The Stoneleighite

Winter 2014-2015 Volume 74, Issue 4

2015 Stoneleigh Board of Governors Announced

Stoneleigh Echoes – "Catching up with the Hoovers" by Lee Starkey

2014 Breakfast with Santa

The Stoneleighite

Winter 2015
Volume 74, Issue 4

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The Stoneleighite is published quarterly by the Stoneleigh Community Association, Inc. Letters to the editor, news items, photos and announcements of interest to Stoneleigh residents are solicited and printed whenever possible. Send items to the editor, Cara Walen, 710 Stoneleigh Road, (410) 828-4034 or email *carawalen@yahoo.com*.

Deadline for spring publication is Monday, April 13th, 2015.

Cover Photo by Brough Schamp

Dear Stoneleigh Neighbors,

Packing school lunches: I love it, and I hate it. I love it because once kids are too big to carry around, once there is no more cheek to cheek and falling asleep on your shoulder, I still need some kind of small expression of physical care for them to keep the parenting vibes going. Packing lunches is one such kind of hands on attention that I can give to my guys. But it's also a bit of a morning headache. Every morning, the same thing. I know it's a grind because I get really excited when they get even a day off. When winter and spring breaks come around, my excitement is beyond words (yes, I realize I have rather low threshold for getting excited).

Volunteering in Stoneleigh is a bit like these lunches. It can be something of a headache, but I am really glad that I have been doing it. I care about this neighborhood and the people in it. Some of my neighbors are almost like close family (and the rest are at least like second cousins). I will do what I can to care for my neighbors and my neighborhood, much like I will care for family. While this is a distinction perhaps only a philosopher could love, you might say that I choose to live in Stoneleigh, and not just reside here. Living with people, building your life with them, is both rewarding, and also at times frustrating. Stuff just has to get done. If someone doesn't step up to do it, things start to fall apart.

While I suspect many of you have a sense of what it takes to really live in Stoneleigh and so to work to keep this neighborhood as beautiful, fun, and safe as it is, I promise that if you volunteer to help out, you will get an even better sense of all of the hard work that this takes. Our pool is not just the social center of summer life in Stoneleigh, it is the crown jewel of the neighborhood requiring a lot of care. Dave Frisch and the Pool Committee work really hard to manage the memberships, to have the pool ready for us on Memorial Day weekend and to keep it clean and safe all summer. Brough Schamp, Carol Newill, and the Greening and Recycling committee have kept the neighborhood beautiful all year long. Dan Bakondi and the COP volunteers have worked to keep us safe. Greg Dildine has taken remarkable care of our financial records. Wendy Marcello and Meghan Virro, and everyone on the Social Committee have brought many fun times to residents young and old. Cara Walen brings you the Stoneleighite four times a year. Kathleen Williams welcomes new residents and knows exactly who to call to fix our roads. Hons On A Mission help us to care beyond the borders of Stoneleigh. The wisdom of our board members has really helped to referee the sometimes competing interests that are found in any family or neighborhood. While some have stepped up to take over some of these jobs, there are still many ways that you can get involved. I hope you will.

Finally, a word of apology. When I was living in Edinburgh Scotland as a junior in college, one of my flatmates was young Muslim man from Pakistan. On the night before I was to leave for home, he came to my room and asked if over the year there was anything he had done to me for which he needed to ask forgiveness. He asked on behalf of the honor of his family and so that he could stand confidently before God at the Last Judgment. While I will not suggest that the stakes are that high (the chances of me standing confidently before any kind of judgment are about zero) I do believe that I have not served some of you as well as I might have, and for that I apologize. I began and end my year as president the same: grateful for every one of you.

Sincerely,

Joe Pettit
President, Stoneleigh Community Association
stoneleighpresident@gmail.com

Stoneleigh Community News

Birth and New Neighbor Announcements

Camilla Ann and Colette Marie Martel

Joe and **Whitney Martel** of Stoneleigh Road are thrilled to announce their arrival of their twin daughters, **Camilla Ann** and **Colette Marie,** on January 5th 2015. Mom and Dad are sleep deprived but Milly and Coco are doing great. Congratulations to the Martel family!

Elizabeth Marie Patton

Matt and **Megan Patton** of Greenleigh Road are proud to announce the arrival of their daughter, **Elizabeth Marie,** back on March 12th 2014. Elizabeth was welcomed by big sister Madeline. Congratulations to the Patton family!

Ben and Meredith Wells

Ben and **Meredith Wells—801 Kingston Road** – moved to Stoneleigh from Rodgers Forge. Ben works for UB Financial Services and Meredith works at McCormick. They are very excited to join the community. Welcome to Stoneleigh!

On a sad note, we bid farewell to long time Stoneleigh resident Justin Salter. Mr. Satler passed away at home on October 28 at age 91. As one of our oldest residents, he lived on Oxford Road for 52 years. He and his wife Jane (who died on the same day 8 years ago) were active members of the community and raised three kids here.

Mr. Justin Salter of Oxford Road

You may remember Justin as one of the "older" gate guards at the pool. As a greeter, he enjoyed working with all the young people and keeping up to date on all the community news. You may also have seen him driving through the neighborhood while on Citizen On Patrol. He and neighbor Warren Wurzbacher were senior members of the team for many years. Justin loved sports, especially tennis, and had many partners in the neighborhood. He was also active in Towson Rec when he coached girls basketball and softball . He and Jane were quite the dancers who spent a lot of time on the dance floor at many Stoneleigh Dinner Dances. He was fun, a good handy man and helpful neighbor. We will miss him.

Thinking ahead to summer? You aren't alone! Summer camps, nannies, swim team….it will be here before you know it! If you are considering a summer nanny, word on the street is that Mary Poppins is headed our way. Katherine Rhea, an experienced 4th grade teacher, is looking for a summer family to care for in Stoneleigh. She would be available to bring the children to the pool, explore the library, go to the zoo, be outside and bake cookies. She has previous summer camp experience and is willing to tutor as part of the day. Please contact her directly at Katherine.rhea@gmail.com.

Greening and Recycling Update

by Carol Newill

NEW ENERGY FOR THE NEW YEAR - A group of enthusiastic Stoneleigh residents came to the Greening and Recycling meeting in December to propose a new initiative: the further greening of Stoneleigh as a healthier place to live and raise children.

Led by Rachel McFadden, the group discussed the risks to the health of children, adults, pets and pollinators that are imposed by chemical pesticides and herbicides used on our lawns and gardens, and the risks to the Chesapeake Bay due to chemicals flowing downstream from here.

Participants then focused the discussion on positive aspects of avoiding such chemicals, including encouraging children and pets to play outdoors on lawns that are free of chemicals, appreciating the value and beauty of plants other than grass, emphasizing the usefulness of clean native plants and trees to pollinators including butterflies and bees, and enjoying the right to raise some vegetables in one's yard without worrying that the neighbors' chemicals are coming in on the wind or in run-off water.

Projects to encourage non-chemical approaches to lawn and garden care were discussed, focussing on simple strategies that are accessible to busy families. Ideas included:

-simpler, healthier approaches to lawn care,
-native plants that may be more resistant to pests,
-Bay-Wise certification of many more yards,
-put up Bat Houses and decrease standing water, to control mosquitoes,
-establish a book library on related topics.

Everyone is invited to join in this new initiative. Please read the following column about The New Stoneleigh Lawn, and look at our additions to the Stoneleigh website. So far, members of the babysitting coop, the Garden Club, the beekeepers, Hons on a Mission, and Greening and Recycling are participating, and we would love to include you!

CANOPY SHADE TREE PROGRAM - If you are interested in having a native shade tree(s) planted in your yard or strip in 2015, contact Carol and Brough at cnewill@gmail.com

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Gifts of Winter

by Marguerite Stucki

The first snow of the winter has come. I never tire of the magic of it! Oh, the wonder of watching soft snowflakes as they transform an ordinary tree into a graceful, beautiful sight. The evergreens in our back yard, "snow-dusted," become a winter wonderland. I smile when in the dazzling moonlight; I see small paw prints crisscrossing on the blankets of snow!

As the Christmas season draws near, neighbors unpack favorite decorations. Beautiful fragrant wreaths and greens appear on doors and porches. Trees and bushes are decorated with wonderful, sparkling, colorful lights. Neighbors trudging through the falling snow enjoy the soft glow of candles in the windows of charming homes. Now the temperature has fallen to single digits and the wind blows fiercely, knocking over outdoor decorations and trash cans. As I bundle up to brave the chill, my thoughts turn to the "homeless." They have no comfortable chair to relax in, no sweater to put on when they feel cold.

Oh, how blessed we are to live in our beautiful community of caring, giving, neighborly folks – Stoneleigh.

The New American Stoneleigh Lawn

by Rachel McFadden for the Greening and Recycling Committee

In conjunction with the Greening and Recycling Committee, Stoneleigh would like to build awareness and become an exemplary neighbor to our residents, pets and the bay. These efforts will begin by offering information about the New American Stoneleigh lawn.

The lawn we are referring to is one that is green, healthy and friendly to neighbors, pets and the environment. The risks of placing pesticides on our lawn far outweigh the benefits, with our children, pets, bees and waterways at risk it is time for us to start the trend in a greener direction.

The first tip we are going to provide is the obvious one, but still worth stating. Begin by refraining from using synthetic pesticides, weed killers and fertilizers on a routine basis. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service says homeowners use up to 10 times more chemicals per acre than farmers do. These pesticides are going from our lawns and gardens into our drinking water and into our bodies. We have come to believe that these treatments are necessary to maintain a beautiful lawn, but we have been misled.

The New Stoneleigh lawn is a lawn that is green and beautiful and has no use of synthetic pesticides or fertilizers and is easier than you think to obtain.

Here are 10 tips for a greener, healthier lawn many of which we can all do with little effort.

1. **Incorporate native plants into your garden**. Use natives for beauty and adaptability to your climate, local soils and rainfall. Plants that are native to your region require less water and care and support animals and wildlife, so you will see more birds and butterflies. For information about where to buy these Native plants contact Blue Water Baltimore for information about their Herring Run Nursery at nursery@bluewaterbaltimore.org.

2. **Use shredded leaves and yard debris as natural mulch.** Mulch reduces erosion and retains water.

3. **Allow plants to go dormant if conditions become dry.** Water only when needed, and avoid frequent, shallow watering, which encourages Japanese beetle grub infestation, fungus and root rot. Once a healthy lawn is established, water only after seeding.

4. **Capture and reuse rainwater.** Redirect into garden areas to avoid wasting water resources.

5. **Re-defining weeds.** What is a weed? Until the 1950s, clover was included in lawn seed mixes for its soft texture and ability to contribute nitrogen to the soil. Then the American lawn industry began promoting pesticide use and encouraged the public to view clover as a weed. Many plants considered weeds—such as Veronica and violets—are actually listed in wildflower books. If your lawn looks green, and most importantly, is a healthy place for your children and pets to play, can you re-think your definition of "weed"?

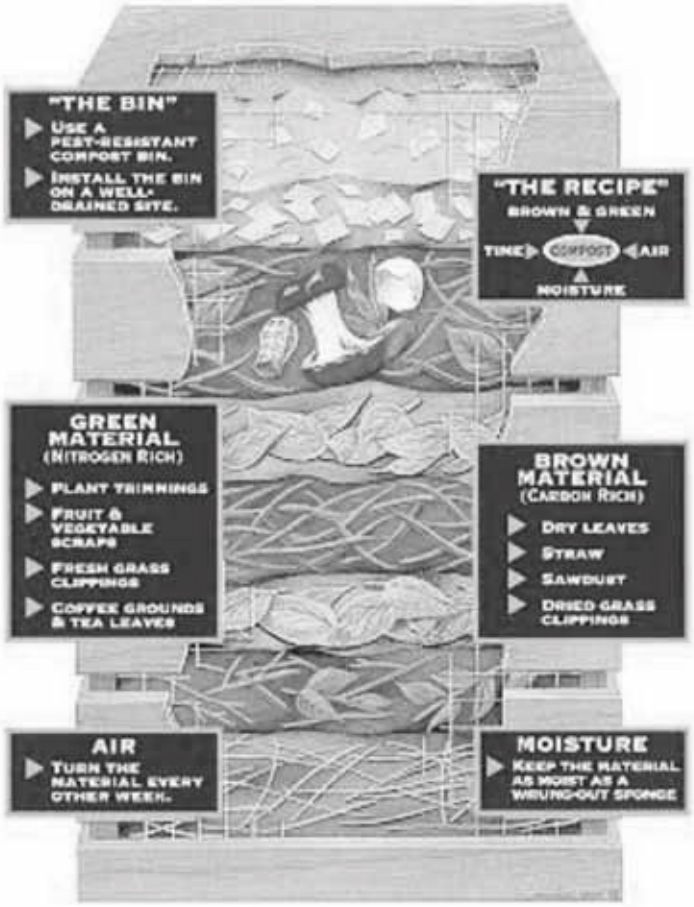
6. **Grow your grass and inch or two taller.** Set your mower to 3 inches. Short grass and over watering promote shallow root growth, weeds and thatch. Leave the grass clippings on the lawn—this provides at least 40% of the nutrients your lawn.

7. **Reduce your lawn size.** Plant native trees, shrubs, perennials and groundcovers.

8. **Over-seed.** Over-seeded with grasses which naturally resists insects, fungal diseases and changes in weather. Grasses best suited to the climate in most of Maryland are "cool season" species such as fescue, bluegrass, or ryegrass. Annual over-seeding is the most effective strategy for keeping weed populations down.

9. **Compost your yard waste.** If you are friendly with your neighbor you may even like to share a designated yard composting area to use.

10. **Feed the soil healthy food.** A good way to improve the soil and increase plant growth is to incorporate organic matter such as composted yard waste into the soil. Organic matter improves soil structure, improves water retention, slowly releases valuable nutrients, increases beneficial microbial activity, and reduces the need for purchased fertilizer.



Our vision for Stoneleigh is a beautiful landscape filled with native plants for our children, pets and wildlife to enjoy without polluting the water we drink and without causing harm to the bees and insects needed for a healthy planet. For questions or comments about how to obtain your New Stoneleigh Lawn or for ways to get involved in the greening of Stoneleigh and surrounding neighborhood, please feel free to contact Carol Newill (cnewill@gmail.com) or Rachel McFadden (mcfadden.rachel@gmail.com).

Breakfast with Santa Event Spreads Good Cheer in Stoneleigh

by Emily Parks & Katie Flynn

On December 13, Santa took a break from his holiday duties to visit with the children at Stoneleigh's annual "Breakfast with Santa" event. Santa also brought some elves and singing entertainment for the children as they waited for their turn to visit Santa. The children came prepared with drawings, detailed lists and stories to share with Santa.

Adults and children enjoyed a delicious breakfast of Dunkin Donuts munchkins, bagels, fruit, coffee and juice. The children were also given a candy cane and personalized ornament to commemorate their holiday fun.

Stoneleigh residents spread Christmas spirit by bringing unwrapped gifts to the event to share with local children in need. Dozens and dozens of children will have a bright Christmas morning thanks to the generosity of Stoneleigh residents.

A special thanks to all who attended and contributed their time and talents to make this neighborhood favorite a success!

Photos courtesy of Emily Parks and Gene Flynn

Decking the Halls…..2014 Holiday Judging

by Nancy Talbott

What a beautifully clear and sunny day for the holiday judging in Stoneleigh! Many of the homes were decked out for the holidays as always, making it a difficult task for our two judges to narrow down the winners. The judges are from another garden club in our district. To help them with their task at hand, the judges are given a set of guidelines to go by:

1) Use of fresh greens and plant materials.
2) Originality of design/theme.
3) The amount of effort put in.
4) Use of some artificial fruits and accessories is allowed.

The judges are also given a list of the winners from each category from the previous three years. Winners of 1st, 2nd, 3rd in each category are not eligible for placement in their respective category, but are eligible for 4th or placement in the other category. This hopefully allows everyone to have an opportunity to show their best.It was a tough choice again this year as there are over 500 homes to judge. Two members from the Garden Club of Stoneleigh are the driver and co-pilot for the tour and we have to keep our opinions to ourselves- which is sometimes hard to do! We made numerous laps in and around the neighborhood so the final choices could be made. Many thanks to our two judges for willingly giving up their day during a busy time of the year to spend touring our neighborhood. Both judges commented numerous times during the drive through the neighborhood how well kept all the homes are in Stoneleigh. Clearly this is a neighborhood that takes pride in its self. Great job Stoneleigh neighbors!

Many thanks go to Agnes O'Ferrall for providing a yummy luncheon and lots of hot tea for our judges and tour "guides". Agnes does make the best cucumber sandwiches. As hard as I try, I can never make mine taste quite as good.

Without further ado, the winners are:

Overall Decor

First Place – 802 Wellington Road
Jane Cook

Second Place – 817 Wellington Road
Colleen & Brian Marden

Third Place – 815 Kingston Road
Marcie & Scott Hipple

Fourth Place – 7116 Wardman Road
Karen McGagh

Overall Door Design

First Place Door – 908 Old Oak Road
Mary Jo & Louis Forte

Second Place – 911 Wellington Road
Anne & Jim Costigan

Third Place – 7003 Bristol Road
Becky & Scott Garvey

Fourth Place – 7116 Bristol Road
Jennifer & Greg Lalla

Hons on a Mission Update

by Karen Fireman

Hello Neighbors,

Would you like to make a difference to a new or expecting mother? This year's Spring Project, April 20-May 4, will collect items for **Layette Starter Kits** which will be distributed at local shelters to mothers and their babies through Christ Child Society (CCSB). We will also collect gently used maternity clothes!

Items needed:

*While HOAM strives to collect items that we already have and aren't using, we must request that some of the items be new due to shelter requirements for young babies. Such items are indicated.

- Newborn-6 month onesies/outfits- *NEW please
- bath towels *NEW please
- bibs/ burp pads *NEW please
- diapers (partially open packages accepted)/ wipes
- New OR gently used board books

We are also collecting.....gently used and laundered MATERNITY CLOTHES!

The following organizations will receive these items:
Family Crisis Center
Sarah's Hope
Susanna Wesley House
Pregnancy Center North
Mary's Place
Stork's Nest- Johns Hopkins Bayview

When there is a group of pregnant or new mothers in a shelter, CCSB also brings "Celebrate You and Your Baby" events which are essentially baby showers where the Layettes are given and Lactation/Childbirth Educators are brought into the shelter.

I know it takes some doing to go through your attics and closets but I promise you every bit makes a difference!

Collection drop-off sites (April 20th - May 4th):
911 Wellington
6904 Avondale

If you would like to learn more about Hons On A Mission or if you have a project in mind, PLEASE join us for our annual planning meeting:

SUNDAY, APRIL 26th @ 4:00pm
6904 Avondale Road

I am grateful to Donna Rae Smith for creating and growing HOAM. Our neighborhood is truly rich with generous and charitable neighbors! It is an honor and privilege to be entrusted to help coordinate it. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Karen Fireman

Stoneleigh Mixed Bowling League – Winter Update

by Nancy Talbott

The Stoneleigh Mixed Bowling League is in full swing of its 42nd year. The first half of the season was this past Thursday, January 15th. We had our annual Halloween party, with costumes optional! We did have our annual Thanksgiving Turkey roll-off. The man and woman with the highest set for that night wins a turkey. We draw a name for the third turkey. And the winners of the turkeys were: Rick Reid, Katie Gallagher and Sharon Manson. The winners of cranberry sauce (those with the lowest set) were: Diana Rush and Gary Bacon. Our Holiday party was celebrated in style with yummy sandwiches, appetizers and desserts and tasty libations. It is always a fun night and a good way to start the holiday season.

So far this season, there have been only three people with triple headers. Congrats to: Mel Manson w/134; Rich Talbott w/153 and Nancy Talbott w/147.

The end of the first half of the season was a very close race indeed with 5 teams going into the last night of the 1st half all within a game or two of each other. After the first two games were played, it was still anyone's guess as to who would be the winner. Team #8 "Happy Days" pulled ahead with a win/loss record of 38/26. Team members are Joan Sanders, Paul Armetto, Mel Manson and team captain Chris DesMarais. Congratulations to all. The second half will start on January 22nd. So it's back to square one.

Stats for the 1st half

Hi Team Set #9 w/ 1381
Hi Team Game #6 w/505
Hi Mens Set- Pat Doherty w/408
Hi Womens Set- Diana Rush w/416
Hi Mens Game- Rich Talbott w/170
Hi Womens Game- Sharon Manson w/157

We welcome anyone who would like to get a bit of aerobic exercise and an evening of fun! Come and give it a try as a substitute and you might get hooked.

Contact either Debbi Gill at Stoneleigh Lanes 410-377-8115 or Nancy Talbott (League Secretary) 410-377-0542

Garden Club of Stoneleigh

by Sara Douglas

We are pleased to announce the 2015 calendar of events. Feel free to join us anytime – we always welcome new members.

Tuesday February 10th	11:30 am Lunch and Business Meeting, Razorback's Restaurant, 926 Dulaney Valley Road 1:30 pm Garden Club members will assist residents to make tray favors. Manor Care Nursing Home on Joppa Road
Tuesday March 10th	11:30 am Home of Carolyn Benfer, 3 Leadburn Court Towson, MD 21204 (410-337-6716) Brown Bag lunch 12:00 noon Business Meeting 1:00 pm Demonstration of spring floral arrangements--$25.00 per person by Kathy Sanner of Perry Hall Florist
Tuesday April 14th	11:00 am Home of Betty Ford 9403 Seven Courts Drive Baltimore, MD 21236 (410-248-2018) 12:00 Business Meeting and Election of Slate of Officers 1:00 pm Presentation of Scented Plants in the Garden Speaker: Richard Archambault, retired School Principal with Master's Degree in Science and Education
Tuesday May 12th	11:30 am Home of Carolyn Benfer, 3 Leadburn Court Towson, MD 21204 (410-337-6716) 3 Leadburn Court, Towson, MD 21204 12:30 pm Annual Covered dish Luncheon Installation of Officers Plant Exchange and growing tips by members Contact Carolyn Benfer 410-337-6716

We will communicate details on the April Geranium and Plant Sale when they are available – stay tuned!

April Geranium and Plant Sale - date to be announced

From The Potting Shed

For a spot of color during the winter months, purchase a flowering houseplant from a local nursery such as Valley View Farms or Radebaugh Florist. Houseplants can help clean air in enclosed spaces. Some are: Areca Palm, Lady Palm.,Rubber Tree, Boston Fern and Peace Lily.

Join us on February 28th at 9:00 am to hear a lecture on Native Perennials at Valley View Nursery in Cockeysville.

Emphasis today for our gardens is to use more native plants which can be more heat tolerant and even disease resistant. More of these plants in our gardens help establish a more a green community. More "greening" information will be coming from the Greening and Recycling committee.

Be sure to visit the Maryland Native Plant Society website for more information. Visit http://www.mdflora.org

The Garden Club of Stoneleigh was established in 1947 by a group of residents who wanted to beautify the community and to learn about gardening. The club has been active ever since with a normal turnover of members. Now, the current members range in age from 70 to 90, thus we can't do the planting and weeding we have done in the past. We are appealing to the younger residents to give three hours one day a month to keep this institution going in Stoneleigh. The meetings are on the second Tuesday of the month from 11:30 to 2:30 pm to enable you to meet your children from school or drive a carpool. If there is no interest to this appeal, the club will be disbanded in June. Through the years we have worked with the school children planting daffodils and other plants to beautify the entrance of the building, held holiday workshops, sold plants at May Fair at Kenilworth and at Hunt Valley before that to raise money for planting in the community. I didn't join the club until after I retired form my work outside the home. I hoping some of you can join and arrange playdates to keep you children so you can attend a meeting. The Garden Club is willing to work with the Greening Education of Stoneleigh through workshops and funding. We would love to see someone step up and carry on this beautiful tradition for our community and the future.

Sara Douglas
saradoug@verizon.net
410-560-9026

Stay Connected in Stoneleigh!

Did you know that we offer the **Resource List**, which includes babysitters, house sitters, dog walkers, and other miscellaneous services, on our website? This password-protected file is accessible at any time, so in case you recycle your Stoneleighte, visit *www.Stoneleigh21212.org* and follow the links for Community Resource List. Follow the instructions to obtain your password if you can't remember yours – it is that simple!

Did you know that over 75% of the homes in Stoneleigh are members of the **Stoneleigh Community Association Google Group?** These homes receive emails from time to time updating them on community news and events that are about to take place. We do NOT allow merchants or vendors to advertise through this service, nor do we share your email addresses with any third party organizations. This is not a message board or public forum. This service does not have a "Reply to All" function, nor does it publicly display members email addresses. Members simply receive carefully vetted emails alerting them to community news and events. There no fee of course to join; simply email the Stoneleigh President at *StoneleighPresident@gmail.com* and request to be added to the group.

2015 Board of Governors - Stoneleigh Community Association

President	Noah Lechtzin	7104 Rich Hill Road	(410) 296-3140
Vice President	Greg Dildine	907 Old Oak Road	(203) 228-4649
Treasurer	Joe Carney		
Secretary	Amy Godat	Wardman Road	
Past President	Joe Petit	7108 Bristol Road	(410) 321-1640
Pool Chairperson	David Frisch	907 Kingston Road	(443) 275-2964
Stoneleighite Editor	Cara Walen	710 Stoneleigh Road	(410) 828-4034
Social Committee Co-chair	Kerri Brennan	502 Hatherleigh Road	(410) 296-1715
Social Committee Co-chair	TBD		
General Board Member	Meghan Virro	6904 Wardman Road	(646) 489-3217
General Board Member	Karen Fireman	6904 Avondale Road	(410) 832-5552
General Board Member	Joe Sanchez	7103 Wardman Road	(410) 377-2682
General Board Member	Scott Thomas	7099 Sheffield Road	(410) 583-5262
General Board Member	Tim Weighs	6905 Marlborough Road	(410) 321-1440
General Board Member	Kathleen Williams	703 Stoneleigh Road	(410) 299-7011
General Board Member	Ryan Clifton	7117 Wardman Road	(954) 741-7398

Stoneleigh Echoes

by Lee Starkey

What is there for a former editor of The Stoneleighite to do? Why, write a column, of course!

Two weeks ago I received an email from Rosemary Hoover. Dean, Rosemary and family resided at 900 Kingston until two years ago when Dean's company moved him to their facility in North Dakota. Rosemary gave me permission to publish portions of her letter, so that other Stoneleighite readers may enjoy her descriptions of their adventures. Rosie writes:

"Christmas Blessings-Epiphany Greetings to you all!

"Christmas is still in the air, including the -30 degree [weather] at our house in Williston, ND. Christmas does not end until the Epiphany, so Merry Christmas to you all!

"My second year here has been rather interesting. Dean and I have traveled over the border to Canada several times: Regina, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Esteven and the International Peace Garden, to name a few. I have a hard time understanding the local culture of never visiting Canada, even when you are less than 60 miles away. This also goes for the political leaders in our town. I am still amazed at the cultural difference in this community of about 39,000. Dean and I spend a good deal of time at the new Area Recreation Center, a 260,000 square foot [facility] of exercise equipment, tennis courts, batting cages, simulated golf, water park, three swimming pools. There is a huge hot tub which Dean and I frequent after our trainer has worked us over. Dean looks great, by the way.

"We do a lot of people watching here, too. Never have I seen so many colorful people. Yes, people full of color-dyed purple, green, red and pink hair. This includes children in school. I do a great deal of subbing in the public schools. The colored tattoos that I see are downright awful…the ugly baby pictures on the chest, misspelled words of the back. The mobile van tattoo salon shows up at all the local events like the county fair or the street dance or the farm Fest.

"This Holiday season we were very busy traveling to LA to see Anna and then to Minnesota to see Dean's family and my oldest sister's family for Christmas, a good adventure for all. Anna had requested that we come out before Christmas to warm Los Angeles. Since Anna lives in West Hollywood, she wanted to make sure we stay close by for time and traffic concerns. This trip we stayed at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, CA, thanks to pricline.com. I should [mention] that as a family we like to stay in old historical hotels; the old charm factor and beauty are irreplaceable. This is where the Golden Globes takes place, for example, and where Whitney Houston expired a few years back. They do not rent that room any more, I was told.

"Due to a flight delay we arrived late to the hotel after midnight. We saw the ending of a white tie holiday party breaking up. I had never seen so many beautiful people. All the men were in tails and the women in stylish fitted long gowns. What struck me was the vintage mink stole draped on this beautiful woman. It just did not seem to fit the 'California lifestyle,' Texas yes, but not here. Dean and Austin did not seemed to be impressed with this four star hotel especially after the inside door handle to our room fell off and we could not get out."
There is much more about family in Rosemary's letter. If you'd like to share news with her, you may contact her at rosemaryuh@aol.com.

***Stoneleigh Echoes** reflects on the rich history of Stoneleigh. Please contact Lee Starkey at Starkey919@Verizon.com to contribute to this column.*

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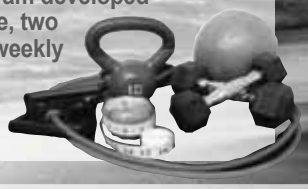
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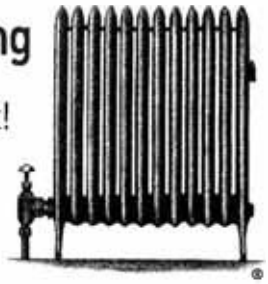

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