

Windreader

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Neighborhood News

Crime Watch Alert:

Neighborhood watch volunteers were daunted to learn of a brazen daylight break-in at the Whisperwood home of Dan Young and Gary Tuttle. The vandal smashed a window and entered the garage where he did significant damage – and injured himself. Traces of blood indicate that he probably sustained cuts from the broken glass. He escaped before authorities could arrive. No further investigation is likely – since the perpetrator was a deer!

July is the perfect month for celebrating the US flag. Paul Hancock and Jeff Collins proudly fly their flag in front of their Greenwillow home.

SAVE THE DATE

Monday, August 14
10 AM-1:00 PM
Indiana Blood Drive, at the Community Bldg.
Watch your email for details.

Somethin' Broke in the Neighborhood? Who You Gonna Call? The Fixer!

Found a hole in your siding? A huge tree branch collapsed on your front porch? Need a hero with a hammer? The fellow most likely to save the day won't be riding a white horse – he'll be behind the wheel of a 2006 Ford F-150 pickup!

And who is this rescuer? Javier Alvarado, Windridge's Maintenance Supervisor. With over 16 years of service to the neighborhood, Javier suspects that he's worked on the inside and outside of every one of Windridge's 221 units! Although the size of his team varies, depending on the season and the project, it's Javier's group that tackles most of the hands-on maintenance and repair projects that keep Windridge looking beautiful and functioning smoothly.

Born in Juarez Chihuahua, Mexico in 1966, Javier came to the U.S. in 1990. Although he and his wife Carla were born in the same town, they didn't meet until each was visiting relatives in El Paso. The couple married in their home town but moved to Indianapolis in 1994 to be closer to Javier's sister and her family. American citizens, both Javier and Carla have been good neighbors to their adopted city. Javier is proud of Carla's long-standing contribution to the Indianapolis Omni Hotel, where she is an award-winning member of the banquet staff. The couple has two children, daughter Ashley, 21, who is studying criminal justice at the University of Indianapolis, and son Javier, Jr., 19, who will start classes at Indiana State this fall – after working as one of his father's maintenance crew for the summer.

Javier enjoys his Windridge work. "This is a one-of-a-kind job," he says. "We are always out and doing something. There are new challenges every day." And some days have provided exceptional challenges! Asked for an example, he recounts the time, back in 2003, when Fletcher Court flooded due to a massive downpour and an overflow of water from the neighborhood south of Hawk's Pt. Rd. "One of the residents was standing on his front porch calling me," Javier recalled, "and he wanted me to come over and unclog the storm drain, except that the storm drain wasn't clogged. It was draining just fine. The problem was that so much water had come pouring in that the drain couldn't handle it all. I couldn't reach him because the water was nearly three feet deep. We were standing there yelling back and forth and I couldn't make him understand that there really wasn't anything we could do until the water went down." Hearing the story after 14 years, it's clear that Javier is still frustrated by his inability to prevent the flood. He's the kind of fellow who wants to be part of the solution.

He also tells a story about the time the maintenance crew needed to clean out one of the lift stations. They found that the pump was completely clogged with the head of a big floor mop. "Somebody must have thrown it into the toilet and it probably got flushed on accident," he says. "We spent several hours trying to get that thing out of the drain and get the pump working again." In the end, the pump had to be replaced – which probably cost Windridge about \$1200."



Windridge Maintenance Supervisor Javier Alvarado and his faithful steed -- the Windridge workhorse truck

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Great Neighborhoods Don't Happen Accidentally; They Grow Because People Treat Each Other with Kindness

Most residents moved to Windridge from larger properties. Giving up a yard and the attendant elbow room and privacy can require a period of adjustment – for pets as well as for their owners! For the convenience of reduced exterior home maintenance and yardwork, condo owners become more aware of: the need to reduce household noise that might disturb others; the importance of removing common area clutter; the necessity to restrict one's aesthetic individuality for the sake of common area compatibility; and willingness to engage in collegial rather than independent decision making, e.g., house painting decisions. Good neighbors occasionally reflect on the benefits of living in a congenial environment and identify opportunities for supporting and enhancing these benefits for all. Following are some possible examples:

- Do I observe Windridge's 20 MPH speed limit – and drive even more slowly when passing pedestrians on wet streets? Do I remind my guests to obey the speed limit – and to yield the right of way to pedestrians?
- Do I keep my pet cat/s inside at all times?
- Do I ensure that my dog is a good neighbor by:
 - Restricting my dog's barking?
 - Preventing it from using garden areas, flower beds, and ornamental shrubs as "potty" stops?
 - Removing and properly disposing of all dog waste?
- Do I maintain the foundation plantings around my home?
- Do I keep a watchful eye on the safety and property of others?
- Do I respect the privacy of others and avoid petty gossip?
- Do I treat my neighbors, Windridge employees, and board members with courtesy?

Following are the results of a very informal "good neighbor survey" conducted over the past six weeks. It includes comments from Windridge residents about interactions with their neighbors:

- My neighbor drives me to the airport when I visit my family.
- My neighbors pick up my mail when I go out of town.
- Our neighbor brought us soup when both of us were sick.
- Last winter when I was sick my neighbors took turns walking my dog.
- When my neighbor goes to CVS, she often asks me if I need anything.
- Every time I drive by the new shade garden on Whisperwood, I say a prayer of gratitude for the generous neighbor who donated it. What a nice gift for all of us to enjoy!
- I can't keep up the little corner garden like I used to; the garden committee helped me out.
- Javier and his crew always pick up the things I trim in my garden. And they always wave and say hello!
- Thanks to my neighbor who opened my garage door for me when the power went out!
- The man who cuts our grass didn't run over my daffodils; he was careful to go around them.
- We are so grateful for Jim Loiselle and the neighborhood watch volunteers!
- We love the beauty and location of this friendly neighborhood. We won't ever move!
- I really didn't think that I was going to like living in a condo. And now my next door neighbor is a dear friend and I don't know what I'd do without her.
- Thanks to our Board and Doug and the rest of the crew for all their hard work!!! ■



Windridge Vice President Vicki Eident and garden committee member (and soon to be Master Gardener!) Glenna McGann help spruce up the gardens around the Community Building.

Honeysuckle, Wild Grapevine, and Invasives; Why All the Fuss about these Pretty Plants?

Honeysuckle is that shrubby tree that flaunts beautiful white flowers in the spring and pretty red berries in the fall. You see it everywhere in the Indianapolis area. It fills in open areas along the roads and provides privacy and a sense of countryside in the urban environment. It's also on the botanical Hit List of invasive species and the State of Indiana, the City of Indianapolis, and Windridge are all "out to get it." Why?

Invasive plants are more than just weeds. Weeds are simply plants that interfere with farmers' or gardeners' plant management goals. For example, clover growing in a pasture protects the soil and provides nutrition for livestock. In flower beds, clover is demoted to weed status because it takes over. It's mostly an inconvenience.

But invasive species are the zombies of the plant world; they crowd out, poison, and overgrow any other plant, including fully grown trees. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), invasive species are non-native plants that usually have been transported into new growing regions through human activity. Once established, they damage their new environment. A recent article in *Mother Earth Living* says that plants like honeysuckle "upset the balance of entire ecosystems as they outcompete with native species for food and other resources."



Master Gardener Ken Myers of Whisperwood, standing in a "cage" of wild grapevine that killed two mature trees shown in the background.

They also spread non-native plant diseases, eat native species, or kill the new growth of native species. As a result, they can wipe out native flora and fauna, and possibly even eliminate the biodiversity of the landscape.

And, according to Windridge resident and Indiana Master Gardener Ken Myers, invasive species can be really difficult to kill. Myers knows whereof he speaks. The beautiful hillside common area behind his Whisperwood home was a nightmare of wild grapevine, honeysuckle, and poison ivy when he bought the unit in 2016.

Attractive landscape improvements completed by an earlier resident had been neglected and the acreage sloping westward toward Emerson was completely overgrown with honeysuckle.

Myers is a soft-spoken fellow but he becomes animated when explaining why he has single-handedly removed nearly a dozen semi truckloads of mostly honeysuckle and wild grapevine from numerous locations in the Windridge neighborhood, including the common area around his three-unit building. So far this year Ken has logged over 150 hours of backbreaking labor - and still counting...!

He knows what he's talking about. Raised on a farm, Ken planted his first tomato plant at the age of three - and was hooked for life.

He took horticulture classes in high school, is an award winning flower arranger and a graduate of the Herron School. He interspersed military service, a career as an art teacher and social worker with periodic stints in numerous flower shops, along with raising two sons. Now "retired," Ken donates his time maintaining several church floral and vegetable gardens - when he's not manning his chainsaw on Windridge hillsides!

As a teacher as well as a "black nail gardener," he understands why education is so important. "We need to explain to people how toxic these plants are," he says. And he willingly shares some surprising examples.

1. Honeysuckle spreads in numerous ways. Birds and the wind can disperse its seeds. It climbs into the branches of other trees, suffocating them. It also spreads through a system of aggressive shoots that head away from the main trunk in all directions - and sometimes travel through the soil for distances of up

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Long Live Windridge's Sewer Lift Stations; Here's the Whole "Disgusting" Story...!

Several times each year, Windridge residents are notified that their water will be shut off for several hours the next day. Most often, these shutdowns are needed so that the lift stations can be serviced.

According to Property Manager Doug Beyers, Windridge utilizes over two miles of sewer lines. There are three lift stations on the property; The main lift station is just north of the main entrance gate. A secondary one is close to 5210 Windridge Drive and the third one is close to 5347 Fletcher Court.

These lift stations have large pumps that route waste water and any materials from residents' drains or toilets into the city's sewers.

Windridge can save a lot of money and staff time, by properly disposing of household cooking, cleaning, and hygiene waste.

In 2016, Windridge spent nearly \$18,000 on sewer and lift station maintenance. Over \$5100 of this amount went for cleaning the lift stations. According to Doug, cleaning is required to remove grease and debris from the lift station pits.

In order to save wear and tear on the pumps, and save money for the associations and its members, residents should consider the following:

Management of kitchen waste:

Grease and oil from cooking (and barbecuing) should never be poured into a sink or toilet. Once cooled, liquid or fat should be poured into a container that can be closed with a lid and disposed of in the trash.



Kitchen produce:

The garbage disposal should be used to grind up kitchen produce scraps. Bulky items should be chopped before they are inserted into the garbage disposal. A Tablespoon of dish detergent added to the disposal before it is turned on can help prevent clogs in the line and will reduce bacteria and odors in the disposal. A cup of ice cubes ground up in the garbage disposal a couple of times each month will keep the blades sharp and grind waste more efficiently. Citrus peel left in the garbage between grindings will act as an air freshener and kill bacteria in the disposal.

Cleaning and household products:

Floor mop wipes and disposable dust rags are not biodegradable. They may clog the drains of a unit and cause flooding or accumulate in the lift station pits and clog the lines. After use, they should be placed in the trash.

Hygiene products:

Toilet paper is the only product that should be flushed down a toilet. Sanitary wipes, diapers, incontinence and feminine hygiene products, cotton ear swabs, and cotton balls should be disposed of in airtight trash bags only - never in toilets.

Manufacturers may claim that many of these products are biodegradable - and sometimes they are - but it often takes years for them to break down and, in the meantime, they've clogged sewers and polluted waterways.

Cat litter: Cat litter clogs water lines. Like some paper products, some brands of litter are biodegradable - but only over the long haul. Immersed in water, it masses into gooey clumps that can clog water lines and increase wear and tear on the sewer system. Cat litter should be disposed of in plastic grocery bags - an excellent recycle use for them.

Through additional attention to the disposal of household waste, every Windridge resident has the opportunity to prolong the life of the neighborhood's stalwart lift stations - and to reduce the expenses associated with employees' time and labor, use of equipment, and pump replacement.

(Honeysuckle, cont'd. from pg. 3)

to 30 feet! It also emits toxins into the soil that kill adjacent plants. These toxins can linger in the soil for extended periods of time, even after the honey-suckle has been removed. Ken has an ominous example of how hard it is to get a honeysuckle plant to “stay dead.” Behind his back patio is a four-foot long honeysuckle trunk. He estimates that it was cut down at least two years ago. He reports that the “dead” trunk is now sprouting new growth. When he says it’s really hard to kill, he’s not joking.

2. Areas heavily infested with honeysuckle become “dead zones,” Ken says. The lower branches of trees and smaller vegetation are suffocated and poisoned by the invasive plant (see photo of the large tree that was “strangled” at its base by honeysuckle which girdled the trunk, then climbed up and killed its host. Another negative aspect of honey-suckle infestation is that birds won’t build their nests near it. This poses a loss to the beauty and diversity of the neighborhood, Ken says, because birds are an important part of the wild habitat.
3. People mistakenly believe that honeysuckle provides a “wall of green” that increases the feeling of a country environment, even in the city, but, according to Ken, knowledgeable home shoppers are less inclined to buy properties that are infested with invasive plants. And, by removing the “bad guys,” neighborhoods benefit from more open vistas and the return of beautiful native plants (see photo of Ken standing in the dappled sun that now shines in an acre-size slope looking down toward Emerson, which he cleared of honeysuckle. The remaining trees and plants now have a chance to survive.

Sometimes it takes a while to get used to the “empty” look of an area that has been cleared of invasive plants. But Ken has shared a list of preferred plants, including full-sized trees, ornamental trees, and smaller plants and shrubs that can quite nicely complement the opened spaces, attract birds, and improve the floral diversity of the neighborhood. This list can be obtained at the office or on line at the Windridge website. ■



Mature tree was killed by honeysuckle which wrapped around the base, strangled the roots, and then climbed up the trunk cutting off the tree’s access to sunlight.



Master Gardener Ken Myers of Whisperwood shows how clearing out of invasives opened up a vista – a view of something that is more beautiful than a “green wall.”



Two years following the removal of dead ash trees and honeysuckle from the common area behind her unit, Vicki Eident found a clump of native trillium blooming in the cleared area behind her Fawn Hill Ct. home. Mother Earth is so resilient!

Summer's Finally Here – and So Are the Bugs!

We wait through the cold weather and the grey skies and the spring rains and, finally, it's summer and we're delighted to be able to go outside and enjoy the trees and the lawns and the flowers. Unfortunately, we're not the only ones who are happy to see the vegetation. Here they come, an army of pests, assuming that our little patch of garden paradise is their cafe. We need to get rid of those critters. But – we don't want to kill our friends the pollinators, AKA, bees, butterflies, and birds.

We all know that chemical compounds are often toxic to the wildlife we love. So how do we repel/kill the one group without killing the other? First, use the experts at your local garden center. They can tell you which sprays are the least toxic (because ALL of them are toxic to some degree). Second, carefully read the instructions – and follow them. Third, never spray when there's even a small breeze. Spray only the minimum necessary amount recommended. Don't spray when it's going to rain because the chemical will be washed off the plant. And, spray very early in the morning or late in the day, when it's nearly dark. At this time, most bees, butterflies, and birds aren't foraging and you'll be less likely to harm them.

Following are two excellent DIY recipes that have been recommended by Bill N. McKnight, author of "Rantings of a Mad Botanist," an excellent gardening book that focuses on the trials and tribulations of Central Indiana gardeners.

Anti-Fungus Spray

1 Gallon water
¼ Cup baking soda
2 Tablespoons vegetable oil

Spray after every rain.

Anti-Aphid Spray

1 Gallon water
1 Tablespoon dish detergent
1 whole head crushed garlic cloves (skins, too!)

Put garlic in the toe of an old nylon and tie it shut to make a sort of teabag. Steep in the sun. Then spray on plants. Repeat as needed.

Thanks to Bill Pert for information on pollinators. Learn more from the National Wildlife Federation: NationalWildlifeFederation@NWF.org



(Alvarado, cont'd from pg. 1)

It was Javier and his crew who hit the streets following the huge storm of August 2016. Before the lighting had disappeared over the horizon, the Windridge maintenance team was scouting for downed power lines and sawing up trees that had fallen into the streets. Residents pay monthly fees for "services," but Javier is Doug's right hand in making sure that the safety of residents comes first.

And, just to keep from being bored, Javier also runs his own construction company on the side. Alvarado Construction is bonded and insured and provides interior and exterior carpentry and home remodeling, including decks, fences, and chimney repairs.

In his "free time," Javier loves to relax with Carla, his kids – and his pet Yorkies, Nikko, 3 ½ lbs. and Molly, 3 lbs. Interesting picture: this great big man clearly spoiling these tiny little dogs.

The neighborliness that is so evident in Windridge is also apparent in the professionalism and dedication of its wonderful employees. Javier doesn't live in Windridge, but he's surely one of its best neighbors. ■



Javier and his Yorkie posse – Nikko and Molly