

April 2004

College Heights Estates Association, Inc.  
7100 Eversfield Drive  
College Heights Estates, MD 20782-1049



*Is Your Address Label Highlighted In Yellow?  
If So, Please Pay Your CHEA Dues.*

**CHEEA**

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# College Heights Estates Newsletter

April 2004

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## Letter from the President

Greetings,

Spring is finally here and though we didn't have the snows of a year ago, our winter seemed longer than usual! The daffodils, camellias and forsythia are in full bloom and the countless azaleas that thrive in our community will soon follow. I would like to encourage you to spend an afternoon walking through College Heights Estates enjoying the beautiful scenery and chatting with your neighbors. We are truly lucky that those "pioneers" who first built in CHE planted such a variety of azaleas and that we all have continued that tradition.

You will find enclosed with this newsletter a CHEA magnet that we hope you will post in a prominent place in your home. It contains important numbers that may be helpful when you are looking for a quick reference. We are indebted to Bev Silverberg (Calverton Drive) for their design and production.

I would also like to thank David Baldwin (Clagett Road) for his work cleaning and repainting the white wooden street signs throughout CHE. He started just before winter set in and is continuing as the weather has moderated.

As always, if you have a question or issue that is important to you, please feel free to contact me or any board member to discuss it. Phone numbers and email addresses are listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

*Ron Blunck*

### CHEA Board Members

The CHEA board members are listed below. If you have a question or issue that you would like the Association to address, please contact any board member. All board members volunteer their time and energy and are not compensated for services they provide.

Ron Blunck (301) 864-0186, [RBlunck@GEICO.com](mailto:RBlunck@GEICO.com)

Bill DeWitt, (301) 779-4370, [wdewitt@rhsmith.umd.edu](mailto:wdewitt@rhsmith.umd.edu)

Don Hein, (301) 927-4396, [donaldhein@erols.com](mailto:donaldhein@erols.com)

Elaine Murphy, (301) 403-8891, [emurphy@hyattsville.org](mailto:emurphy@hyattsville.org)

Ron Browning (301) 927-1209, [arkabee@comcast.net](mailto:arkabee@comcast.net)

Edna Szymanski, (301) 779-3289, [ednas@umd.edu](mailto:ednas@umd.edu)

David Merkwowitz, (301) 927-5811,

[drmerkwowitz@earthlink.net](mailto:drmerkwowitz@earthlink.net)

Bev Silverberg, (301) 779-0861, [BRSCComm@aol.com](mailto:BRSCComm@aol.com)

Jean Lee (301) 927-1956, No E-mail Address

Erskine Davis, (301) 864-2749, [edeldavis@aol.com](mailto:edeldavis@aol.com)

Julie Gilden, (301) 864-8007,

[julie\\_gilden@fanniemae.com](mailto:julie_gilden@fanniemae.com)

Cathy Beard, (301) 927-2375, [cjbeard@umd.edu](mailto:cjbeard@umd.edu)

Sandy Stein, (301) 864-9556, [sangret@aol.com](mailto:sangret@aol.com)

Walt Johnson, (301) 277-390,  
[walter.johnson@longandfoster.com](mailto:walter.johnson@longandfoster.com)

### **Your 2004 CHEA Membership Fees May Be Due**

The annual membership fee, still only \$25, is the primary source of funds for all CHEA activities. The fee covers newsletters, postage, street sign maintenance, gate maintenance, community block party, special projects and all other CHEA expenses. The annual fee is a small amount for each household to pay and we ask that residents send their payment each year to help support the only community organization that serves all of College Heights Estates.

Check the mailing label on your copy of the newsletter. Above your name, on the right, is the date (YYYY/MM format) of your last payment. If this date is highlighted in yellow, your 2004 fee (\$25) is due and should be sent to CHEA, 7100 Eversfield Dr, College Heights Estates, MD 20782-1049. Thank you!

### **CHEA E-mail Communications (E-COMs)**

The following E-COM emails were sent over the past year:

1. Home Re-Assessments (sent 2/2/2004)
2. Armed Robbery at Wells Parkway & College Heights Drive (sent 1/14/2004)
3. Second Leaf Collection (sent 1/1/2004)
4. Do you need a caregiver for children or a senior? (sent 12/22/2003)
5. Leaf Collection (sent 11/14/2003)
6. Annual Picnic & Community Review/Update of Buddington Property Development (sent 10/21/2003)
7. Update on Theft on Windsor Lane (sent 5/14/2003)

8. Test - Siren / Early Warning Test  
Scheduled at University of Maryland  
(sent 3/18/2003)

CHEA is making an effort to maintain a group e-mail capability for dissemination of current issues impacting the CHE community. **PLEASE** check the mailing label on your copy of the newsletter. Below your name is the e-mail address you have provided to CHEA. Send us any corrections/updates to this so that you receive e-mail notifications such as the ones listed.

### **Maryland Day 2004, Explore Our World**

There is something for every age at Maryland Day 2004, **Saturday, April 24 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** at the University of Maryland, College Park. The campus will be buzzing with more than 350 activities for neighbors, alumni, parents and prospective students to explore and enjoy. Come taste the new flavors of ice cream, visit hands-on research demonstrations and exhibits, relax under the Big Top with live performances and spend time exploring the numerous agricultural events, from designing landscapes to a petting zoo. There will be plenty of food items available for purchase throughout the campus, including Maryland crab cakes, burgers, chicken, veggie burgers, sundaes and milkshakes. And you can end your day at 4:00 p.m. at Byrd Stadium with Coach Ralph Friedgen and the Maryland team at the annual Spring Football game.

Visit the Web site [www.marylandday.umd.edu](http://www.marylandday.umd.edu) for information on specific events. Plan to spend part or all of your day exploring and enjoying all that UMD has to offer.

### **Cicada Invasion**

If you were in College Heights Estates 17 years ago, you will remember them – nature's noisiest

insect! Adult cicadas do not feed on leaves and when they feed, it is by sucking sap from young twigs. Young trees are more likely to suffer damage from cicadas so you may want to postpone any tree-planting until the fall. Netting with less than 1/2 inch openings can be used to cover young susceptible ornamental trees and, in the meantime, root for the insect-eating birds to enjoy their feast! The cicadas are scheduled to appear in early May and remain through June.

**Property Tax Reassessments**

Most of you recently received a property reassessment for your home in CHE. A large number of the reassessments in our community were higher than anticipated – some as much as 100 percent. A number of CHEA board members met with Sam Goward (Hunter Lane) to review this issue and a letter will be sent in the near future to Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) to review the measurements, mathematical calculations and other techniques SDAT used in their reassessments. Sam has been leading this effort and has identified large variations in assessment value per square footage of individual homes. We hope that bringing this information to SDAT’s attention may result in adjustments in assessments.

As an individual homeowner, you may “appeal” a reassessment, but the period for that is limited to 45 days from the date of the reassessment. However, homeowners may “petition” SDAT for a review of their assessment at any time, even beyond the “appeal” period. For more information on SDAT assessments, appeals and petitions visit [www.dat.state.md.us](http://www.dat.state.md.us).

As you know, annual property tax calculations are based upon property assessments. In Prince George’s County the overall tax rate is limited by TRIM legislation from years ago, but that is

focused on the overall tax rate throughout the county and not on individual tax bills. There is a state reassessment cap of 10 percent, but in Prince George’s County the cap is reduced to two percent for primary residences. The cap does not apply to the overall assessment but does apply to the increase in property taxes due on individual residences. Check your last Prince George’s County real estate tax bill for a Homestead credit amount at the bottom of the tax bill. The Homestead credit is the means for implementing the two percent cap.

**Crime Statistics**

Below are the non-violent crime statistics reported to the County Police for addresses in CHE.

| Type of Crime                  | 2003     | 2004 YTD |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|
| <b>Breaking &amp; Entering</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>0</b> |
| <b>Theft</b>                   | <b>0</b> | <b>0</b> |
| <b>Stolen Auto</b>             | <b>0</b> | <b>0</b> |
| <b>DWI</b>                     | <b>0</b> | <b>0</b> |
| <b>Vandalism</b>               | <b>0</b> | <b>0</b> |
| <b>All Other</b>               | <b>0</b> | <b>0</b> |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>3</b> | <b>0</b> |

If you are a victim of crime within College Heights Estates, contact the Prince George’s County Police substation in Hyattsville at (301) 699-2630. For emergencies, call 911 immediately. At the same time, please let CHEA officers or board members know so e-mails and telephone calls may alert other residents. As summer nears it is important to watch for those who travel through your block and are not residents. Report anything suspicious to the county police.

### **Telephone Tree**

We would still like to maintain a telephone tree list for emergency notifications of members. Not many have signed up, but if you would like to place your name and number on a telephone tree that allows neighbors to communicate quickly with each other, please call Jean Lee, (301) 927-1956 and leave your name, address and telephone number.

### **Yard Waste Pickup**

Spring brings us all out to begin picking up dead branches and debris. Prince George's County provides branch pickup every Wednesday. Branches should be cut into 3-4 foot lengths, bundled with string and placed on the curb. Other vegetation waste and grass clippings should be bagged and placed on the curb as well. Yard waste is not collected on regular trash collection days of Tuesday and Friday.

### **Bulk Mulch**

If you are interested in purchasing mulch in bulk, contact D.C. Materials located in Glenn Dale at 301-390-6500. The cost per cubic yard of mulch is \$20 if you have a truck and can pick it up. If you need mulch delivered, the minimum is three cubic yards with a \$60 delivery charge. Topsoil is also available at the same price. Think about partnering with a neighbor if three cubic yards is too much for you individually. If you need help with spreading the mulch or in general maintenance of your yard, CHE has the name of an individual who has done work in the area and is very reliable. Give Ron Blunck a call at 301-864-0186 and he'll pass along the information.

### **Furniture and Appliance Disposal**

Prince George's County provides residents pickup of old appliances and furniture. If you require help in disposing of these items, please call 301-9532-7600.

### **Buddington Property Development Update**

Development of the Buddington property is proceeding. Residents had the opportunity to view the subdivision plans at last fall's CHEA picnic. Additionally, an architecture committee composed of residents from the adjoining streets met with Ken Michael and provided input to the project. The subdivision plan will be filed with the county in the near future; details are being sent to residents of the surrounding area by Greenhorne & O'Mara. Work should begin during the next few months.

### **Calling All Phones (\*)**

Instead of tossing your old cell phone, consider donating it to one of the following groups:

[www.charitablerecycling.com](http://www.charitablerecycling.com) Gives used phones to senior citizens and battered women for emergency 911 service and to patients awaiting organ transplants.

[www.collectivegood.com](http://www.collectivegood.com) Refurbishes phones for use in developing countries.

[www.wirelessfoundation.org](http://www.wirelessfoundation.org) Among other programs, provide phones with free airtime for victims of domestic violence.

\*Thanks to Kiplinger magazine for this tip and list of websites.