

Laurelhurst Letter

April/May/June 2005

Keeping sidewalks clear the neighborly thing to do

The summer growing season is upon us. It's time to step back and view your garden critically—and not just from an aesthetic point of view.

Are your shrubs sprawling across the sidewalk? Do your tree branches droop so low that passersby have to duck? Has your planting strip grown so tall that drivers can't see what's coming at the next intersection?

If so, you need to take pruning shears in hand. City bylaws require that property owners keep adjacent sidewalks, roads, and alleys clear of all obstructions. Encroaching shrubs and hedges must be cut back, and a minimum eight-foot clearance must be maintained above sidewalks (14 feet above roads and alleys). Vegetation that obscures an intersection at a distance of 30 feet should be trimmed.

Failure to observe these bylaws may result in a Notice of Violation, which comes with a \$25-a-day fine for each day out of compliance.

Fines aside, keeping your sidewalks clear is a neighborly thing to do. Who hasn't felt frustration having to step off a sidewalk to avoid an overgrown shrub? Beyond the aggravation, there's the safety aspect as well.

So please do your part. As a property owner, keep your trees and bushes trimmed!

Ordinance prohibits outdoor junk storage

Laurelhurst is not generally known for rusting cars in the driveway or sprung sofas on the front porch. But every so often there's an exception, and neighbors are right to be concerned when one house stands out from its peers by nature of its junkyard appearance.

Junk is not only unsightly but unhealthy: it can attract rodents and other pests. What's more, studies show that unkempt properties attract crime, beginning with graffiti. Perhaps most worrying, the rundown appearance of one house can begin to affect property values up and down the block.

That's why the city has an ordinance that prohibits "the temporary or permanent storage outdoors of junk, waste, discarded, salvaged, or used materials, or inoperable vehicles or vehicle parts" in any residential zone. A citation under the ordinance carries a fine of \$150 for the first offence and \$500 for subsequent offences.

And just in case anyone is unclear about what constitutes "junk"—after all, one person's junk can be another's "garden art"—the ordinance defines junk as "used lumber, scrap metal, tires, household garbage, furniture, and inoperable machinery."

Your home may be your castle, but your property rights end where they begin to impact your neighbor. Unwanted items should be recycled or donated (often with a tax deduction!) or as a last resort, taken to the dump.

Car thefts up, yet misconception persists

Auto thefts are becoming increasingly common in Seattle and elsewhere across the country, according to a bulletin issued by the Seattle Police Department Crime Prevention Division. Yet many people harbor a misconception that thieves target only late-model, high-end cars.

In fact, the majority of cars stolen are common models of average value. Often they are simply easier to steal, especially models manufactured between the mid-80s and the mid-90s, which have inherently weak door locks and ignition systems.

If you are the owner of such a vehicle, there are a couple of things you can do to avoid becoming a victim of car theft. The first is to keep your car in a garage, if you are lucky enough to have access to one. Second, you should buy and use a steering-wheel locking device, such as The Club. While the latter can be cut off, its visible presence tends to discourage thieves, who prefer to move on to the next, unprotected vehicle. Third, you can install an ignition cut-off switch in a hidden but easily accessible position near the driver's seat. Turn the switch off and the car won't start. Lastly, you can equip your older model car with a newer model, state-of-the-art car alarm.

Police warn that you should not reduce your insurance coverage on older model cars just to save a little money at premium time. "If your car is damaged as part of being stolen, which happens frequently, you may suffer a considerable loss."

Well-liked postman dies suddenly

Laurelhurst neighbors were shocked and saddened to learn of the sudden death April 22 of mail carrier Ken Jones, who was honored Feb. 12 at the community's Neighbor Appreciation Day celebration.

Although Jones, who was pictured in the February/March issue of the Laurelhurst Letter, did not live in Laurelhurst, he received an LCC Good Neighbor Award because "he certainly makes living in Laurelhurst better!" News of the award was later featured in a post office publication that reached hundreds of thousands of postal workers across the country.

A former U.S. Marine, Jones retired in 1988 before going to work for the Postal Service. Neighbors on his route greatly appreciated his many kindnesses, as well as his outstanding job performance. He is survived by his wife, Kim.

"He was everyone's favorite mail carrier and a good friend to many," Neighbor Appreciation Day Coordinator Coco Sherman wrote in a condolence letter. "We couldn't believe the number of calls and comments we received about how well deserving he was of the recognition."

Neighbors are currently assembling a gift basket for Kim.

Little League, Parks Department sign agreement on batting cage

The Northeast Seattle Little League and the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation have reached an understanding governing the operation of the league's batting cage in the northeast corner of Laurelhurst Park.

The main points of the understanding, intended to address neighbors' complaints

about noise, limit the hours of use from 8 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. and the season of operation from March 1 to July 15 and mandate the use of a rubber batting sleeve on aluminum baseball bats.

The league is to provide its own sleeves, and the Laurelhurst Community Center Advisory Council has agreed to make a sufficient number available for check-out from the community center by any member of the general public.

Finally, the Parks Department will conduct an end-of-season review each year to ascertain how well the understanding is working and recommend changes for future seasons.

The understanding was reached after a community-wide meeting in which a majority of the attendees strongly expressed their support for the batting cage. However a smaller number of neighbors who live closer to the park said the noise of the balls ricocheting off the metal bats was unbearable.

Group rejects mayor's proposal to ease parking requirements

The Northeast District Council has gone on record opposing a 33 percent reduction in the minimum parking requirement for new residential construction in the University District.

In a letter to members of the city Urban Development and Planning Committee, the council stated, "The proposed reduction will negatively impact the availability of street parking for both businesses and residents in this rapidly growing neighborhood.... Even with the existing parking requirement, residents notice that available street parking diminishes as each new project is opened."

The council argued that reducing the residential parking requirement would prove especially damaging to the city's goal of revitalizing the district's commercial component: "Most people do not take the bus to shop, and they will not go to the U. District from other parts of Seattle and the region if they perceive that parking is unduly difficult."

The proposal to lower the parking requirement— from 1.5 spaces per dwelling to 1 space per dwelling—was initiated by the mayor's office, which said it would promote affordable housing options, stimulate transit use, and bring about a pedestrian-friendly environment.

The mayor's office also said that the demand for residential parking in neighborhoods such as the University District is lower than in other neighborhoods and can be met by a lowered standard.

The Northeast District Council is an umbrella organization composed of 20 individual business and community groups, including the Laurelhurst Community Club.

Summer camps available

Don't want your kids to be at loose ends this summer?

Villa Ventures offers more than 40 summer enrichment camps and courses designed to attract children of all ages, interests, and talents. Half- or full-day programs are scheduled in week-long sessions between June 27 and Aug. 19.

Last summer 300 children participated in a myriad of activities including musical

theatre, cooking, sports camps, and ceramics. New this year is Villa Villekulla, an afternoon day camp designed to complement Villa Ventures programming.

For more information visit www.thevilla.org/student/summer.html or contact Diane Myers at dmyers@thevilla.org or 524-7009.

Clinic offers free advice on garden plants and pests

Do you have gardening questions? Bring your plant or insect problem to the Master Gardener Plant Problem Clinic at the Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 N.E. 41st St.

The clinic is open every Monday evening, from 4 to 8 p.m., year-round. During July and August, it also is open Wednesdays from noon to 4 p.m. From September to June, it is open Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The clinic is free and is staffed by volunteers trained by Washington State University Extension to advise on plant selection, insect identification, and managing disease problems.

Summer concert series announced

Fans of the Summer Concert Series in Laurelhurst Park will be happy to hear the event is returning for a seventh season, featuring many of the same crowd-pleasing performers from past seasons.

The series of five free concerts will take place on successive Thursdays, from 6 to 8 p.m. First to perform, on July 14, is jazz pianist Deems Tsutakawa, followed by soulful R&B singer Nadine Shanti (July 21), boogie woogie blues band Two Scoops Combo (July 28), Latin jazz group Mango Son (Aug. 4), and blues artists Little Bill and the Bluenotes (Aug. 11).

The July 28 performance coincides with the annual Family Salmon Bake. In addition to the wonderful music, concert goers can enjoy either baked salmon (\$8) or a hot dog plate (\$5).

Unclassified advertising

ANNOUNCEMENT: Matthew A. Bagnulo, D.D.S., is pleased to announce the opening of his new dental practice at 11830 N.E. 128th St., Ste. 202, Kirkland, WA 98034. (425) 821-9000.

AVAILABLE VARIETY SERVICES: Housecleaning, laundry, ironing, alterations, cooking, etc. Mary, 286-8093.

BABYSITTER: Responsible 17-year-old senior looking for 25-30 hour/week summer sitter job. Flexible hours, days or nights, own car. Call Andrea, 527-2461.

BABYSITTER WANTED: 1 day/week, plus 2 weekend nights/month for three kids, 10, 8, and 4. Lots of fun. Lee, 522-1021.

CALLING ALL SMALL DOGS! We offer daily trips just for the little guys to the Small Dog Area at Magnuson Park. Lic/Ins/Refs. www.erikaspetservice.com. Erika, 850-4030.

CHILDREN'S MUSIC CLASSES: Rising Song offers parent/child Kindermusik classes (newborn–7 yrs) and piano lessons (from 5 yrs). 726-3677 or

www.risingsongschool.com.

COMPUTER HELP–RAPID RESPONSE: Experienced teacher/tutoring.

Hardware/software installation. Microsoft certifications: Word, Excel, Access.

Laurelhurst refs. Matt, 525-8077.

DRUM LESSONS: Convenient neighborhood location, Cornish music major. Jazz, rock, and latin beats. Willy Holliday, 523-6809.

EXPERIENCED, EDUCATED NANNY: CPR certified, excellent driving record. I am also very computer savvy. 380-1718.

EYE EXAMS: “Clear vision begins with healthy eyes.” Comprehensive, thorough eye health exams with Dr. P.J. Bingham @ Market Optical in University Village. 522-9323.

FOR RENT: Lovely Laurelhurst home. Master suite up, plus 2 bdr, 1/1/2 bath main floor. Avail. partly furnished or unfurnished, 9/1/05-6/30/06. Lynne Commins, Sagen Group, 954-1130.

FOR SALE: Crib and changing table (Pali brand) in white. Baby Trend high chair with beige & white plaid seat cover. All items for \$350, but will sell individual items. 524-2265 or lsomme@aol.com.

FOR SALE: Framed poster “Periodic Table of the Vegetables,” 25X40 inches, \$45; pressure cooker, \$20. Both very good condition. Karen, 523-8425.

FOR SALE: Laurelhurst home. Completely updated, quiet dead-end street, 4-bdr., 2.5-bth. 321-7836.

FOR SALE: Peg Perego double Aria twin stroller, like new, \$219; lightweight aluminum-frame infant backpack, \$30; 2 large Baby Blocker Stair Guard gates, \$40. 522-6073.

GARDEN DESIGN: Beautiful, durable, award-winning. From consultation to installation, we meet our clients on any level. APLD member. References. Karla Arnold Design, 301-9301.

HOUSE WANTED: Family seeking home in Laurelhurst or Windermere. Avoid real estate fees! No agents, please. 613-0844.

JAZZ COMBO: Spice up your party with live music. American jazz or latin sambas. Our band plays regular gigs, incl. restaurants, parties, and special occasions. Refs. Will Holliday, 523-6809.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Innovative sustainable residential garden designs for you to enjoy. Dog Day Design, Patricia Gibbon, MLA and Master Gardener, 715-6541.

MARINE CARPENTER/WOODWORKER: Seeks boat and/or house projects. Hourly rate and references. Craig, 523-6655.

NANNY AVAILABLE: Experienced, nurturing, fun. Available full time weekdays from 6/15 to 9/25 and possibly part time during the year. Libby, 992-5892 or melibster@hotmail.com.

PAWS & PLANTS: Personalized care for your pets/plants. Litterbox cleanup, indoor plant care, mail & newspaper pickup, garbage & recycle, dog walks. Lic/bond/refs. Teri Hall, 547-5225.

SITTER/NANNY/HOUSESITTER: Fun, creative, responsible 19-yr-old Whitman College freshman avail. 5/22-8/27. Exc. refs, own car, days or nights. mcquarjk@whitman.edu or 524-4934.

SUMMER NANNY WANTED: To care for 10-year-old girl and 5-year-old boy in Laurelhurst. Driver preferred. Some Mandarin Chinese would be a plus. 523-1841.

SUSAN'S CLEANING SERVICE: Cleaning specialist. Dependable, reliable, efficient. Licensed/bonded/insured. 781-8876.

VACATION RENTAL: Sun Valley townhouse. Hiking, skiing, swimming, fishing. 3 bdrm, 3 bath Prospector Condominium in Warm Springs. \$300/night. 394-6617.

WANTED: Responsible 13- to 16-year-old to help with newborn and small household tasks. Min. 10–20 hours/week (poss. more during summer). Own transportation req'd. 729-6382.