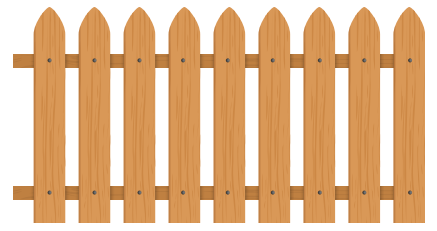


THE GATEPOST of Sharon Woods

SPRING 2021



SHARONWOODSCA.ORG

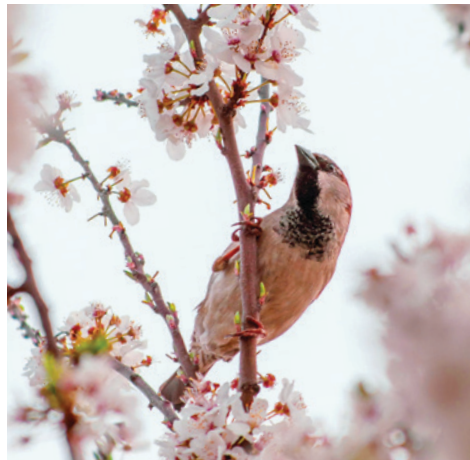
Light is dawning. Spring is here.

by Tyler Mitchell

Spring is my favorite season. It's that magical time of year I can finally walk in a park or commute on my motorcycle without freezing my *you-know-what* off, and for that I am grateful!

I moved to Sharon Woods this past November, and one of the most refreshing things I'm noticing about our neighborhood is the flowering trees...something my little street in south Westerville lacked sorely. In just the past few weeks Sharon Woods has exploded with fluorescent pink redbuds, soft white cherries, and even some peeking purple magnolias.

(If you're the owner of a Bradford pear: thanks for the beautiful show, but please keep those smells to yourself.)



Signs of life reawakening remind us that we have so much to be thankful for. I'm grateful to have moved to such a beautiful community, but it's not just the "woods" of Sharon Woods that I appreciate; Karen Osmond, one of our neighbors, said it so well: "I love the diversity of Sharon Woods. There are large and small homes; people of all races and nationalities; different religions and political views; and, for the most part, we all get along." As we stop and take in the sights and smells of the season (yes, even the Bradfords), let's reflect on *everything* we can be thankful for in this place we call home...*especially those we share it with!* Here are just a few examples:

Chris Colarosa repaired, for a second time and at his own cost, our entrance sign at 161 and Sharon Woods Boulevard after someone hit it with their car. **Margaret and James Westlake** have been picking up trash while out on their daily walks. **Paul Benjamin** donated \$500 in support of our association's 2021 scholarship program benefiting a graduating high school senior. **Franklin Ludwig**, owner of *Nextdoor Lawn and Landscape, LLC*, is donating the flowers we'll use for our May 1 *Island Update Day*.

If you know any of these individuals, please express your gratitude the next time you see them. May their example encourage each of us to seek out ways we can bless others. I can't say it better than Karen: "We have the ability to make Sharon Woods a premier neighborhood, but without each other it can fade away like so many others. Get to know your neighbors, watch out for each other, and get involved in activities that make our community a better, safer place to live. We need you!"

If you haven't renewed your membership in the last year, check out page 7 or visit SharonWoodsCA.org/Membership to start the process.

Events & Updates

Island Update Day on May 1

Help us make Sharon Woods more welcoming! On **Saturday, May 1**, we'll gather in the **Jiffy Lube parking lot at 9:00 AM** to clean up and remove weeds from the island located at 161 and Sharon Woods Boulevard. Once it's clean, we'll mulch and plant annuals. With your help and several volunteers from the Columbus Beechcroft Lions Club, we'll be done before noon. Bring work gloves and a gallon of water.

Future Island Update Days

Future *Island Update Days* are scheduled for June 12, August 7, and October 23. Save those dates and plan to help us maintain the landscaping!

Volunteer Opportunities

If you're interested in volunteering for projects around the neighborhood, visit SharonWoodsCA.org and sign up to receive updates via email. You'll be the first to hear about those opportunities and news about what's going on in our neighborhood.

Serve on the Board

We're currently seeking new trustees! If you're interested in serving the Sharon Woods community by joining our Board of Trustees, please contact President John Kirkpatrick (John@SharonWoodsCA.org) to discuss the possibilities.

Mowing & Yard Services

If you offer mowing and/or yard work services, please email your contact info to Info@SharonWoodsCA.org so we can post it on our website and send it to our email subscribers. Homeowners needing mowing/yard services can contact you directly, and you can discuss your pricing with them.

A Recap of Our 2020 Survey

by Pat Wood

Last year, many of you participated in a survey about how the Sharon Woods Civic Association could better serve you. We received great comments about what we're currently doing as well as helpful suggestions for the future. The Sharon Woods Civic Association continues to discuss the feedback and how we can use it to improve our community.

Here are a few examples of the feedback we received:

- "I'd like to be more aware."
- "My children are older and no longer participate."
- "I don't have young kids...those activities are better offered through churches and other community organizations."
- "Make it easier to pay dues."
- "I would like us to host community events during spring and summer like music, food festivals, or movies."
- "I like seeing *The Gatepost* on the internet."
- "I'd like things that get older folks out."



This is a good opportunity to remind everyone that resources mentioned in several of the responses (including email updates, instant membership renewal, and copies of *The Gatepost*) are available 24/7 at SharonWoodsCA.org. Check it out and stay up-to-date with what's happening in our community!

Thank you for filling out that survey and providing your feedback! We have a few residents who work in marketing, and they're looking into ways we can provide more programs — both in-person and online — to our community, so stay tuned for more updates.



An Easy Way to Improve Our Neighborhood

by John Kirkpatrick

We need your help! Several of the decorative streetlamps around our neighborhood need maintenance due to burned out bulbs and other issues. The City of Columbus does not check up on lights unless an issue is reported. As of January 30, Beechcroft Road had seven malfunctioning streetlamps! The streetlights along Beechcroft Road have been reported several times already, but we're hoping that the squeaky wheel will get the grease if we continue to report these issues!

Did you know that you don't have to trim or care for the trees and shrubs by the curb? The City of Columbus owns and cares for the area between the sidewalk and street (sometimes referred to as the road verge, berm, curb strip, or tree lawn). You may recall that, about eight years ago, the city replaced trees along the curb — victims of the emerald ash borer — and the city remains responsible for caring for those newer trees as well as the existing ones. If you've got a concern about a tree or shrub on your tree lawn, there's no need for you to pay for removal or maintenance!

You can report malfunctioning streetlamps and request assistance with trees at the same place. Just call **311** or visit **311.Columbus.gov!**

Thank you for helping us keep the Sharon Woods community beautiful by informing the city of things that may need attention.

SWIM LOCAL



**We are back and ready for the 2021 swim season!
ARE YOU?**

**Our 2021 season will return to normal as much
as Covid-19 regulations will allows us to.**

You already know that buying goods and services locally is a great thing. Why not swim local too?

Nestled in the centrally located Woodward Park neighborhood at 5006 Almont Dr., Northland Swim Club is North Columbus' community pool. We offer the following amenities:

- Large, open swimming areas, including six Olympic-length (50 meter) lanes, a diving bay with three diving boards, one water slides, and more!
- Spacious grassy areas around the pool with beautiful, mature shade trees, shelter house
- One lap lane on long course of pool.

Visit us today at www.NorthlandSwimClub.com
We will be keeping our rates from the 2019 swim season!



Get Connected

Connect with us online and you'll be the first to hear about what's going on in our community.



Our Website

Visit SharonWoodsCA.org to find updates, volunteer opportunities, our calendar of events, previous editions of *The Gatepost*, annual membership application/renewal, and more!



Email Notifications

When you visit our website, sign up to receive updates via email! When we publish new posts on the site, you'll receive a copy in your email inbox. We won't spam you or sell your email address to anyone.



Follow Us on Facebook

If you have a Facebook account, follow Sharon Woods Civic Association for photos, news, and helpful reminders.



Call or Text

Have a message you'd like to pass along to a member of our Executive Board or Board of Trustees? Call or text **614-600-2469** with your message and it'll be sent along to the appropriate person.



The Columbus Beechcroft Lions Club

by Roger Heckel

The Columbus Beechcroft Lions Club, part of the Lions Club International, have been serving the Sharon Woods community since its chartering in 1982. We have 21 members — community-minded men and women who are interested in making Sharon Woods a better place to live. Our members live in Sharon Woods and in the nearby neighborhoods of Devonshire and Forest Park West, as well as in Westerville, West Jefferson, Delaware, and Hilliard.

As a service-minded group, our outreach has been impacted by COVID-19. We are currently doing small projects such as writing “thinking of you” notes to residents and service workers at the Westerwood Life Care Community (formerly known as Friendship Village of Columbus). We are also distributing handmade face masks to those in need.

Our used eyeglass drop-off boxes at St. Elizabeth Parish, Church of the Good Shepherd, and Karl Road's Columbus Metropolitan Library have collected over 600 pairs of glasses for OSU Optometry, where they are refurbished and sent to countries where eye care is limited. Many recipients are seeing properly for the first time with glasses provided through this program!

Our service projects and fundraisers take about 2–3 hours per month. We also have times of fun and fellowship where lifelong friendships are built. Our meetings take place at 7:00 PM on the third Tuesday of the month, September–June. If you're interested in joining an upcoming Zoom meeting or if you know of a group we could help, please contact me (Roger@SharonWoodsCA.org; 614-600-2469).

Speeding Vehicles

by Pat Wood

For several years our association has been in discussion with the City of Columbus about controlling speeding vehicles, particularly on Skywae Drive. Most recently we have requested solar-powered flashing signs highlighting the 25-mph speed limit, which would serve as a better reminder than the current static signs. Here are some responses we have received from the city, updated April 2021...

Speed data was collected on Skywae in 2019. Based on those results, Skywae has been added to the city's list of potential traffic calming projects. Radar-based speed feedback signs are not deployed on residential streets. (This was not one of our requests.) However, additional speed limit signage is sometimes installed if a residential street is in excess of a mile in length. The City of Columbus does not currently deploy solar-powered flashing signs for speed limits on residential streets. I have noted that many speeders on Skywae are coming from the apartments across the street, and city officials recommended we look at their “Pace Car Pledge.” Speed bumps are another option for limiting speed, but not preferred. The Columbus Division of Fire opposes speed bumps because they slow response times.

Our association will continue to keep in touch with city officials. The Columbus Division of Police are also consistently monitoring speed in the area. *Thank you for doing your part to keep our streets safe by abiding by the posted speed limits!*

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Meet Your Neighbor

by Funmi Oladejo-Lawal

This is the story of how my family came to America and settled in Sharon Woods.

Hello neighbors! My name is Funmi Oladejo-Lawal. I'm married and we are blessed with two beautiful children. My family immigrated to America in January of 2009. Our welcome to America was a snowy and bitter cold day. *What is this white stuff falling from the sky?!* My aunt told us it was snow. It was our first time seeing snow, and we were not properly dressed for it. We are from a tropical county, and it was obvious that we did not get the memo not to wear summer clothes in winter. We got our first American lesson in science and language during the ride from airport!

Second lesson: New York, a city that never sleeps — much like our home in Lagos, Nigeria — is an expensive place. We quickly realized Brooklyn was not for us. After three days there, with barely \$200 to our names and needing support from family friends, we decided to hop on the next Greyhound bus and move to Columbus, where our lifelong lessons began.

Within two weeks of living with our friends in their apartment, we learned that coming to America legally is not a “rite of passage” to good jobs and schools. We had to learn to speak slowly, clearly, and to use the right words to communicate with people. I cannot tell you how many times I was confused, or other people were confused, with words used in conversations that have different meanings. (For example: in Lagos the word “pant” means underwear!) I sometimes felt like I was brain dead and was often frustrated. American culture is really different from what we experienced in Nigeria. Choice of clothes, food, communicating with people older than me, home appliances, general lifestyle, and so on, were things my family had to learn to adapt to our new environment.



My teaching degree and my husband's art degree from Nigeria were insignificant in America. It was shocking! After four months of intense searching and disappointments, I was lucky to get a job at a preschool. I became a Teacher's Aide with the expectation that I attended ESL classes during the new probation period. I had to relearn English and speak fluently. I enjoyed the lessons and became a pro before six months. Within a year, I became a class teacher!

My husband had no choice; he worked in an assisted living facility until his shoulder dislocated while he was helping a resident. After that, he worked as a front desk associate at a hotel. His art career was on hold. After one year, we both decided to rebuild our career paths.

We both worked full-time and studied online full-time. I went into social work and my husband continued in fine art. We did this while raising two children...talk about sleepless nights! We both graduated with honors at different times from different colleges. Our children also had to repeat class grades, even though they passed their ESL assessment at the enrollment office.

We were naturalized in 2014. *We had officially become US citizens!* We were free to express ourselves, fight for our rights, establish a business, and be treated fairly. It was a long, hard, and tiring road for us to get that point, but we are so thankful for the opportunity we have in the US. Going back home to poverty and the life we once had in Nigeria was simply not a choice for us.

March 18 marks my family's tenth year living within the Sharon Woods community. We love our neighbors and the city as a whole. Today I work as a case manager for Head Start, and to date I've been able to assist over 220 families through my job, volunteer opportunities throughout Columbus, and the Facebook group *Columbus, OH Neighbors Helping Neighbors* that I created in November 2020. My husband, Lawal Said, is a local artist. Our son is in college, majoring in mechanical engineering, while our daughter is finishing up high school this year.

That's the story of how my family came to America and settled in Sharon Woods. We are so blessed to be here.



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AD



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Annual Membership Application / Renewal

Support the Sharon Woods community! Complete and mail the form below or visit SharonWoodsCA.org/Membership to apply for new membership, to renew your existing membership, or to make a donation.

Your annual membership and donations help the Sharon Woods Civic Association operate and fulfill its purpose of bettering the Sharon Woods community. With about 1,800 residences in our area, we need all the help we can get to keep Sharon Woods safe, clean, and active! In addition to your membership and optional donation, consider serving as a volunteer or by joining our Board of Trustees (see the last page for more information).

Many of our community events were canceled in 2020 due to the pandemic, but our association remained very productive! We were able to complete beautification projects, conduct a holiday lighting contest, and host our annual luminary candle sale for Christmas Eve. We kept our community informed by delivering *The Gatepost* and other timely updates to mailboxes and email inboxes throughout the year. Finally, our Board of Trustees was well-represented at monthly Northland Community Council and development meetings, prioritizing the needs of Sharon Woods residents.

Thanks for your help in making our association a vital link between the residents of Sharon Woods and greater Columbus!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Your membership renewal date is one year from the month you submit this form. If you need information on your membership status or renewal date, please contact Secretary Laura Bastin (Laura@SharonWoodsCA.org; 614-600-2469).

Today's Date:

First Name:

Last Name:

Street Address in Columbus, Ohio 43229:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

We do not share your email address; we use it to communicate with you only when necessary.

Member Type (Select One):

Household (\$12)

Senior Age 60+ (\$10)

Business (\$25)

Additional Options

of Christmas Eve Luminary Candles (3 for \$1):

Monetary Donation for Community Projects:

Total Amount Enclosed:

What can our association do to make Sharon Woods even better?

Mail completed form with payment to: Sharon Woods Civic Association, P.O. Box 297974, Columbus, Ohio 43229

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The Sharon Woods Civic Association is a local not-for-profit corporation operated exclusively for the civic betterment of the Sharon Woods community.

Our vision is to establish rapport with the entire community to build and cultivate a strong commitment to represent common issues and concerns of all who live and are employed in the area. To contact a member of the Executive Board or Board of Trustees, call or text **614-600-2469** with your message or send an email using the addresses listed below.

The Executive Board

Members of the Executive Board serve voluntarily by overseeing official association business and stewarding association resources for the civic betterment of Sharon Woods.

John Kirkpatrick, *President*
John@SharonWoodsCA.org

Ann Trimble, *Vice President*
Ann@SharonWoodsCA.org

Laura Bastin, *Secretary*
Laura@SharonWoodsCA.org

Karen Osmond, *Treasurer*
Karen@SharonWoodsCA.org

The Board of Trustees

Members of the Board of Trustees are elected to serve our community voluntarily for two or more years by participating in association meetings, taking an active part in the association, and overseeing one or more committees focused on the civic betterment of Sharon Woods.

We're currently seeking new trustees to serve!

If you're interested, please contact President John Kirkpatrick (John@SharonWoodsCA.org) to discuss the possibilities.

Roger Heckel, *Columbus Beechcroft Lions Club Liaison*
Roger@SharonWoodsCA.org

Scotty Kuder
Scotty@SharonWoodsCA.org

Tyler Mitchell, *Gatepost Editor*
Tyler@SharonWoodsCA.org

Funmi Oladejo-Lawal
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