blend that takes care of the needs of the association without putting undue burdens on today's homeowners or tomorrow's. We have a really nice neighborhood, and it's worth the volunteer time that people are giving to help care for it. Thanks for all those who have helped to make our neighborhood a great place to live!

# Bits and Pieces

A special KD Board meeting was called for Monday, January 19, to elect a new treasurer to replace John Ivins, who passed away last month. A new treasurer has been approached and will be named, pending coordination with his employer.

Regular KD Board meetings in 2009 are scheduled for February 11, April 8, June 10, August 12, October 14, and December 8. All meetings will be held in the meeting room at the fire station on Lahmeyer Road beginning at 7 pm.

A big THANK YOU to Matt Hupe for placing the holiday lights at the entrance to our neighborhood. He also added some lights as well as the deer at his own expense. We certainly appreciate your contributions to Kensington Downs, Matt!

At the December Board meeting, it was announced that bids will be taken to remove some trees along Maysville Road and to provide pond maintenance.

## Architectural Control

If you're like me, my mind starts wandering to outside projects this time of year – like what to do with my flower beds. If you, however, are thinking about your summer building project, please note the following. According to the Association By-Laws (Article VII), no dwelling, fence or wall shall be constructed, placed or altered upon any lot until the plans and specifications have been approved by the Architectural Control Committee. This includes decks and room additions. Some guidelines are:

- No wire or chain link fences are allowed.
- No outbuildings are allowed.
- There is a maximum fence height of six feet.
- Fences cannot pass the front foundation of the house.

A drawing of your lot that contains the following points will need to be submitted to the Architectural Control Committee prior to construction:

- \* dimensions and any easements
- \* location of the house on the lot
- \* location of the planned fence, deck, or room addition
- \* name and phone number of the company contacted for the construction

While fences appear to be gaining in popularity in our community, trees and shrubs are a good alternative since it is not so easy for them to have that “neglected” look over time. Call any committee member with questions: Bill Blue (748-4725), Lyman Lewis (749-4917), Pat Johnstone (749-6978), or Pat Manning (749-9225).

# Meet your Neighbors

Stop by 7236 Bent Willow and welcome our newest neighbors Jerry and Sharon Hoover. These newlyweds also share their home with a very cute Oliver, the schnauzer. Jerry is an insurance adjuster with State Auto out of Ohio.

On the other end of the spectrum, I had the opportunity to talk with two long-time homeowners, John and Karen Casey. They built at 2233 White Plains Court in 1991. John is in outside sales at Wayne Fasteners, and Karen helped start and still works at Conference and Travel. They are the parents of John Jr. who lives in New Haven, Erin who is a student at IPFW, and Michelle who is a student at Snider.

Beating them out by two years are John and Karla DiFilippo who built their home at 2320 Kerrigan's Way in 1989. John is a retired police officer with the Fort Wayne Police Department. He avoids some of Karla's "honey do list" items by driving a truck part time. Just kidding, John. Karla, meanwhile, keeps busy caring for elderly relatives.

## Website Now Interactive

By Arlene Klapes

Kensington Downs Community Association now has its own interactive Web site at <http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/ftwayne/kd/>

The City of Ft. Wayne has contracted with Neighborhood Link and its corporate sponsors to provide this Web site to us at no cost. Please visit and explore the many useful and interactive features. You'll find both current and archive issues of the Kensington Downs Newsletter, important KDCA documents (e.g., Covenants and plat maps, By-Laws, Articles of Incorporation), a community map showing each of the nine covenant sections, a Board of Directors membership listing and much more. There is a Community Calendar to announce upcoming KDCA meetings, events and garage sales. Also, the "Community Pages" section contains important neighborhood notices and you can access direct links to both the local government and community police. In addition to the features mentioned above, our Web site has an easy-to-use, interactive Discussion Forum that enables all of us to exchange ideas, concerns and questions about neighborhood issues. Other Web site features include user-free "Classified Advertising" and a "Meet Your Neighbor" section that will allow each homeowner to create (or hot link) their own personal Web pages.

The Neighborhood Coordinator for our Web site is N. Arlene Klapes (749-7432). Please note that Neighborhood Link maintains complete control over the format of the Web site. Therefore, your "designated coordinator" is bound by established parameters when adding content to the Kensington Downs homepage. So, we will not be posting "sensitive materials" to our site at this time, but Neighborhood Link has plans to include a password-protected feature for a nominal fee by late 2009. At that time, we can begin posting Board Meeting minutes, financial reports and Annual Meeting documents for secured viewing by KDCA member-homeowners. The KD Web Site is a new project that we hope will foster lines of communication to further our goal of building a more informed and connected community. Nonetheless, the content on the KD homepage is intended to augment (not replace) the paper newsletter that our community members are used to receiving. Our new Web site has been active since early June of 2008 and will continue to develop over time. So "stay tuned" and please feel free to offer your comments and suggestions for improvement. Visit the KD Web site to learn more, register for use and read the helpful FAQs.