

# WEST TOWSON

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

FALL 2009



# WEST TOWSON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

## LETTER FROM THE WTNA PRESIDENT

### A Great Time to Be in West Towson

Given today's market, few neighborhoods can make the claim that their value is on the rise, but I believe that West Towson can.

There are a number of reasons why, but one of them is the state-of-the-art elementary school for our children that is scheduled to open next fall. The question of redistricting for the new school is addressed in this newsletter, but it seems obvious to me that students living in West Towson would attend West Towson Elementary. We also introduce you to the school's new principal, who has a record of success. We also highlight some of the amazing technology in every new classroom, like virtual chalkboards. It will, quite frankly, blow every other school out of the water.

Talk about water, we also have the potential for a new swim club that will be a place for adults to meet and for children to see their friends during the summer. Teens will ride their bikes to the pool and adults will relax in the "adult only" area of the pool deck. The club will make West Towson more attractive to potential buyers who want a place to meet others in their community, and members who join now will be able to attract buyers with a transferable membership.

But just as the community had to come together and rally to make the new school a reality, we need to do the same for the pool. And we do not have much time.

### The Pool: Jump in Now – or Never

The Towson Swim Club board will make a decision based upon the number of applications received by Thanksgiving to either move forward with the pool project or to return the land to the County. Although we have had encouraging words from West Towson residents, we need more support. For the project to become a reality, the pool needs 100 more members from West Towson. So far, about 75 of the more than 740 homeowners in the community have joined. Some of you may be planning to join but have not yet completed the membership form. I ask that you stop reading this article, visit [www.towsonswimclub.com](http://www.towsonswimclub.com), and sign up.

Some of you may be unsure about the details of the pool's design, the price, the payment plans, the parking, the facilities and other aspects of the club, or you may be wondering whether you can just wait to join and get a better price down the road (which is not accurate). Whether you have questions, concerns or just want to hear about the pool but do not have any present interest to join it, please attend a final information session about the pool on **TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3 AT THE SHEPPARD PRATT CONFERENCE CENTER, AT 7 P.M.** The pool board will have answers to every question, and will explain some new membership benefits created in response to your input.

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### "CREATING A NEW CULTURE OF LEARNING" . . .

. . . is one of the many goals of the new principal of West Towson Elementary School, Susan Hershfeld. Ms. Hershfeld was previously the principal at Ft Garrison Elementary School and Harford Hills Elementary School.

She is looking forward to "starting a community that focuses on children and learning." To aide in this, each classroom is expected to be equipped with Promethean Boards, an electronic blackboard. The board permits the teacher to write on it like a chalkboard, but it can also perform every function that a computer can, like accessing the internet, showing slides, graphics, and instructional videos. She  
*(continued inside)*



## TOWSON DATES

### Friday, October 30th

*Halloween Parade & Oktoberfest, 5:30-8pm  
hosted by WTNA and BYKOTA*

*Costume Parade and Trunk-or-Treat, 5:30-6pm  
(in case of rain, festivities begin inside BYKOTA at 6pm)  
Pizza, Brats, Hot Dogs and Chips, 6-7pm  
Magic Show, 7pm*

### Tuesday, November 3rd

*Pool Information Meeting, 7pm  
Sheppard Pratt Conference Center  
[www.towsonswimclub.org](http://www.towsonswimclub.org)*

### Thursday, November 26th

*Towson Family YMCA Turkey Trot 5k and  
2k Family Fun Walk, 9am  
Registration begins at 7am, 600 West Chesapeake Ave*

### Monday, December 14th

*Santa's Visit to West Towson, 5:30pm  
WTNA Annual Holiday Decorating Contest  
Judging begins*

*(continued next page)*

# WTNA

## NEWSLETTER

### OFFICERS AND GOVERNORS

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>President</b>             | Josh Glikin<br>600 Woodbine Terrace       |
| <b>First Vice President</b>  | Shellie Curry<br>409 Allegheny Avenue     |
| <b>Second Vice President</b> | Stephanie Keene<br>614 Charles St. Avenue |
| <b>Treasurer</b>             | Adam Molinaro<br>306 Marwood Road         |
| <b>Secretary</b>             | Venetia Holland<br>526 Allegheny Avenue   |

### Board of Governors

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Mike Ertel<br>505 W. Joppa Road     | Richard Parsons<br>412 Woodbine Avenue    |
| SueAnn Griffin<br>516 Park Avenue   | John W. Pyle<br>609 Debaugh Avenue        |
| Barry Heddings<br>516 W. Joppa Road | Debbie Shepard<br>507 Woodbine Avenue     |
| Darwin Holder<br>637 Picadilly Road | Samantha Sheridan<br>552 Allegheny Avenue |
| Alastair Palmer<br>419 Range Road   | Louise Teubner-Rhodes<br>5 Orchard Road   |

### Committee Chairpersons

|                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Welcoming Committee</b>       | Barry Heddings          |
| <b>Block Captains</b>            | Barry Heddings          |
| <b>Streets/Signs</b>             | John W. Pyle            |
| <b>Gardening &amp; Landscape</b> | Louise Teubner-Rhodes   |
| <b>Spring Cleanup</b>            | Stephanie Keene         |
| <b>WTNA Website</b>              | Marian Eichelman Mathis |
| <b>Christmas Decorations</b>     | Debbie Shepard          |

### LETTER FROM THE WTNA PRESIDENT

*(continued from front page)*

For example, you may now purchase a membership certificate that is still transferable with your house, but which can remain dormant during the summer. That way, if you do not use pools or if you belong to another club, you still have a means to help increase your home's value and the strength of your community without paying summer dues. If you do join for the summer, though, you will enjoy a first-rate facility.

The pool plans provide for plenty of parking, a pavilion where you can picnic and your children can have birthday parties, a club house that includes inviting bathroom facilities, a game room area, and family bathrooms next to the gradual-entry baby pool. It will feature a playground and an outdoor game area. If you think that the property is too small for all of that, you have only driven by. It is deceptively large – and is comparable in size to the Stoneleigh pool area. It also will be very private. There will be no views of the roads from the inside and no view of the pool from the outside. Finally, the cost is much less than anyone first believed it would be and there is a payment plan that spreads out the cost through next April. Unlike most other clubs, your membership certificate can be sold back to the pool if you choose not to transfer it with the sale of your house.

So, please come to the pool information meeting on **NOVEMBER 3 AT 7PM IN THE SHEPPARD PRATT CONFERENCE CENTER** (for directions, information about the pool, architectural renderings and a membership form, visit [www.towsonswimclub.com](http://www.towsonswimclub.com)).

This generation often gives thanks to past generations who saw beyond their own needs and gave to the greater good of the community. Baltimore County has agreed to give us an incredible deal on very valuable land that once belonged to a prominent local family that donated the land to the County more than a hundred years ago. Empty land in the heart of Towson isn't exactly easy to come by, especially for next to nothing, and for a community purpose at that. We need to take advantage of it now. I do not want to be standing on a convenience store parking lot on that site one day wondering about what could have been.

Sincerely,  
Josh Glikin

# WWTNA

## NEWSLETTER

### CREATING A NEW CULTURE OF LEARNING

*(continued from front page)*

has also ordered Panto Swing Chairs, an ergonomic chair from VS International. The school is not planning on having a computer lab, but instead plans to have several computers in each classroom, along with a full group (enough for a class) of computers either in the library or on a moveable station. The school is also designed with green attributes. The school will take advantage of natural direct and indirect lighting. In addition they are expecting a green roof.

With a school capacity of 451, it is the plan to keep the number at the Baltimore County average of 21.9 for grades K-2 and 23.9 for grades 3-5. Ms. Hershfeld has been working extensively with many people to get the school ready in time. She is in close contact with Barbara Walker the assistant area superintendent of Baltimore County. She expects to be able to get into the new school in August.

One of the final things to be determined is the Boundary Process. As soon as the boundaries are determined, she will be in touch with the PTA Council to get the West Towson PTA established. Parents will have lots of opportunities via letters and meetings to be involved with the school. Ms. Hershfeld is excited to have the opportunity to start a new school from scratch, "to create a new history."

We'll continue to meet with Ms. Hershfeld and report on her progress in the next newsletter and in some email updates. If you have not signed up to receive neighborhood emails, email [info@westtowson.org](mailto:info@westtowson.org) and give us your name, street address and ask us to add you to the list.

### LANDSCAPE UPDATE *by Louise Teubner-Rhodes*

We have some winners! We are proud to announce the Enchanting Planting winners for 2009:

**Best Overall:** John and Holly Sefter, 540 Highland Avenue

**Most Curb Appeal:** Robert and Janet Powell, 518 Charles St. Avenue

**Best Containers:** Beverly Pugsley, 513 Allegheny Avenue

**Best Green Gardening:** Arthur and Mary London, 512 Park Avenue  
(excellent use of native plants)

Congratulations to these great gardeners, who worked so hard to help make West Towson beautiful. All the winners got a \$25 gift certificate to Stebbins. Thanks to SueAnn Griffin and Venetia Holland, who served on the judging committee along with me. With all the enchanting gardens in West Towson, the judging was not an easy task!

Fall is the best time for fertilizing your lawn. The grass has a chance to develop its root system in the fall and will green up and grow faster in the spring. This will help choke out weeds, too. The best defense against lawn weeds is healthy grass. In our area, fall fertilization is preferable to spring fertilization, except for a zoysia lawn. A standard fertilization rate is 1 lb. of nitrogen for 1,000 square feet of lawn. The University of Maryland recommends avoiding weed and feed products, as they lead to over-fertilization and overuse of herbicide. Try spot treating weeds, and stay away from the use of insecticides unless absolutely necessary.

To protect our bay, we need to keep fertilizer out of it! Use only the amount you need, and keep it off paved surfaces. A drop spreader helps in this regard. Don't apply to frozen or dormant lawns, and don't use it to melt ice.

Fall is a great time for planting trees and shrubs, and we have plenty of time before the ground freezes. Pick specimens that are not too root-bound in their pots. You should check pots carefully for insects or weeds; I found thistles in one pot! Even in our cooler fall weather, the new plants will need thorough watering. Make sure evergreens are watered, too, before the ground freezes. One final fall task is to clean up any plants with diseased foliage. Peonies in particular should be cut back to ground level. The diseased foliage should be bagged and not composted.

## West Towson Neighbor

West Towson Neighborhood Association  
P.O. Box 502  
Ridderwood, Maryland 21139-0502

### WHO WILL ATTEND THE NEW WEST TOWSON ELEMENTARY?

Parents are starting to ask who will attend the new elementary school that opens next fall on Charles Street, and where the boundary lines will be drawn. The rumors are flying, but the truth will not be officially known until next spring.

In October, the West Towson Elementary School Boundary Study Committee will meet for the first time. Appointed by the Baltimore County Public Schools as required by Board of Education Policy 1280, this committee comprises parents, teachers and administrators of schools affected by the redistricting. It also includes members from area neighborhood associations and community groups. BCPS officials have said they want the community to make this decision, as they know their community best.

The Boundary Study Committee will take information provided by the BCPS Office of Strategic Planning and devise three redistricting scenarios. These will be presented in a community-wide forum where everyone attending will get to make comments, ask questions and rank the scenarios by preference. The West Towson Neighborhood Association will make sure our community members know the date of this meeting.

Based on that feedback, the Boundary Study Committee will then make its recommendations to the school system, and the Baltimore County Board of Education. At that time, there is another opportunity for public comment before the Board votes to approve any redistricting proposal.

Final approval of the plan by the Board of Education is not expected until March 2010. Board of Education Policy 1280 can be found here: [http://www.bcps.org/system/policies\\_rules/policies/1000Series/POL1280.pdf](http://www.bcps.org/system/policies_rules/policies/1000Series/POL1280.pdf)

Community involvement is key to making sure all the different perspectives are considered. Try to attend the meetings and encourage your neighbors to participate.

### WEST TOWSON DUES

The WTNA needs your support to continue doing good things for our community. So far this year we have had only 19% of the community pay the \$35.00 annual household dues. Enclosed with this newsletter is a dues form that I ask you to complete and return. If you prefer, you can pay your dues at [www.westtowson.org](http://www.westtowson.org), which offers the secure PayPal form of credit card payment. Your dues help to pay for improvements to the neighborhood signs, the park and playground, community events, protection by the Board against zoning request that threaten the residential nature of our community, and dues also will pay for new projects that are designed to increase the value and appearance of our neighborhood.