

Spring Is Here!

After a long, cold, snowy winter, spring is finally here! March 20 marked the first official day of spring and with the warmer temperatures we've seen recently, along with the emerging daffodils, tulips, and other spring flowers visible around the Village it's apparent that winter really is on its way out.

With the arrival of spring, we begin to look around our yards and gardens and think about what we might like to change or add to make it an even more enjoyable space for the upcoming months. It could be something as simple as adding a splash of color by planting some annuals. Or it may be something more drastic like planting a new tree or removing some shrubbery. Every year the landscape committee receives requests from co-owners around the Village to make these more drastic changes to their areas. These requests are submitted to the committee by filling out a "Co-Owner Request form", which co-owners can pick up from the Village office. The requests range from asking for a new shade tree to be planted to replace one that had been removed in a previous year to removing healthy boxwood bushes, so they can have more room to plant a flower garden. When the landscape committee receives one of these "Co-owner Requests", the committee discusses whether the request should be approved and how much, if anything, the co-owner would have to pay for the change to occur. Oftentimes, the committee agrees that the change requested would aesthetically benefit the landscape of the Village and therefore uses funds set aside specifically for these types of requests. The landscape committee would like to encourage all co-owners to submit a "Co-Owner Request form" if they have ideas that would make our neighborhood more beautiful.

So let's put those snow boots away and start thinking about how to beautify our gardens and green spaces for summer!

Lizzy Hurwitz, Landscape Committee Chair



The Easter Bunny was seen in Pittsfield Village!

He was looking for spring flowers. He found some snowdrops on Edgewood, Norwood and Pittsfield but did not find too many other flowers. What signs of spring have you seen?

What Do I Do With All This Stuff!?

Let's face it—I love the idea of living small and reducing my carbon footprint, but holy cow—our condos are really small and short on storage! I joined Costco a while back, and it has great prices on household goods like toilet tissue and paper products. But where in heaven do I put those 24 rolls of toilet tissue and 18 rolls of paper towels?? What about all those Christmas ornaments and outdoor lights and that artificial tree that *finally* need to find their place? Not to mention clothes for more than one season and pots/pans/pantry items for more than micro-wave meals.

There are plenty of resources and articles out there for helping us think small and live small, so I won't belabor the obvious options, such as yearly spring cleaning/purging of unused and unloved items, buying only when you need things, getting furniture that does double duty, etc. If, however, you need ideas and don't want to spend bucks on magazines and such, check out the small (of course!) but very good collection of books at the Village office on how to live in small places.

What I want to do here is focus on OUR homes, because that's where we live. And since I'm on the Modification and Maintenance Committee, I want to start by making some

noise about our policies and guidelines, not because 'them's the rules', but because M&M Committee members have thought long and hard about what makes sense and what works well for us individually in our homes and together as a community.

The Not-So-Fun Part: What We Can't Do

Attic storage? Nope... or, rather, no longer. Until 2014, we allowed it and even had guidelines in place for owners that wished to install pull-down ladders and lay plywood across the joists for extra storage space. Within the last year, we reversed that decision for a number of pretty important reasons.

Safety/liability: the attic is essentially considered a limited common area. It's a space that's connected to your neighbors and anything that goes up there can have an effect on the building as a whole. That space becomes very, very hot in the summer and very, very cold in the winter. Anything stored there that's flammable (paper, textiles, wood and wood products) pose a risk of fire, not to mention a risk of getting adopted as comfy nests and hidey-holes for mice, squirrels, and other critters we don't want to share our homes with.

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Landscape Committee

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Design and Nature Photography

Karen Tuttle of klizaDESIGN.com

Impacting Your Community

Several years ago, after living in Ann Arbor for some 25 years, I moved to the Village. Initially I focused on my house and my garden. My first involvements in the community were those of using the pool on a regular basis, running my dog through the streets in the early morning, and putting out my pink flamingos. These activities continued as I added picking up litter, and then becoming a member of the Finance Committee. The former was very easy—carry a bag, bend over, pick up, put in bag, repeat. The latter was challenging, as I slowly learned to read the finances of the Village and participated in the budget process. While other Committees had, and still have, openings, I picked one that had an impact on outside contractors, our reserve accounts, and my monthly fees. I stayed on this committee until about three years ago when I was elected to the Board of Directors. I have been on the Board since.

I have friends who volunteer at different places in Ann Arbor and Detroit. My way of volunteering is that of being on the Board. I am able to make changes as well as hold onto traditions in the small community in which I

live. At board meetings I hear a total view of what is planned. I get to see the immediate impact of the decisions of which I am a part. I have learned about foundations, gutters and roofs, crawlspaces, trees, cement, and the list goes on. This knowledge has helped me make sound decisions about my home. Lastly, I get to work with the management, other co-owners, committee chairs, and other Board members, witnessing and participating in a process of government that truly works.

I am continuing on the Board until next year, at which point you will hear that I want to run again. What I have written is not a plug to be voted in again, but a plug for you who read this to consider yourself for a seat on a Committee or the Board of Directors. You could ensure that what you would like in the Village, that is, changes—big, small, or perhaps not to be made at all, are brought to the table. The only thing you will regret by being involved is that you did not do it sooner.

Kat Irvin

Board Member

Gardening Club

The Landscape Committee is interested in knowing if anyone would like to form a "Gardening Club"? (This will be separate from the Landscape Committee.)

The "Gardening Club" would plant flowers in the window boxes of the vacant units, and take care of them for people who are unable to do it for themselves.

The "Club" will be a "FUN CLUB" for gardeners. Ideas and suggestions will always be appreciated.

Please sign up at the "Flower Giveaway". Just leave your name, address and contact information on the sign up sheet at the gate!

Don't Pull That Dandelion!

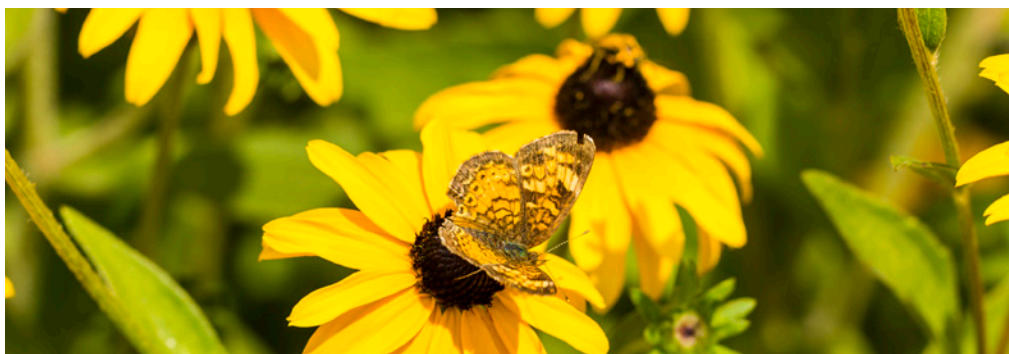
*It's one of the first spring foods for
our precious bees.*



*Let's not kill off anything
that helps the bees.*



www.gmo-freeusa.org
www.fccbook.com/gmo-freeusa
www.facebook.com/gmo-freecanadagroup



"Partners in Personal Assistance"

"Barrier-free" independence was not much on Charles Noble's mind back in the mid-1940s when he was building Pittsfield Village! As a result, our community of 422 units has a negligible percentage of residents who are wheelchair users or have significant difficulty on stairs and can call the Village "home", compared to the general population.

Fortunately, though, our community room IS barrier-free and spacious! And this last December, a party was held there and attended by four persons in power wheelchairs, two Village residents, and several others; and it was a joyful time. The occasion was a holiday gathering for a non-profit agency, Partners in Personal Assistance, (PPA, <http://www.anarborppa.org/> (734) 214-3890), especially celebrating achievement of national C.A.R.F. accreditation in 2014.

PPA was created through the partnership of two groups of people: those with caregiving needs but desiring independent living with self-determination, and those enjoying skilled caregiving and desiring stable work with a competitive wage.

I am sharing this because Pittsfield Village residents can also "partner" with PPA (located very close to the Village at 3810 Packard—Suite 100B, in two ways.

1. If you know someone interested in local work as a caregiver, (or if you would like to help the agency as a volunteer yourself), please contact the PPA office (above).
2. Costs for the stringent training of the Personal Assistants are high, and PPA is currently seeking sponsorships for a Gala Dinner on April 17th at Weber's Inn. I am creating a fund called "Pittsfield Village Supporters of PPA" for any residents interested in contributing smaller amounts (\$1-\$49) to PPA, which will be recognized in the dinner program. Anyone interested in full sponsorship (\$50+), attending dinner, or receiving tax-deductible acknowledgment, please contact the PPA office or myself, Barb Bernard Butler, 2420 Pittsfield, 677-5622.

Many Thanks!!!

10 Ways To Make Groceries Last As Long As Possible

1. Onions stored in pantyhose will last as long as 8 months. Put onions in pantyhose, and tie knots between onion. Plus it makes a freaky wall art installation!
2. Freeze green onions in a plastic bottle. Make sure the green onions are completely dry before storing or they'll get freezer burn.
3. Get an ethylene gas absorber for the fridge. These little pods absorb the ethylene emitted by fruits and vegetables to keep them fresh up to 3x longer.
4. Store delicate herbs like flowers, then cover with plastic, secure with a rubber band, and refrigerate. This is the best way to keep delicate herbs like parsley, basil, cilantro, and chives fresh the longest.
5. Treat oily herbs differently. Oily herbs like thyme can be tied loosely together with string and hung in the open air.
6. If you use a lot of fresh herbs, invest in an Herb Savor. Supposedly, it'll make your herbs last up to three weeks.
7. Use a vinegar solution to make your berries last longer. Prepare a mixture of one part vinegar (white or apple cider) and ten parts water. Swirl the berries around in the mixture, drain, rinse, and put them in the fridge. The solution is diluted enough that you won't taste the vinegar. Raspberries will last a week or more, and strawberries go almost two weeks without getting moldy and soft.
8. Spray leftover guacamole with cooking spray before putting it back in the fridge. There are a number of ways to keep avocado green, and oil is one of them. You should also keep the pit in the guacamole.
9. Don't store onions with potatoes. They'll spoil faster. In a cool dry place with good air circulation, onions will last 2-3 months.
10. Store potatoes with apples to keep them from sprouting.



Pittsfield Village
Communications
Committee

Bulletin

COMCAST / XFINITY

The Village has its own Xfinity representative: Terri—(734) 827-4951.

Moving?

Call Terri for a quick and easy transfer! Get more for your entertainment \$\$\$!

Call Terri for a quick review of your current service provider!

Terri—Your dedicated Xfinity representative. Call today: (734) 827-4951.

SUMMER JOBS

Looking for a summer job? Pittsfield Village is looking to hire seasonal Lifeguard positions and a part-time grounds helper. Please contact Terri at the Pittsfield Village office if you are interested in more information.

CONDO OWNERS: STILL WRITING CHECKS?

If you are still writing checks each and every month, worrying about getting the payment in on time, using ever-increasing postage stamps, well, we have a solution for you! Perhaps you are interested in safe, easy, convenient and reliable method for paying your monthly Association Fees. If so, we urge you to consider signing up for Direct Debit from your checking or savings account! All you have to do is complete the short form and return it with a voided check to Wanda Buster at the Pittsfield Village office. The monthly fee will be automatically withdrawn at the beginning of the month and you'll NEVER have a late fee!

MESSAGE FROM COMCAST

Peace of mind and control is what the XHS Home Security from Comcast provides. You set the rules so you can know what's happening at home when you are away. Contact the Village's personal Xfinity representative, Terri at 734-827-4951 for more details. Call if you need transfers, upgrades and new service. Special pricing for Village residents!

Village Construction

There was and continues to be a lot of heavy equipment around the Village. The landscape committee selected Arbor Valley to remove 32 trees that were on the dead, diseased or dangerous list. After the removal Arbor Valley came back to remove the stumps.

There were 68 homes selected for the Ann Arbor footing drain disconnect project, which includes sump pump installation. Every home in the city is expected by law to have footing drains be disconnected from the sanitary sewer. Pittsfield Village has been receiving approximately \$5,000 worth of work done at no cost as part of a developer credit program. The city website has more information: www.a2fdd.com/faq.htm#Legal. We are very fortunate to have this work done and paid for by the developers. It is anticipated that there will be more Village homes selected for this project in the future.

The re-roofing project began in January but due to the weather did not really get going until March. There are 13 buildings selected for this fiscal year ending April 30, 2015. An additional 11 buildings are being planned for the 2016 budget year. Buildings are selected based on age of the roof and condition.



Tree stump being ground on Whitewood



Periscope? Cannon? No, footing drain disconnect project mid-project



Shingles set on a building on Pittsfield waiting for new roofs

What Do I Do....continued from front page

Privacy: In four-plexes, the inner condos typically are one-bedroom units. If you're up in the attic, part of it is over your neighbor's bedroom. Not too comforting, really—for your neighbors that is—to think that there's stuff above them that could pose a problem or, heaven forbid, to have a foot come through their bedroom ceiling if the plywood wasn't laid right or you tried to walk between the joists and lost your footing. And yes, it's happened.

The kicker reason: we have begun the process of re-roofing all of our buildings AND adding insulation in the attics. Our contractors have come across owners/residents with items stored in their attics. With stuff there, they can't install the insulation, which means that a) the home won't get the immediate benefit of insulation in the space where it's most critical; b) it interferes with the work process—the roof is mid-way through getting re-done and the roofers need to change plans to proceed differently, thereby c) disrupting and lengthening the schedule for the work to be done, and d) resulting in time spent by the roofers and our management to re-calculate costs to accommodate the change in plans and then e) the need to return later to get the insulation in place after the roof is in place, when that wasn't the plan...etc, etc. In short, a real headache.

Conclusion: NO storage in the attic. And if you have stuff there, bring it down and put it somewhere else. Round file or recycle or....chuck it, because you probably haven't looked at for a very long time anyway!! (I speak from experience.)

Other Not-So-Good Ideas:

The crawl space under the living room? Well, it depends. We don't have a specific policy about it, but it's really not the best idea. Why? Moisture and mold are the main reasons. These spaces are not designed for storage: they have dirt floors; in many homes there's left-over debris from the renovations in the 1980's; there can be water infiltration or seepage at various times; and there are, of course, lots and lots of critters, spiders and other crawly things that will take up residence in whatever you put there.

Choices?

So where does that leave us? There are still good options:

Achieving the zen of stuff-less living (not a whisper of a chance for me....)

Getting cozy with thrift shops and the Salvation Army (I'm working on it...)

Choosing things you love but can live without and gifting them to friends and family so you can still visit them if you want... (just started this one...doesn't feel so bad)

Think vertically and creatively. Here are a few I've tried and like—we'd love to hear about others (pictures please!).

Pantry: Those shelves in the kitchen on the back wall of closet are pretty narrow. But they're just perfect for glass mason or similar containers to hold a lot of dry goods, as well as canned goods. I've chosen glass jars of various sizes for my dry staples: flours, sugars, legumes and beans, pastas, grains, dried fruit, etc. I know exactly how much I have and when I run out. I need to transfer stuff from the container it came in (bag, box, etc) to the glass one, which takes some time, but the convenience of having things visible and within easy reach outweighs that effort. Plus, it looks nice. As you can see in the picture, I ran out of space and added some shelves over the doors. Think vertically!



Stairwell storage: Ahhh, this was a nice chunk of space to fill with stuff! I have four shelves in the basement stairwell to hold pots and some pans and bowls, as well as the mother-load of paper towels that you get at Costco. The shelves sit on brackets that hook into vertical supports that are bolted (lots of 'em) to the wall. I've gotten pretty good at



'the towel toss' – to get the towel rolls up on the top shelf. Fun for kids too.

More stairwell storage: We all know that there's not enough room in our kitchen cabinets for pots and pans. Pot racks in front of the kitchen window are one way to go. Another favorite spot is wall of the stairwell to the basement. With a grid securely fastened to the wall and a good supply of S-hooks, you're in business.




In this photo, you'll also see two very important items: a fire extinguisher and a smoke alarm. The fire extinguisher is placed to be readily accessible for a kitchen fire (on the stove) as well as for basement use. Smoke alarms are critical – as is making sure it's working!! Change those batteries twice a year—link it to the time change and it'll become automatic.

Linen closet and curtain rods: Another nifty idea I picked up somewhere is to use spring-loaded curtain rods in the linen closet to hold all those rolls of toilet paper. They're off the shelf, so other stuff can sit underneath, but still close to the bathroom (and not in the basement) where you need them. (No picture here...I couldn't bring myself to take a picture of toilet paper.)

Basement storage: There are myriad ways to store things in the basement. Just a word here: keep items you care about in plastic containers and off the floor. There's enough moisture to damage things in contact with the floor, and in the unhappy event of water in your basement, your stuff will be safe.

I'll be back with more ideas, especially for outside storage, now that we can go outdoors without getting frostbite! If you have ideas to share, let us know -- we'd all love to hear and see them!

<div><p>Pittsfield Village GREEN SPACES • GREAT NEIGHBORS</p><p>April 2015</p></div>			1	2 6pm Landscape Committee meeting	3	4
5	6	7 6pm M&M Committee meeting	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17 Newsletter articles due	18
19	20	21 6pm Finance Committee meeting	22	23 6:15pm Open Forum 6:30pm Board Meeting	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	<i>All meetings to be held in Pittsfield Village Community Room unless otherwise noted.</i>	

Upcoming Events

Annual Meeting

Monday, May 11, 2015
Pittsfield Elementary

Flower Giveaway

May 16, 2015

Bi-Annual Landscape Walk

May 29, 2015
3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

