



VILLAGE OF FLOWER HILL WINTER 2013 NEWSLETTER

WWW.VILLAGEFLOWERHILL.ORG

DID YOU RECEIVE UPDATE CALLS FROM THE VILLAGE AFTER THE STORM?

If you did not get the daily Village updates it's probably because you either didn't sign up or you only included your home phone number, not your cell phone number, when you signed up. You can also receive email alerts but you must sign up for that service as well. To enroll or add numbers to our database you must go to:

WWW.NORTHSHOREALERT.ORG

Click on "Sign Up" at the left side of the screen. Next, click on Flower Hill on the map. Check the box that says "Sign me up" and click on the "Sign Up Now" box. Read the directions and click "Next". At this point you will be asked to either add your contact info or edit your contact info. You must then enter your email and create a password. Click on "Next" to enter your info. Follow the prompts, save and submit. Remember that during a power outage your home phone may not be working so use a cell phone number as an alternate. You can also receive email alerts but you must sign up for that service as well. You may want to consider designating an out of town friend or family member to receive calls. You can use a different email address to create more contacts. If you do not have access to a computer, call Ronnie at the Village Hall, 627-5000, and she will sign you up.

VILLAGE ELECTIONS MARCH 19, 2013

Annual Village elections will be held in March. Up for election are three Trustee positions for a two year term each. If you are interested in serving the Village, please visit the New York State Board of Elections website at www.elections.ny.gov and click on the "Running for Office" tab on the left. This site has all the information you will need. If you have any other questions, please call Village Hall.



NYS COMPTROLLER'S AUDIT

The Village has completed an audit by the NY State Comptroller's Office which targeted internal controls over selected financial operations for June 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011. The audit was then extended to other areas back to 2006. The Village's response to each of the findings is included. The entire audit report can be found on the Comptroller's website: www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/audits/index.htm and the Village website. Mayor Phillips will give a complete review of the audit findings at the February 4, 2013 Board meeting at 8 pm.

SNOW SEASONAL REMINDER

Parking is prohibited on Village streets when two inches or more of snow has fallen or is in the forecast by the National Weather Service. This will allow all streets to be plowed curb to curb. **Parking may be resumed when the snow has stopped falling and the roads are cleared.**

DO NOT shovel snow from your driveway back into the plowed street. The Village Code Enforcer patrols the streets after the plows have gone through and will issue a summons if snow is shoveled or plowed back into the roadway. When snow is pushed back onto the road after it has been cleared, it tends to ice over and cause hazardous conditions. We understand that the plowed snow blocks driveways, but it is your responsibility to remove the snow. Please shovel that snow back onto your lawn. It will melt! If you use a plow service, please advise your contractor that they may **not** plow the snow from your driveway onto the road or your neighbor's property, they must plow it back onto your property.

HURRICANE SANDY RECAP

The superstorm of 2012 took its toll on our Village. Thankfully only one home was lost to a generator fire and there was no loss of life. Our biggest problems were the massive loss of trees, the damage they caused to property and the loss of electric power to the entire Village during a very cold two week period. The lack of information from LIPA made it very difficult for us at Village Hall to do our job of keeping you informed. The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Trustees and staff worked around the clock trying to get information from LIPA, returning the calls of every resident who phoned us, and patrolling the Village to find all the problem spots where LIPA was needed the most.

A special thanks goes to our Highway Superintendent Scott Hislop and his crew: Jim Barton, Marvin Calderon and Rich Falcones. They spent over 48 hours straight here in the Village before, during and after the storm. They cleared the massive trees that fell across our roads so that emergency vehicles could pass. Then they set about completing the huge task of clearing the other debris from the roadsides. Scott was able to obtain a FEMA clean-up crew to assist. In all, over 2,250 tons of debris was cleared.

Village Code Enforcer Robert Rockelein visited every home where we had notice that elderly residents were living alone. He made sure they were okay, offered transportation to the shelter, offered to contact friends or relatives and made sure they had groceries in their homes.

Village Administrator Ronnie Shatzkamer and her staff: Kathy Wade, Jim Gilhooly, Ann Lauria-Smith and Susan Williams kept the Village Hall open during the storm's aftermath even though there was no heat or telephone service. Using their own personal cell phones, they were able to track callers to the Village Hall and return their calls and were thus able to contact LIPA or the tree crews as to where they needed to go. Once our generators were up and running, we offered hot coffee, a place to recharge electronic devices and a warm place to hang out.

One of the most important things we need is good contact information from you, our residents. We heard from many residents who did not know what was going on in terms of power restoration because they were not getting the Mayor's daily phone updates. If you are not signed up with Northshorealert.org we will not be able to reach you. Please see page 1 for more information.

Hopefully we will never have to go through another severe storm and its aftermath again, but we want to be as prepared as possible especially since we live on the North Shore of Long Island where overhead power lines are the rule. Please follow all of the Red Cross recommendations for preparing your home and family in case of disaster. You can find their information at redcross.org. For more information, please contact the Village Hall.



ON VILLAGE TREES by Tree Committee Chair, Trustee Karen Reichenbach

We know here in the Village of Flower Hill that Hurricane Sandy took a toll on community trees, putting our safety and property at risk. An excellent article appeared in a recent Time Magazine on-line "Ideas" blog entitled "When Trees Become Lethal". The author points out that it is important that the discussion about urban forestry not end when the storm damaged trees are cleared. We must ask the question "What we can do to take better care of our trees, both to minimize risk and fully enjoy their enormous benefits.". We must address healthcare for trees and planting viability,

Regular pruning and maintenance, and hiring professionals when help is needed is a good way to keep trees healthy. Hiring cheap assistance from people without the proper credentials is a mistake. To keep trees viable you must **plant the right tree in the right place**. Roots need the space to grow, and trees that tower over homes and utility lines put power and property at risk during disasters.

Rather than immediately remove a damaged tree, the CEO of the Arbor Day Foundation, America's largest organization dedicated to planting and caring for trees, recommends patience. " Trees are amazingly resilient and many recover over time with proper care. The urge to do something immediately is strong, but people should try to be patient. As long as there isn't an immediate physical risk from a damaged tree, many times it's best to keep the tree for now and determine the course of action later." If a tree is not a hazard, take some time to make sure it gets the care it needs. It's OK to wait a few weeks or months before a final decision is made on the fate of the tree. A good rule of thumb on whether a tree can survive is it must still have at least 50 percent of its crown (branches and leaves). A tree with less than half of its branches remaining may not be able to produce enough foliage to nourish the tree another season.

If a tree requires immediate attention, the Arbor Day Foundation recommends hiring a qualified arborist. Arborists are recommended for work off the ground, if a tree is leaning against wires, structures or other trees, if utility lines or structures are endangered or if a chainsaw is needed. The Village office has a copy of local certified arborists distributed by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County.

We need to learn how to better live with our trees and move away from our simplistic understanding of them. Yes, trees are pretty and useful but they're also a responsibility that too often people shirk. We have to show respect to these giant, powerful beings around us. They do so much for us. Let's do more for them.

GENERATOR BASICS by Deputy Mayor Tab Hauser

Since Hurricane Sandy, many residents have become interested in having a home generator. There are two ways to have generator power to your home. The expensive way is to get a built-in natural gas powered generator, which requires a permit, at an average cost of \$20,000 to \$25,000. The alternative is to add a portable generator to your home, as I did several years ago, at a complete cost of less than \$2,500. Contact me at tab@tabhauser if you are interested in learning how I installed my portable generator.

There are a few things you should know about generators before deciding which is right for you. There are also some things you should be aware of once you have a generator.

1. Generators do not need to run all the time. At our home, we turn on the generator in the morning for about an hour to get the boiler, hot water and refrigerator running. We also charge phones, computers, etc. We run the generator after the sun sets, turning it off by 11PM as to not disturb our neighbors sleep.

2. It is smart to turn off your portable generator at night. Your hot water heater will keep the water in your tank hot for your morning shower. Your refrigerator will also stay cold. We turned our generator off at night and did not even see our ice cubes melt. Homes will also retain their heat overnight.

3. If you are not using any power during the day and have enough natural light to move about safely, keep the generator off.

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PRESORTED
FIRST CLASS
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GENERATOR BASICS CONTINUED...

4. Power and usage should be computed before buying a generator. Decide whether you need to have your A/C on during the length of a power outage. Keep in mind that hurricanes usually occur later in the summer when evenings are cooler and sleeping with the windows open can be comfortable. To determine the size generator I needed for my home, I planned on connecting a few outlets for charging, the refrigerator, lights for the den and kitchen, our boiler and microwave.

5. Portable generators should not be running in your garage even with the door opened. Carbon Monoxide is clear and odorless, emissions can be a concern when operating it even in an open area like a shed or garage. Portable generators should be outside your home and clear of anything that can catch fire. I muffle some of the sound by placing garbage cans around the generator.

VILLAGE WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Mayor Phillips has made several appointments to fill empty positions on the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Village's Planning Board. Joining the Zoning Board are former Trustee William Clemency and Dr. Arnold Goldman. New to the Planning Board are Chair, Rhoda Becker and members Larry Lioz, John Ghize and Georgina Morgenstern. The Mayor has also appointed a Tree Committee to examine the Village's tree policies, chaired by Trustee Karen Reichenbach with members of the staff and resident Zachary Menkes. We look forward to seeing more participation in local government by our residents!

