



The Citizens Report

A bimonthly publication of the Brighton Heights Citizen's Federation

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Winter Tips from the Dirt Doctor

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Snow Removal Tips:

- » The sooner snow is removed the less likely ice will form.
- » Shovel snow from sidewalks on all sides of the property.
- » Shovel the full width of the sidewalk.
- » Shovel to the concrete and remove all ice.
- » Use salt to melt the ice, if necessary, and maintain updated salt logs (that is, location, date, time, et cetera.)
- » Pile snow on the property rather than in the street or the alley.
- » Use the proper snow removal equipment to avoid back injuries.
- » For particularly heavy snowfalls, consider hiring a professional service to handle the removal.
- » Finally, remember to arrange for snow removal during planned vacations.

The Importance of Using Entry Mats:

Effective, high-performance matting systems are designed to stop water and moisture at the door. They also have the ability to hold the dirt and moisture that is deposited on them. Eighty percent of the soil that enters a facility is walked in through the front door.

Well-designed matting systems trap soils and other contaminants from entering your facility or home until cleaning crews remove them via vacuuming or extraction. And then there is the "Rule of 15s." To trap as much contamination as possible, experts recommend using five feet each of three separate types of matting:

1. Scraper mats, placed directly outside entries in order to catch larger debris and heavier concentrations of moisture.
2. Wiper/scraper mats, installed inside facilities in order to capture and trap smaller contaminants and liquids.
3. Wiper mats, the "final line of defense," positioned after wiper/scraper matting to remove any remaining dirt and moisture from shoe bottoms.

Using this type of effective contaminant-trapping system does more than just keep facilities clean. It also enhances building safety by reducing the risk of slip-and-fall.

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www.brightonheights.org

Minutes of the BHCN General Membership Meeting of January 12, 2012

The meeting was brought to order at 7:05 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Special Guest - Jan Oliver - Alcosan Director of Regional Conveyance

Jan Oliver presented an overview and update on Alcosan's efforts to comply with the consent decree signed with the federal government concerning elimination of sewage overflows. Dan Lockard and Nancy Barylak assisted. A Wet Weather Plan that meets these objectives will be open for public comment in July 2012 and submitted to the various regulatory agencies in January 2013. The project plan, when accepted, must be completed by 2026 and be sustained for 20 years. The cost for ratepayers is still to be determined during this negotiation process.

The minutes from the November 10, 2011 General Membership Meeting were accepted without changes.

Report of Officers and Others:

Pete Bellisario, President - Construction of the three town homes on the smaller Saint John's lot at Antrim and McClure has commenced. After 15 years, progress is starting. Construction meetings will be held monthly and Pete Bellisario and John Norman will be our representatives. Planning for housing on the larger "big-hole" lot is ongoing.

Upcoming activities include flower planting in May, our house tour on June 3rd and a Community Day at a Pirates game.

Treasurer's Report, Joan Bellisario: Net Worth – As of January 12, 2012: Assets

Cash and Bank Accounts Bank CD \$0.00	Monument \$1736.65	Operating Account \$29,004.49	State Grant Account \$905.63	United Way \$2416.73
Total Cash and Bank Accounts \$34,063.50	Total Assets \$34,063.50	Liabilities \$0.00	Overall Total \$34,063.50	

Corresponding Secretary, Vince Pallus - Vince Pallus reported on the availability of community members to receive training in the Green Ambassadors and Apprentices Northside (GAAN) program sponsored by GTECH. This is a three-month program meeting every two weeks to focus on implementing elements of the green economy in our communities. Vince will apply to participate and those who do will receive a stipend. Applications are due by January 27, 2012.

Crime and Safety, Donna Kramer - Incidents of shots being fired in November were discussed. The homicide on Fleming in late December is under investigation. Five arrests for drug activity were reported and vehicle hit and run accidents have increased. A January 7th incident involving youths near Christ Hope Church and Legion Park was discussed. Alicia Park and Denise B., who plan to operate a child care facility on this Church's property, introduced themselves and answered questions.

NSLC Board Report, Peggy Urzua - Northside Community Development Fund has received a \$250,000 grant for assisting small businesses. They will conduct workshops at various locations in the Northside to help citizens start new businesses. The first will be January 24th at Manchester Citizens Council. More workshops will be announced. The NSLC is asking for a list of all properties owned by the member groups in order to develop a central plan to evaluate the county tax reassessments. The Garden Theater Block application for New Market Tax Credit funds has met the minimum requirements and is progressing. The former Wheeler paint store project is on track as well as the Penn Brewery expansion. The ROX Music Education program has relocated to the Elks building and is expanding.

Old Business

The Legion Park holiday tree lights will come down at a To Be Determined date. It was noted that the new LED-type saved a lot of money in electricity costs.

New Business Special Guest II - Real estate broker Jim Dunn was asked to make a short presentation on the factors affecting a successful appeal of property assessments. General discussion followed.

The 50/50 raffle: the winner of \$29 was Jim Dunn. It was donated to the Federation.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John Belch

Next Meeting is March 8th. – 7:00PM in the Morrow Auditorium

So You Think You Want a Dog

Our guest columnist this issue is friend and neighbor Lillian Akin, DPDT-KA, CBCC-KA, a certified dog trainer and certified dog behavior counselor who lives with her three dogs in Brighton Heights.

Are you looking to add a furry friend to your household? If so, how do you decide what dog is right for your family? And more importantly, where do you obtain this four-footed friend? The best advice I can give you is to do your research ahead of time. Make sure you know whether or not that dog will work with your lifestyle and make sure you are getting that dog from a reputable source. Know what your dog was bred to do before you decide if that dog's instinctual behaviors will be compatible with yours.

What do you want from a dog? Do you want a good family pet that will allow visitors into your home easily, or are you looking for a guard dog? If you want a good family pet, hunting dogs such as retrievers and the hounds and even pit bulls and pit mixes tend to be very people friendly to strangers. Dogs such as shepherds, Rottweilers and Dobermans were bred to guard. They're suspicious of strangers and might not always be friendly toward people entering your house.

How much are you willing to exercise your dog? Hunting dogs tend to need a lot of exercise, as they were bred to run, run, run while hunting. They are not going to be happy in a small apartment without the ability to run around off leash somewhere. They tend to require aerobic exercise. Lap dogs and your larger-breed dogs won't need as much exercise. Herding breeds need a lot of exercise, as well as mental stimulation, to keep them happy.

Are you willing to brush and groom your dog? Dogs with longer and curlier hair need much more upkeep to keep them hygienic and looking good. Shorter-haired dogs tend to need less brushing and shed less. My next article will discuss how and where to find your canine match.

President's Message by Pete Bellisario New Homes, New Church, New Lights. And More.

Springtime is right around the corner and hopefully we haven't had as much snow as we saw last year. Since our last newsletter, the City of Pittsburgh Urban Redevelopment Authority's (URA) contractor has begun construction of three houses on the corner of McClure Avenue and Antrim Street. Weather permitting, these houses will be under cover in May 2013. This is our first step in redeveloping that part of our neighborhood. We will continue to work with the URA on building more homes on the former site know as Saint John's Hospital. We anxiously await the results of a proposal on site development of the area between Fleming and McClure. The topography of that area has proven difficult to design a project, so we can't be sure of the arrangement of the buildings until we learn more from this contractor.

The Memorial Day planning committee will begin in February to plan for this important day. We will partner with Emmanuel Christian Church on Davis Avenue for the lunch portion of the day. In years past, the church and Riverview Manor held separate luncheons after the ceremony. It just seems natural to join forces to enhance the experience. More to come, for sure.

The Federation's light-up of our "tree" in Legion Park went very well. The children's chorus from Northside Catholic School provided their voices and music to add to the festivities. Thanks to a grant from Duquesne Light we hung 700 LED lights and the amazing aspect of this change in lighting is that we saved more than \$100 over conventional lighting.

We will be flower planting in May as we have in the past. We have the three flower beds at the intersection of California and Termon Avenues. Last year the Board decided to take responsibility for the last flower bed at the intersection of Brighton Heights and Ohio River Boulevards. This past summer, our neighbors on Antrim Street were successful in obtaining a grant from Mayor Ravenstahl as part of his "Neighborhood Beautification Program." The group asked for and the Board approved funding for flower planting on the corner of Antrim and Fleming.

We are welcoming a new church to our community. Destiny of Faith Church is located in the building of the former Brighton-McClure Presbyterian Church on the corner of Benton Avenue and Brighton Road. It is a non-denominational church with traditional foundations. The Reverend Brenda Gregg, former pastor of the Greater Allen AME Church on the corner of California and Davis Avenues, now heads this church. She'll be a speaker at our March general membership meeting. She has dynamic plans for the church's future. We encourage you to be there to welcome her and to hear about all the other happenings in the neighborhood. The meeting will be held on March 8th at 7 PM in the Pittsburgh Morrow Auditorium.

A Brighter Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl



Dear Neighbors,

Keeping our streets safe and adopting green technology to save taxpayer dollars remains a priority as we begin 2012 in the City of Pittsburgh. As you may have noticed, Pittsburgh's business districts are looking brighter, safer and cleaner this year. In December, we began replacing streetlights in more than 40 business districts with improved, energy-efficient Light Emitting Diode (LED) streetlights. This enhancement will make our business districts safer and better-lit as residents and visitors visit our local shops and restaurants. The new streetlights produce a brighter, cleaner light that improves visibility for drivers and pedestrians and have a longer life than standard bulbs. In addition, the City will reduce its energy usage by more than 60 percent, saving taxpayers approximately \$110,000 per year. This is the latest in my efforts to restore, revive and reinvest in our business districts.

Through the Taking Care of Business Districts program, crews responded to a list of action items delivered by callers and businesses to the Mayor's Response Line, 311. These included graffiti removal, painting road lines, problematic sidewalks and other property citations. The TCOB program also provides neighborhood businesses districts with clean sweeps, infrastructure improvements and long-term strategies to renew the neighborhood lifelines.

If we want to continue to grow and improve Pittsburgh, we have to keep our local businesses strong and vibrant. Keep an eye out for these improvements in your community and take this opportunity to walk through your local business district and visit some of our City's great businesses. Sincerely,
Luke Ravenstahl, mayor
City of Pittsburgh

Columbia Gas Grant

With spring fast approaching, flower gardens will again be dressing up our streets in Brighton Heights. If you're going to purchase those flowers to help beautify our neighborhood, don't forget to take some Before and After pictures and submit those receipts for a 25 percent reimbursement (up to \$100.) We still have some of that grant money available, so use that green thumb, and get some green back!

SPRING into Action Darlene Harris, President, City Council of Pittsburgh



I began this year working to improve and secure a healthy bond rating for our City. In January I went to New York City with members of the administration to advocate on behalf of Pittsburgh. By speaking with one voice, we proved that Pittsburgh's financial position is quite stable despite the national economy. This led to an upgrade from two rating agencies. This upgrade defines our progress and demonstrates the health of our local economy.

The City has embarked on borrowing funds for the first time since 2008 to invest in projects throughout our city. Our upgrade resulted in lower costs including the lowest fees in city history. This allows for more dollars to actually be spent on projects. I look forward to working with the Administration and the community in identifying the priorities of our neighborhood.

As the days grow a bit longer and the sun shines a bit brighter, we welcome the fact that spring is right around the corner. This time of year re-awakens our urge to be outdoors and to rediscover the treasures in our neighborhoods.

The constituents of District 1 have good reasons to welcome springtime and the opportunities it brings to enjoy the uniqueness and beauty of our neighborhoods. Each year Brighton Heights residents energetically cure their cabin fever by banding together and wholeheartedly jumping into outdoor projects. I am looking forward to the results of this year's beautification projects, be they trash and litter cleanups or flower plantings.

I enjoy the yards along Harbison Street and others, with their spring gardens bursting with brightly colored flowers. At Legion Park, which serves us throughout the year, we will make new memories at this year's Memorial Day celebration.

This is the time of year when Pittsburghers can enjoy our Northside neighborhoods to the fullest. I hope that constituents will take advantage of the spring season to rediscover Brighton Heights' treasures, both its people and its parks. I look forward to meeting you as we're out and about in District 1.

Visit us on the web at
www.brightonheights.org

Help with Home-heating Bills Available Through LIHEAP
Adam Ravenstahl
Pennsylvania State Representative



Old Man Winter has settled in, and it looks like he'll be here for a while. Temperatures have dropped, and unfortunately, home-heating bills have risen for many families. The higher bills are putting a strain on many household budgets. But people don't need to be left out in the cold. Help paying heating bills is available for many families through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, commonly known as LIHEAP.

LIHEAP offers two types of grants and the amount of each type of grant depends on income, household size, type of heating fuel and region of the state. Cash grants help families pay regular monthly heating bills. Crisis grants are available to pay for heating emergencies such as a broken furnace, a fuel shortage or utility service shutoff.

To qualify, a household of one can earn up to \$16,335, while a family of four can earn up to \$33,525 and qualify. LIHEAP grants do not have to be paid back. The names of every person living in a household, their dates of birth, Social Security numbers, proof of income and a recent heating bill are required to apply. Applications are available in my office at 3689 California Avenue, Pittsburgh. Please stop by if you would like help filling out the forms. You can call my office at 412-321-5523. You also can apply online at www.humanservices.state.pa.us/compass.web

The deadline to apply is March 30th. However, you should apply early for the program. LIHEAP funding is limited due to federal cuts to the program, and the funds may run out before the program deadline comes.

If you can't benefit from this program, but know someone who can, please pass along this information so they don't get left out in the cold this winter.

If you want tips about energy savings, visit the Public Utility Commission's website at www.puc.state.pa.us

Help Filing Federal Income Tax
State Senator
Wayne D. Fontana
42nd Senatorial District



As tax season is upon us, I want to remind workers they may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC.) In addition to introducing Senate Bill 1347 (SB 1347) that would require employers to notify employees of their potential eligibility for the EITC, I have also reached out to employers to ask that they share this information with employees voluntarily. Workers may be eligible to get more money back from the IRS – as much as \$5751 – if they earned less than \$49,078 from wages last year.

If you need assistance in determining your eligibility for EITC or general help with your tax returns, the United Way of Allegheny County and the Money In Your Pocket Coalition offer free tax preparation and financial education services to low-to-moderate income workers so that they can receive their full refund at tax time. Since 2006, they have trained and mobilized hundreds of community volunteers during tax season to provide free, quality income tax preparation assistance to families earning up to \$40,000 and individuals making up to \$20,000 a year. In the past three years, the Coalition has assisted in preparing 14,839 tax returns for low-to-moderate income households.

If you want to learn more about the EITC eligibility requirements and where to get free tax help, including partner sites located throughout Allegheny County, visit www.pghfreetaxes.org. These services are free but an appointment is required and all taxpayers must have all W-2 forms and tax documents.

www.senatorfontana.com

Coming Events - Spring is the busiest season for the Federation.

- We hope you will be interested in one or more of our forecasted events:
- Thursday, March 8, 2012: General Membership Meeting
- Saturday, April 21, 2012: Great Pennsylvania Clean Up
- Thursday, May 10, 2012: General Membership Meeting
- Sunday, May 27, 2012: PNC Community Day
- Monday, May 28, 2012: Memorial Day Ceremony in Legion Park
- Sunday, June 3, 2012: Chocolate House Tour
- Saturday, June 9, 2012: Flea Market in Legion Park

Food Stamps: Corbett Wrong to Impose Extra Requirement

**Representative
Jake Wheatley
19th Legislative District
Allegheny County**



The Corbett administration is wrong to impose an asset test for people who receive food stamp benefits in Pennsylvania. In making the announcement, the Corbett administration tried to spin this as "relaxing guidelines" since it had floated the idea of an even harsher asset test. In fact, this is a newly imposed requirement for poor, elderly and disabled people who can least afford it.

The governor and his administration are once again out of touch with the majority of Pennsylvanians. The Corbett plan will cost taxpayer dollars to administer but not deliver results – Pennsylvania is already a role model for other states when it comes to preventing fraud and waste.

Pennsylvania already has a means test that limits the food stamp program based on income. Former Governor Ed Rendell detailed these and other reasons for opposing the asset test plan in a letter to Governor Corbett.

There is no need to kick people who are already down in this economy by forcing them to spend what little savings they have before providing help with a basic human need – food.

In addition, 35 other states – many with Republican governors – do not require an asset test for food aid. This new Corbett asset test will punish seniors who are saving for medical or funeral costs as well as working parents saving for education expenses.

Governor Corbett is searching for a solution to a nonexistent problem while the real needs of today are being ignored: jobs and infrastructure investments; investing in and improving our educational system; a real and permanent solution to support mass transit and fix roads and bridges across the state; and protecting our environment and regulating the Marcellus Shale natural gas drillers. As your representative, I will continue working to address these needs.

Web Site Proposal

Brighton Heights is looking to update our web page and we are seeking a web designer. If you are interested in bidding for the job, or if you know of anyone who might be interested, please email us at brightonheights@yahoo.com for the particulars. We hope to start the project in March.

Brighton Heights Citizens Federation:
Answer Line: 734-0233
Website: www.brightonheights.org
E-mail: brightonheights@yahoo.com

City Council Office: 255-2136
Mayor's office: 255-2626
Mayor's Response Line (Non-emergency services and government information): 311 (Monday through Friday, 8:00 to 4:30) If you're unable to get through: 255-2621

Report a burned-out street light: 255-5483 (Seven days a week, 24 hours a day). If you can, provide the:
Closest address
Side of the street
SL number (it's on the pole)

Alcosan (Odor Control Hotline): 766-9445
Building permits (Bureau of Building Inspection): 255-2175
Organized Crime, Narcotics and Intelligence Division (ONI): 665-4300
Police, Zone One station: 323-7201
Pittsburgh School Police: 622-3520
Police, fire, ambulance emergencies: 911
Dial 412 before all of the above phone numbers (except 311 and 911)

Brighton Heights Citizens Federation
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