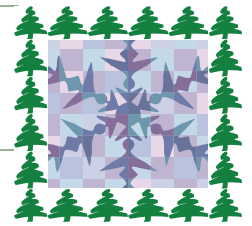




CHARTER POINT Holiday NOTES



December 2008

Never worry about the size of your Christmas tree. In the eyes of children, they are all 30 feet tall. - *The Merry Book of Christmas*



Best Decorated Yard Contest!

A \$25.00 prize and "Best Decorated" sign will be awarded to one of our beautiful Charter Point homes this Christmas holiday. Judging will be held in daylight and in the evening on Sunday, December 21. Be sure to have any exterior lights turned on that evening!

Charter Point Calendar



Children's Holiday Party with Santa
Saturday, December 13
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Fern Creek cul-de-sac (south end)
Snacks, cookie decorating, tile painting
Visit with Santa!

You better watch out. You better not cry. You better not pout, I'm telling you why . . . Santa Claus is coming to town! Children of all ages are invited!
Ho! Ho! Ho!

Luminary Candle Lighting
on Christmas Eve



Place luminary candles curbside at dusk
Park cars in driveway to keep streets clear



New Years Eve ~
Light-the-Night

Keep porch lights lit through the night to welcome the New Year!

Greet your neighbors at dusk to offer best wishes; share 2009 resolutions and a toast of good cheer!

Residents Gather at Town Meeting to Discuss Amending Charter Point Covenants & Restrictions

Inquiring Charter Point property owners attended a town meeting on November 22, 2008, at the University Park Library to discuss recent proposed amendments to Charter Point Covenants and Restrictions. Board members Linda Hemphill, Ernie Waller, Walt Holton and Craig Hemphill fielded questions from the group. The necessity to amend the current C&R, a 24 year old instrument, was emphasized due to years of enforcement challenges experienced by the CPCA, largely attributed to ambiguous language and enforcement reference shortfalls (.e.g., provisions to deal with unkempt yards, a means to assure the fiscal solvency of the association, and expanded processes to deal with violations in a constructive, stepwise manner).

Most agreed the C&R should be updated to secure improved aesthetic standards with an eye on the future, with special focus on provisions for yard upkeep, nuisance activity, tree protection, and more effective enforcement methods to use to deal with violations in a firm but reasonable manner. Amending the C&R is no simple task. Further analysis and consensus building will take time and great care.

The upshot of the meeting was creating a C&R review committee to examine key areas of the amended C&R and make recommendations. The committee will be composed of property owners representing sections of the neighborhood. Committee reps will communicate project progress with and solicit feedback from neighbors in their area. Although CPCA membership is not a committee member requirement, it was generally felt that having active membership status would signal good faith and aligned support for the neighborhood. Committee members include: Walt Holton, Ernie Waller, Doug Tibbetts, Bob Barletta, Bill Cuartero, Millie Kanyar, Webb Wade, and Nancy Tinsley. Craig Hemphill, C&R chair, will serve in a legal consultant capacity. Additional representation is also needed from the Maywood/Sage Oak quadrant. The committee will convene in January (date TBD) after the holidays.

If interested in serving on the committee, contact Walt Holton at 762-1502 or wwholton@bellsouth.net. If you need a hard copy of the latest draft of the proposed amended C&R, contact Craig Hemphill at 745-1833 or rcraigh@aol.com. Draft copies are also available electronically.



Keep Charter Point #1 Among Arlington's Most Elite Communities

Start the New Year off right by renewing your Charter Point Community Association (CPCA) membership dues. A strong, supportive membership provides the necessary revenue that assures the Charter Point lifestyle enjoyed by all – safety and security, a beautiful entrance and perimeter wall area, enforcement of standards, and a monthly newsletter. 2009 membership notices will be mailed in early to mid January.

Thank you in advance for your support! ~ *Terri Ryder, CPCA Membership Chair*

"Wouldn't it be wonderful to find one gift that you didn't have to dust, that had to be used right away, that was practical, fit everyone, was personal and would be remembered for a long time? I penciled in "Gift certificate for a flu shot." ~ the late Erma Bombeck, American humorist

Plant of the Month

By BWH



My favorite holiday plant is the Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera bridgesii*), a popular winter-flowering houseplant native to Brazil, available in a wide variety of colors including red, purple, oranges, pinks and creams. Its pendulous stems make it a great choice for hanging baskets.

Christmas cactus is a member of a group sold as holiday cacti that includes the Thanksgiving cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*) and the Easter cactus (*Rhipsalidopsis gaertneri*). When grown under normal night-length conditions, Thanksgiving cacti normally flower near Thanksgiving, approximately a month before Christmas cacti. The Easter cactus flowers primarily in the spring and sporadically throughout the year. All of the holiday cacti have similar cultural requirements.

CULTURE

Light and Temperature: The Christmas cactus grows best in light shade. Full sunlight is beneficial in midwinter, but bright sun during the summer months can make plants look pale and yellow. Ideal growth occurs at temperatures between 70 - 80 °F during its growing season from April to September. Do not let temperatures rise above 90 °F once the flower buds are set in the fall. Continuous warm temperatures can cause flower buds to drop.

The secret of good flower bud production involves temperature and dark (photoperiod) control. To flower, plants need:

- Bright light
- Night temperatures between 55 and 65 °F
- Long nights - 13 hours or more of continuous darkness each day is required before flowering will occur. Long nights should be started about mid-September and continued for 8 weeks.

Watering and Fertilizer: Water the growing medium when it is dry to the touch. The Christmas cactus is tolerant of dry, slightly under-watered conditions. Do not let the soil become waterlogged, especially during the dark days of winter. Do not let the soil dry out either. Reduce watering from fall through spring. Fertilize plants monthly from the time new growth starts in late winter or early spring, and throughout the summer using a one-quarter strength soluble fertilizer. Reduce fertilizer during the fall and early winter.

Growing Media: The Christmas cactus flowers best when kept somewhat potbound. Repotting is necessary only about once in three years. The potting media must be well-drained with good aeration because the Christmas cactus does not grow well in heavy, wet mixes. A good mix may contain one part potting soil, two parts peat moss or compost, and one part sharp sand or perlite.

Problem: The Christmas cacti commonly drops unopened flower buds, which may be induced by an excessive number of buds or a sudden change in temperature, light or other environmental factors, such as drying out of the growing medium. Lack of flowering is often due to light interrupting the long night period (13 hours) that is required for flowering initiation to occur. Street lights, car lights or indoor lighting can disrupt the required dark period. The major disease is root rot, which can be prevented by avoiding excessive watering. Insects and related pests include mealy bugs, soft brown scale, red spider mites and aphids.

(<http://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheets/HGIC1554.htm>)



The History of Luminaries

The first luminaries in North America were bonfires of crisscrossed pinon boughs arranged in 3-foot high squares. Later luminaries were small paper lanterns, which were made when colored paper was brought to this continent from the Orient. Instead of hanging these delicate lanterns from trees or on wires, they were placed on the ground, on rooftops and along pathways.



Tradition has it that luminaries lit the way for Mary and Joseph in their search for lodging in Bethlehem. Other writers place the tradition back even earlier, linking it to the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah, when people mark the miracle of the container of oil that was only meant to last one day but lasted eight. To this day, Hanukkah, the Festival of the Lights, is celebrated with a multi-branched candelabrum, with a light for each day. It's the multiple lights and their use throughout history in guiding, saving and celebrating, that cause some writers to see Hanukkah candles as luminary forerunners.

Luminaries are also linked through history to the ancient tradition of communicating, warning and celebrating through linked bonfires. For instance, the lighting of hundreds of bonfires long the Mississippi River in Louisiana originated with German and French settlers who migrated to the state in the 19th century. The lights were also meant to guide the Acadian version of Santa, Papa Noel. It is said that Pa pa Noel was able to navigate the river through thick fog to bring presents to the children only because of the chain of fires. Today in Louisiana, Christmas Eve bonfires guide church-goers travelling on the water and along the river road to Midnight Mass.

The North American tradition of luminaries comes from Mexico. It has been celebrated for many years in New Mexico before spreading to communities throughout the United States, Canada and Europe. The Pueblo Indians in New Mexico have long lit small fires outside their homes to light their way to church on Christmas Eve, learning the custom from Spanish settlers who introduced farolitos, or little lanterns, in the sixteenth century. The Spanish settlers burned small bonfires along the roads and in the churchyards to commemorate Christ's birth. By the 19th century, American settlers brought beautiful Chinese lanterns to hang from their doorways instead of building bonfires. But the lanterns were too expensive for many people so they began to make small lanterns out of paper sacks to save money.

In Europe, many people postpone their use of luminaries until just before January 6, the Festival of the Three Kings. Their luminaries light the wise men as they bring gifts to the Christ Child. In many European countries, Three Kings is the part of the festival in which gifts are given and feasting takes place. Christmas itself remains primarily a religious celebration.

In recent years, the use of luminaries has expanded so that they're used throughout the year at parties, weddings, religious ceremonies and charitable events. And they're used both indoors and outdoors. Luminaries enhance any occasion in which multiple lights will guide or celebrate or beautify.

Patricia Miller, Research Journalist
(<http://www.flicluminaries.com/history.html>)





Tangy Key Lime Pie



- 1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 3 large eggs, separated
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1 (14 ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup fresh lime juice, preferably made from Key limes
- 1/2 teaspoon finely grated lime zest, plus more for garnish
- Sweetened whipped cream, for serving

MAKE THE CRUST: Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. In a medium bowl, mix the graham cracker crumbs and melted butter. Press the crumbs evenly over the bottom and up the sides of a 9-inch glass pie plate. Bake the crust for about 15 minutes, or until firm. Let cool.

MAKE THE FILLING: In a large bowl, whisk the 3 egg yolks with the lightly beaten whole egg until thickened. Beat in the condensed milk, then beat in the lime juice and zest.

In a large stainless steel bowl, beat the egg whites until firm peaks form. Fold one-third of the beaten whites into the custard, then fold in the remaining whites. Pour the custard into the pie crust and bake for 15 minutes, or until barely set. Transfer to a rack and let cool completely, then refrigerate over-night. Serve with sweetened whipped cream and garnish with lime zest. Yield: 8 servings.

Best Dutch Apple Pie

If you are looking to try a new and improved version of the classic Dutch apple pie, this is a recipe for you. It adds in some cinnamon and brown sugar streusel topping for extra flavor and is a variation from the standard two crust apple pies.

Ingredients :

- One 9 inch pie crust
- 8 medium apples
- 4 tablespoons of lemon juice
- 1/4 cup of brown sugar; 1/3 cup of white sugar
- 1/2 cup of flour + 2 tablespoons of flour
- 1 teaspoon of nutmeg; 1 teaspoon of cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 1/2 cup of butter
- 1/2 cup of chopped walnuts



Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Core, peel and slice the apples. Place the apples and lemon juice in a bowl; mix well. Mix brown sugar, white sugar, flour, nutmeg, cinnamon and salt. Cut in butter with pastry blender. Add chopped walnuts. Add half of the mix to the apples' mix to coat. Place apple mix into the crust. Evenly sprinkle the rest of the streusel crumbs on the top. Put foil around the edges of the crust; bake at 375 degrees for 40 minutes. Remove the foil and bake an additional 20 minutes

This **best Dutch apple pie recipe** is a delicious way to top off a nice meal or to serve anytime. You can serve the apple pie hot or cold, and with your choice of toppings. Whipped topping and ice cream are popular choices.



December Yard of the Month

Don and Carol Ruckman
5447 Fern Creek Drive
Lot 42

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Vice-president:

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For useful information concerning Charter Point and items of civic interest, check out our Web site - www.charterpoint.org. Receive up-to-the-minute news via the **Charter Point Breaking News** email group! Email cpcanews@aol.com to join. Complete email privacy and confidentiality guaranteed!

Holiday Safety Reminders . . .

Keep a watchful eye around your home at holiday time.

When out of town for the holidays, be sure to have a neighbor take in your mail and newspapers or postpone delivery until you return. If out for the evening, be mindful to lock all doors and windows before leaving and to turn on lights, a radio or TV so it looks like someone is at home. When at home, keep porch and outside floodlights on overnight.



Parking on the street overnight or during the entire day makes for unsafe driving conditions. Guest parking curbside for holiday gatherings is understandable; drivers, please be mindful of walkers and bicyclists as you maneuver around parked cars.

Before lighting your fireplace, remove all greens, boughs, papers, and other flammable decorations from the fireplace area. Check to make sure that the flue is open. Use care with "fire salts" that produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires.

Cooking Safety: Keep cooking areas clear of combustibles and wear short or tight-fitting sleeves when you cook. Keep the handles of your pots turned inward so they do not over-hang the stove. If grease catches fire, carefully slide a lid over the pan and smother the flames, then turn off the burner.

Take care with holiday lighting: Be sure candles are kept away from decorations or other combustible materials and not left unattended. Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they are certified for outdoor use. Plug all outdoor electric decorations into circuits with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFI) to avoid electrical shocks.

Holidays can create special concerns for pets, too.

- Avoid feeding pets large quantities of *people food*, as human food and seasonings are too rich for most pets' digestive systems, often causing stomach upsets.
- Various seasonal plants are poisonous to pets if nibbled or eaten: mistletoe - very toxic; ivy and holly - moderately to very toxic; Christmas greens (balsam, juniper, cedar, pine, fir), hibiscus, and poinsettias - moderately toxic.
- Hang treasured ornaments higher on the Christmas tree to avoid damage from curious paws, and take care with tinsel. Tinsel is non-toxic, but could cause intestinal obstruction/choking problems, if ingested.
- Keep pets safely inside on New Years Eve, too. Noisemakers and fire-crackers can frighten pets, causing them to bolt out an open door or window in search of safety, possibly getting lost.

Holiday luminary candle deliveries are underway!

Please contribute \$5.00 when your luminaries are delivered. If you have candles left from last year, use them to line your driveway to expand your holiday lighting experience. Luminary lighting begins at dusk on Christmas Eve and marks a breathtaking, quiet moment amid the hustle and bustle of the holidays. If you need help lighting your luminaries or will be out of town and want them lit in your absence, contact any Board member for assistance.

Friendly reminder: Be sure to turn off your sprinkler and restrict curbside parking that evening. Rain contingency: If it rains on Christmas Eve, put your luminaries out at dusk on Christmas Day. If it rains on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, display your luminaries on New Year's Eve.