



HAMLET AT SOUTHBRIDGE HERALD

December 1, 2004

HAMLET AT SOUTHBRIDGE
HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

Volume 1, Issue 3

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ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS

Tom Pitschneider—President

David Lindquist—Vice President and SCA Representative

Barb Fialkowski—Treasurer

Robert Pickens—Secretary

Sonya Kraft—Director and SCA Representative

Letter from the President

Welcome to the second edition of our association newsletter. Although this was written as the leaves were falling throughout the neighborhood, there is likely to be some snow lying around by the time you read this letter. The board and the associa-



WELCOME TO THE HAMLET HERALD!

tion committees continue to be active in maintaining and planning for our future. Many of our committees are in need of additional members, especially the Maintenance and Architectural Committees. Please consider volunteering your time and participating on an association committee; you can help make your neighborhood a great place to live. Contact the board at board@hamlet-southbridge.com for more information on our committees and their needs.

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Maintenance Committee Update

The Maintenance Committee is looking forward to 2005! Their plans include upgrades to the irrigation system for the neighborhood entrance at Southbridge Parkway and Windsor Drive to cover the new shrubs and flowers planted in 2004. Landscaping and irrigation of the island areas at Whitehall Place and Sussex Place are also a priority. The committee is requesting bids for the following projects:

- Irrigation contract 2005
- Landscape contract 2005
- Irrigation upgrades to entrance

monument at Southbridge Parkway and Windsor Drive for 2005

- Handyman for association maintenance issues

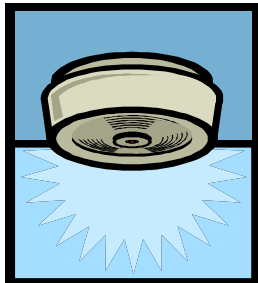
If you own a business or know someone who may be interested in offering a bid on any of these projects, please contact the Maintenance Committee for more information. Please send your name, business name, and phone number to maintenance@hamlet-southbridge.com.

Carbon Monoxide and Fire Safety



CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING CAN RESULT IN DEATH IF LEFT UNTREATED.

“ODORLESS, TASTELESS, INVISIBLE, AND IF UNDETECTED CARBON MONOXIDE CAN INTERRUPT THE NORMAL OXYGEN SUPPLY TO A PERSON’S HEART, BRAIN AND OTHER VITAL ORGANS OF THE BODY CAUSING GREAT BODILY HARM AND DEATH. “



ONCE THE SMOKE ALARM SOUNDS, YOU MAY HAVE AS LITTLE AS TWO MINUTES TO ESCAPE YOUR HOME.

Oh, the weather outside is frightful, but the fire is so delightful! And since we’ve no place to go, let it snow, let it snow, let it snow! What better time of year to remind ourselves of the benefits of working carbon monoxide detectors and smoke alarms in our homes.

For years, we have been told of the dangers that carbon monoxide can cause and how it can result in death if left untreated. With all of the warnings and the scary stories on the news, do you remember how to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, or how to protect your family?

CMAC, the Carbon Monoxide Awareness Coalition of Central Indiana, was formed to provide education and promote public awareness of the danger, the causes, the symptoms, and preventive measures associated with carbon monoxide.

Odorless, tasteless, invisible, and if undetected carbon monoxide can interrupt the normal oxygen supply to a person’s heart, brain and other vital organs of the body causing great bodily harm and death. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning can appear in as little time as a couple of minutes in exposure at dangerous levels. They include headache, dizziness, nausea, and convulsions. The first thing the CMAC wants you to know is that carbon monoxide detectors, though very important and useful, are not fool-proof and should not ever replace proper maintenance and safety measures. Read the instructions thoroughly on your detector, but most manufacturers suggest placement of detectors on every level of your home especially in hallways outside bedroom doors.

Further preventive and maintenance reminders listed on the CMAC web-

site include:

- ◆ Open garage door before starting your car, snow blower or any fuel-burning equipment.
- ◆ Never leave cars or fuel-burning equipment running in a garage, (even with the door open, CO can reach a harmful level and seep into your home).
- ◆ Make sure that burner flames on all appliances are correctly adjusted.
- ◆ Verify that your furnace and water heater are properly vented.
- ◆ Have flue vents and chimneys checked for blockages (leaves or bird nests).
- ◆ Provide adequate ventilation in your house when using any type of combustion materials in stoves, fireplaces, or space heaters. Never burn charcoal indoors or in an enclosed area.
- ◆ Limit the smoking of tobacco products indoors, since the smoke contains carbon monoxide.

Along with carbon monoxide awareness, fire prevention and safety is also important this time of year. The fall season brought with it the annual Fire Prevention Week. Tom Pitschneider, the president of our association, is the city of Shakopee’s fire marshal. He wrote an article for the October 7th issue of the Shakopee Valley News stressing the importance of reviewing home fire safety. In the article, Tom highlighted the fact that a fire can quickly spread through your home, “leaving as little as two minutes to escape safely once the smoke alarm sounds.” For this reason, smoke alarms

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Association Rules Update

The Hamlet at Southbridge Association has a set of covenants, rules and guidelines to protect each homeowner's investment. They provide a clear definition of what is acceptable in terms of home alterations and uses that affect you and your neighbors. The purpose of this recurring column is to highlight a couple of our lesser known covenants.

In the age where satellite and cable television are in great competition with each other, satellite dishes are in abundance. One of our covenants requests that television antennas be installed in the attic, otherwise any exterior antennas or satellite dishes exceeding one meter in diameter require board approval.

Outside storage is also covered in our covenants. If you have a need for storage outside of your home or garage, vinyl patio bins, lockers and small storage containers are allowed so long as they are within one foot of the back of

your home. Storage sheds require board approval and must be permanent, on a concrete slab, same in appearance or materials as the roof and siding on the main house, and smaller than 10'x12'. Play forts, swing sets, and play houses or dog houses must be to the rear of the main dwelling.

In line with outside storage, our covenants state that all woodpiles must be properly secured and either uncovered, or covered with tarpaulins of dark (green or black) color.

Our covenants, rules and guidelines are designed to maintain the integrity and value of our neighborhood. For a complete list of the Hamlet at Southbridge Homeowners Association Summary of Covenants, Rules and Guidelines, please visit the association website at www.Hamlet-Southbridge.com. If you have a question regarding any of our covenants, please contact the Board by email at board@hamlet-southbridge.com.



HIGHLIGHTING LESSER KNOWN COVENANTS.

Carbon Monoxide and Fire Safety

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are key to fire safety, as is the basic home fire-escape plan to ensure that everyone knows what to do should a fire occur. As a family, Tom encourages everyone to walk through your home and identify two ways out of every room. Next, select an outside meeting place a safe distance from your home where everyone can meet. Finally, practice your escape plan twice a year. Take care with children under age six, as they are at the greatest risk when fire strikes. The National Safe Kids Campaign reminds parents that when the smoke alarm sounds, children may

panic and hide in closets or under beds. When making your family's fire-escape plan, decide who will take charge of each child.

"Let our advance worrying become advance thinking and planning," Winston Churchill.

To learn more about carbon monoxide, visit our association website www.Hamlet-Southbridge.com/news.htm and read the Carbon Monoxide Safety article provided by the Shakopee Fire Department. For fire safety questions or additional fire safety information, contact the City of Shakopee at 952-233-3800.

"OUR COVENANTS, RULES AND GUIDELINES ARE DESIGNED TO MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY AND VALUE OF OUR NEIGHBORHOOD."



PRACTICE YOUR ESCAPE PLAN TWICE A YEAR.

Letter from the President

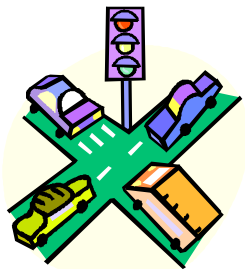
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DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE ON THE CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF THE OPEN SPACES IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD.



THE SHAKOPEE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WILL BE HOLDING A RESIDENTIAL HOLIDAY LIGHTING CONTEST. DETAILS CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.SHAKOPEE.ORG OR BY CALLING THE CHAMBER AT 952-445-1660. THIS SITE ALSO PROVIDES A CALENDAR OF EVENTS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.



COUNTY ROAD 21 ISSUES STILL TO BE IRONED OUT.

I've listed a few updates on association projects and area news, but if you haven't had a chance to visit the redesigned Hamlet web site, take a minute to check it out. The site has several new features and contains many of the past Board of Directors meeting minutes along with other important association news.

ISLAND LANDSCAPE DESIGN

One of our current activities involves ongoing discussion regarding the design for the island areas located on Whitehall Place and Sussex Place. We are currently working with the City to develop preliminary plans for the islands. These areas are part of the public right-of-way (public street) and therefore any work requires City approval. Although work will be delayed until 2005, funding remains within the association's 2004 budget.

OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT PLAN

We are continuing discussion on the care and maintenance of open space, both within Hamlet and throughout the overall Southbridge area. City officials are currently developing a management plan for the open spaces in Southbridge and each of the village associations are actively working with the city on that plan. The management plan will include information on the care, maintenance and use of open spaces within the Southbridge area. Information will be mailed to each property owner as the plan is developed. Some of the initial phases include: encroachment issues in the open space, buckthorn mitigation, tree diseases, land management, and recreational needs. Initial mailings should begin this winter and the overall plan

should be completed by the middle of 2005.

SOUTHBRIDGE PARKWAY IMPROVEMENTS

The Southbridge Community Association (SCA) Board of Directors has approved the installation of an irrigation system along the outside shoulder areas of Southbridge Parkway. The SCA Board will be working over the winter months on additional improvements to the parkway including sod/seed, tree and plant replacement and overall landscape appearance.

COUNTY ROAD 21/SOUTHERN CONNECTION TO SOUTHBRIDGE PARKWAY

There have been ongoing delays related to the Environmental Impact Statement for the County Road 21 project. Several concerns have been raised about the road configuration at the future merge of new County Road 21 and existing County Road 18, including the impact of additional traffic merging onto Highway 169. The current design only has about a 10-year life span and the standard design criteria require a 20-year design. The County Road 21 extension is in the 5-year capital improvement budget; however, there are still many issues yet to be resolved.

On a related note, the City of Shakopee is proceeding with plans to develop Pike Lake Road north from County Road 16 to its future intersection with Crossing Boulevard and Southbridge Parkway. Several development plans are emerging in the areas directly south of our development along the southern alignment of future County Road 21. Proposals include single-family detached homes, neighborhood commer-

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Letter from the President

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cial areas and public park amenities. The City is currently looking at purchasing a large portion of land north of County Road 16. This area is proposed for a community park with trails and non-active areas. This proposed site may have some field play areas; however, due to the natural resources on the site the play areas will be limited.

RULES

We will be establishing enforcement guidelines for various rules and regulations of the association. The Rules Committee will begin meeting in December and will share further details on the Hamlet website. If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns, please contact the Rules Committee at rules@hamlet-southbridge.com.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE NEEDS

The Maintenance Committee will be working on several items in the coming month including bids for the 2005 summer landscape season. The Maintenance Committee is in need of additional members interested in the overall care and maintenance of association property. The committee will also be looking for a handyperson who will be available to make repairs to association property. If you are interested in assisting with maintenance issues, please contact the Maintenance Committee at maintenance@hamlet-southbridge.com.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

As we prepare for the 2005 budget year, our homeowners' association is in good financial condition. There are about ten properties with outstanding dues owed to the association. The

Board has filed liens on those properties and will be able to collect the outstanding dues at the time of property sale or foreclosure by the Board as allowed by the association documents. We also have a preliminary 2005 SCA assessment amount and we are happy to announce that there will be no dues increase for 2005.

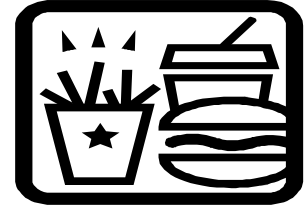
AROUND THE COMMUNITY

The Southbridge commercial area continues to attract new businesses. The most recent additions include White Castle, Showtime Video, Chili's, Pier I and an addition to the Wal-Mart for the Supercenter upgrade. Other new businesses around town include Dean Lakes (medical office building, Holiday Station Store and Goodyear Tire & Auto), Meineke Muffler, Floors To Go and Rainbow Foods.

The time period between Christmas and New Years is when more people die in home fires. Check to make sure your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are working properly.

I hope you have a safe and happy holiday season.

Tom Pitschneider



WHITE CASTLE WILL SOON BE MOVING IN.

CHECK OUT SOME OF THE OTHER SOUTHBRIDGE VILLAGE WEBSITES:

CLASSIC (CENTEX) - WWW.SOUTHBRIDGECLASSIC.COM

SAVANNA OAKS (DR HORTON) - WWW.SAVANNAOAKS.COM



BIDS ARE WANTED FOR OUR VARIOUS MAINTENANCE NEEDS.

Connect with your Neighbors through the Services Offered Directory



CONNECT WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS AND THE SERVICES THEY OFFER!

Do you wish you had a friend who finishes basements? Or a cousin who is a mechanic? How often do you wish you knew more teenagers who are available to baby-sit, mow the lawn, shovel the sidewalk, or walk your dog? We can connect you with people who are experts at a variety of services right here in our own neighborhood.

The Services Offered Directory is available on the Hamlet at Southbridge web site, and will be distributed in future issues of the newsletter. If you own a business or have a special skill (pet sitting, tutoring, music lessons, etc.) that you would like your neighbors to know about, this is your chance to spread the word. Parents, be sure to let your children know about

this opportunity to advertise their services to neighbors and increase their chances of making a little extra money.

If you are interested in a directory listing, please send the following information to communications@hamlet-southbridge.com:

- ◆ Your name
- ◆ Business name (if applicable)
- ◆ Contact information (address, phone, e-mail)
- ◆ Type of business/service offered
- ◆ Description of business/service offered (75-words or less)
- ◆ Fees (if applicable)

“THE SERVICES OFFERED DIRECTORY IS AVAILABLE ONLINE.”



HELP COULD BE JUST NEXT DOOR.

Babysitters

Example

Parent(s) Names

Phone

Our daughter has been babysitting for three years. She is available weeknights until 9pm and weekends until midnight.

Fee: \$5/hour for one child

Realtors

Dan Hennen

Email: danhennen@mn.rr.com

Phone: (612) 910-4445

Fax: (952) 403-0593

Dan has been a Realtor with Coldwell Banker Burnet for 10 years, and has lived in Southbridge for 4 years. He is also the sponsor of our Annual Southbridge Garage Sales. Whether you are thinking of Buying or Selling, please call your Neighborhood Realtor.

Check out the New Website

We have updated the association website at www.hamlet-southbridge.com! Some new features on the website include an online version of our *Hamlet Herald*, as well as the Services Offered Directory. Board meeting minutes are still available, as well as up-to-date budget information and Board and Committee information.

While at the website, please take a few minutes to submit your answers to the

communications survey regarding the existence and effectiveness of communications from the Hamlet at Southbridge Neighborhood Association. Your feedback is very important in helping the association understand what type of information and resources you find most convenient and valuable.

We will be updating the site with current news and events frequently, so please stop by and see what is new.



WE HAVE A NEW LOOK TO OUR WEBSITE.

Minimal Commitment for a Lasting Reward

Are you concerned with the appearance of the open spaces and parkland areas within our neighborhood? Have you noticed improvements, but want to do more? Do you wonder who is in charge of talking with neighbors about trailers and boats parked in their driveways? Do you have opinions on the rules and guidelines of the Hamlet at Southbridge Homeowners Association? Do you want to have more involvement on how your association dues are spent?

If you answered "Yes!" to any of these questions, then you would make a wonderful addition to any of our association's committees. Our committee

members strongly encourage anyone to join. We have openings in all four committees: Maintenance, Architectural, Rules, and Communications.

We need members to keep these committees running, otherwise the plans for our neighborhood cannot move forward. Being a member of a committee requires a minimal time commitment but the reward for your effort is lasting in the betterment of your neighborhood. Please send your name, address, phone number, and the committee or committees you would like to be a part of to board@hamlet-southbridge.com. Everyone is welcome!

"WE NEED

MEMBERS TO KEEP

THESE COMMITTEES

RUNNING..."

Christmas Tree Pickup Reminder

A brief reminder from Dick's Sanitation, residential collection for Christmas trees will be during the weeks of January 3rd-January 14th. Please remove all plastic bags, tinsel and ornaments before taking your tree out to the curb.

Because the remaining observed holi-

days this December and January fall on the weekends, there will be no interruptions of service, or deviations from our Wednesday garbage pickup day.

Dick's Sanitation now has an updated website, visit www.dickssanitation.com.



CHRISTMAS TREE PICKUP WEEKS ARE JANUARY 3RD AND JANUARY 14TH.

Who's Spying on my Computer?



BANKING, EMAIL, SHARING
PICTURES... WHAT
WONDERFUL TECHNOLOGY!

Isn't technology wonderful? You connect to your bank web site and transfer money from one account to another. You "chat" with a friend who lives in another state. You send yesterday's

digital pictures to your parents. What a world!

As terrific as it is to have this technol-

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Quick Dinner Recipe

Cranberry Roast Chicken and Sweet Potatoes

(4 Servings)

1 pound sweet potatoes, thinly sliced
4 bone-in chicken breast halves (about 2 ¼ pounds)
1 16-ounce can Ocean Spray Whole Berry or Jellied Cranberry Sauce
¼ cup olive or vegetable oil
½ teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 375°.

Place potatoes evenly in a 13 x 9-inch baking pan. Place chicken on top. Whisk remaining ingredients together in a medium mixing bowl. Pour mixture evenly over chicken and potatoes.

Bake uncovered for 50 minutes or until chicken is cooked throughout and potatoes are tender.

“GET OUT AND

ENJOY ALL THAT

MINNESOTA HAS TO

OFFER!”

Important: Moving or Just Moved?

Notice to anyone who is moving out of the neighborhood, or who has recently moved into the neighborhood. Please visit our association website at www.hamlet-southbridge.com and send an update to the treasurer

through the Resident Information link. It is important that the treasurer have your updated information for association mailings.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

What to Do During this Winter Season

Winter and hibernation typically go hand-in-hand. But wait! You do not have to seclude yourselves in your house watching television and movies all winter long. Get out and enjoy all that Minnesota has to offer! Read on to learn about fun things to do during

the cold weather that Mother Nature so generously bestows upon us this time of year.

♦ [Santa and Albert the Elf in “Santa’s New Elf”](#) – Bachman’s on Lyn-

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WINTER IS A GREAT TIME OF
YEAR.

What to Do During this Winter Season

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dale - 11/20/04 through 12/19/04 - FREE Saturdays and Sundays, 11:00 - 12:30 - 2:00 - 3:30 Bring your camera for pictures with Santa after the show! Visit www.bachmans.com for more information.

THE FOLLOWING IDEAS ARE FROM THE CITY KIDS' POCKET GUIDE OF THINGS TO DO:

◆ Marshall Field's Annual Animated Holiday Display - 11/6/04 through 12/31/04 - FREE Snow White the Fairest Tale of All - Minneapolis, 8th Floor Auditorium, during store hours.

◆ Amahl and the Night Visitors - Orchestra Hall - 12/5/04 - Adults \$19-\$36, Kids \$12-\$24 2pm and 4pm on December 5th at Orchestra Hall. "On their way to Bethlehem, the Three Wise Men find another mother and child in great need. In this brief, wondrous children's opera by Gian Carlo Menotti, mother and child receive the miracles they need most: hope, love, faith and forgiveness." Call 612-371-5656 or 1-800-292-4141 for ticket information.

◆ A Year with Frog and Toad - The Children's Theatre Company - 11/16/04 through 12/31/04 - Enjoyed by All Ages. "They're back! Take a couple of dapper amphibians, add a trio of Andrews Sisters-type birds, a wild-west Pony Express snail and you've got a show that's jazzy and snappy and downright witty." 2400 Third Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 612-874-0400. www.childrenstheatre.org

◆ The Monkey King - The Children's Theatre Company - 3/1/05 through 4/16-05 - Ages 6+ "What do you get when you cross an ancient epic

story with a totally hip chimp that makes Curious George look like a chump? This play. Meet Sun Wu Kong, the Monkey King. With the powers of a superhero and the spirit of a seven-year old he's been the most beloved hero in Chinese culture for centuries." 2400 Third Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 612-874-0400.

www.childrenstheatre.org

◆ The Minneapolis Institute of Arts - Ford Free Sundays! Every Sunday 11am to 5pm Free general admission, Free Art Cart activities, Free audio guide use, Free Family Center activities, Free Treasure Hunts and Free public tours. 2400 Third Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 612-870-3131.

www.artsmia.org

◆ Meet the Presidents of the United States - Minnesota History Center - FREE Sunday, December 12, 1 to 4pm - Hear adventure stories told by Theodore Roosevelt. See favorite White House toys and make your own paper teddy bear. 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul 651-296-6126 or 1-800-657-3773

◆ Foss Swim School - FREE Fun Swim Meet, 1-2 hours of family time on us - Ages 3-12 Backfloat Baby® Infant program. 3 years old to adult lessons. Enthusiastic and well-trained adult instructors. Small class ratios in a fun, warm (90+ degrees!) instruction pool. Fantastic birthday parties! Fun focused swim meets. Three metro locations with Savage, Lakeville and Blaine schools opening in early 2005. Now registering! 952-278-SWIM www.FossSwimSchool.com

THE FOLLOWING IDEAS ARE FROM THE EXPLORE MINNESOTA WEBSITE AT WWW.EXPLOREMINNESOTA.COM:

◆ Holiday in Lights - Minnest Har-

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SWIM INDOORS WHEN IT'S TOO COLD OUTSIDE.

“GET OUT AND ENJOY ALL THAT MINNESOTA HAS TO OFFER!”



EVENING NEIGHBORHOOD DRIVES LOOKING AT LIGHT DISPLAYS IS ALWAYS FUN.

What to Do During this Winter Season

(Continued from page 9)



WHO IS UP FOR A POLAR ADVENTURE?

“THE NEW YEAR
WILL BE HERE
SOON. PLAN
SOMETHING FUN
FOR THE WHOLE
FAMILY.”



ENJOY WINTERTIME OUTSIDE
AT OUR LOCAL SKI/SNOW
TUBE HILLS.

vest (Sponsel's) Apple Orchard - 11/19/04 through 3/13/05 Jordan, Minnesota.

◆ Santa Sights at Camp Snoopy in the Mall of America - 11/20/04 through 12/24/04 Bloomington, Minnesota. Hours vary. Please call 952-853-9804 for specific dates and times.”

◆ Folkways of the Holidays - Three Rivers Park District - 11/26/04 through 1/2/05 Shakopee, Minnesota - Historic Murphy's Landing. “Enjoy the magic of a 19th century holiday celebration at Historic Murphy's Landing's award-winning 'Folkways of the Holidays,' weekends November 26th - January 2nd, 2005. Horse-drawn trolleys carry visitors along snowy lanes while candles beckon from frosty windowpanes. Each weekend, visitors can tour 11 different ethnic homes and enjoy tasty food samples and lively folk-artist performances that bring to light the festive season.”

◆ Polar Adventure at the Minnesota Zoo - 12/4/04 Apple Valley, Minnesota. “Enjoy some holiday magic at the MN Zoo. Our 'Polar Adventure' event will include holiday music, photos with Santa, crafts/animal enrichment activities for kids, and shopping for that special gift in the Go Wild Gift Shop. New this year will be the 'Polar Play Area' for kids.”

◆ Old Fashioned Holiday at Holz Farm, Eagan CVB - 12/5/04 Eagan, Minnesota. “Spend an Old-fashioned holiday 1940's style back on the farm with carols, crafts and hot cocoa.”

◆ New Year's Eve Celebration - Three Rivers Park District - 12/31/04 Prior Lake, Minnesota. “Celebrate a family-friendly new year with horse-

drawn hayrides, a bonfire, storytelling, music, crafts, and cross-country skiing. The ball drops at 10pm. Event is on snow or no snow. Event is free. Hayrides are \$3/person or \$10/family.

◆ Happy New Year, Charlie Brown! New Year's Eve 2005 - Mall of America - 12/31/04 Bloomington, Minnesota. “Help Charlie Brown and the rest of the PEANUTS Gang bring in the New Year at Camp Snoopy's Family New Year's Eve Celebration! The fun begins December 31st at 6pm and goes until midnight.”

◆ Buck Hill's Annual New Year's Eve Bash - 12/31/04 Burnsville, Minnesota. “Music, food and drink specials, fireworks, torchlight parade, skiing, snowtubing and snowboarding.”

◆ Candlelight & Ice - Wood Lake Nature Center - 12/31/04 Richfield, Minnesota. “Celebrate the New Year with family and friends at Wood Lake Nature Center. Follow hundreds of candles along trails that wind their way through the cattail islands and forests of Wood Lake. After the walk, come back to the building to warm up near a toasty fire. Enjoy roasted marshmallows and hot cocoa.”

◆ Animals, Books and Children Weekend - Minnesota Zoo - 1/15/05 through 1/17/05 Apple Valley, Minnesota. “Children's activities for this event will focus on animal stories and costume characters. Families will have the opportunity to make their own pop-up books.”

◆ Ice Harvesting Festival - Three Rivers Park District - 1/22/05 Bloomington, Minnesota. “During this exciting family event, learn how hardy ice harvesters sawed massive ice blocks out

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What to Do During this Winter Season

(Continued from page 10)

of frozen lakes and ponds to keep food chilled prior to the advent of mechanical refrigeration. Participants also can enjoy viewing fish from a dark house, and many other fun activities.”

THE FOLLOWING FUN THINGS TO DO CAN BE DONE RIGHT AT HOME! (Found on the Prairie and Northern Region Green Lane of Canada website, www.pnr-rpn.ec.gc.ca.)

◆ Crystal Balls

What you need: Bubble Solution (or one part Joy/Dawn dishwashing liquid to 10 parts water), glycerin and sugar. Bubble blowers, wire shaped into a circle, or try a straw with 4-1cm slits at the end.

What to do: On a cold day with light wind, form a bubble, but do not let it escape. As the bubble freezes, watch the formation of ice crystals. If you leave it long enough, it will form a crystal ball.

◆ Take a Good, Close Look at Snowflakes

What you need: Black paper or fabric (place in freezer). Magnifying glass.

What to do: Take the black paper or fabric out of the freezer and outside when it's snowing. Let some snowflakes land on the paper and quickly use the magnifying glass to see the beautiful shapes.

◆ Snowflakes on Glass

What you need: A piece of glass and hairspray (aerosol, not pump).

What to do: Freeze the glass and the hairspray and wait for the snow to fall. Spray the frozen glass with the frozen hairspray and let some snowflakes set

tle on the glass. Bring the glass inside to thaw for 15 minutes and you will have a permanent record of your snowflakes.

◆ Snow Globe

What you need: An empty jar with lid. Epoxy glue or silicone seal. Small plastic animals, trees, scenery items, etc. Glitter. Water and glycerin.

What to do: Glue animals, trees, scenery items, etc. with epoxy or silicone seal to the lid of the jar in a pleasing arrangement. Let dry completely, probably overnight. Fill the jar (not quite full) with water and a little glycerin (will work without glycerin – glycerin makes the snow fall a little slower) and add a tablespoon or so of glitter. Gently try to put the lid on, first adjusting the amount of water in the jar – keep as full as possible. The lid must then be glued on with epoxy glue or silicone seal. Leave to cure for several hours, then shake and enjoy!

◆ Snow Slush Dessert

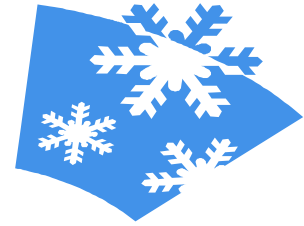
What you need: Fresh, clean snow. Frozen juice concentrate (thawed, but cold). Cold glasses or bowls.

What to do: Scoop the snow into a glass or a bowl, drizzle a few spoonfuls of concentrate on the snow and enjoy.

◆ See How Much Water is in the Snow

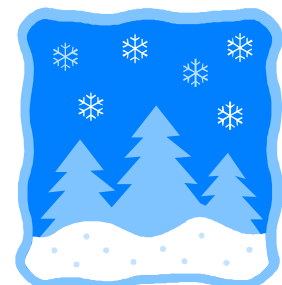
What you need: A container, preferably clear plastic. Ruler. Snow.

What to do: Gently fill the container with fresh snow, then bring it inside and let it melt. Measure how much water is in the container. You can try this several times over the winter, using different kinds of snow (light fine snow and big fluffy snow) to see if there is any difference in the amount of water.



LOOK MORE CLOSELY AT SNOW.

“AMAZING WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT AT HOME!”



MAKE YOUR OWN SNOW GLOBE.

Who's Spying on my Computer?

(Continued from page 8)

ogy, there is a definite downside to our ability to do so much via the internet. This downside often comes in the form of **spyware**. According to recent publications, 9 out of 10 computers connected to the Internet are infected with spyware.

WHAT EXACTLY IS SPYWARE? Spyware, also known as *adware*, *malware*, *trackware*, *scumware*, *thiefware*, *snoopware*, and *sneakware*, is the name for any program that may track your online and/or offline PC activity. *Online activity* often includes information on what web sites you visit. *Offline activity* could include your personal computer files, passwords, and any other information you save on your computer. Spyware programs are dangerous because they not only gather your information, but can send it to other computers without your knowledge or consent.

HOW DOES IT GET ON MY COMPUTER? Spyware is quite easily transmitted, often through normal Internet activities. Visit most websites and you're bound to get a tracking *cookie*. A cookie is a short line of text that a web site puts on your computer's hard drive when you access the web site. Cookies are meant to be helpful by enabling frequently-visited web pages to load faster, but if a cookie contains spyware, your computer will become susceptible.

Another way to get spyware is through installing a file on your computer from an internet web site. Read the fine print before you install software from a web-site; you often are getting more than you bargain for. Spyware often comes with the file, and the fine print in the installation

box tells you so. Be careful!

WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS OF SPYWARE? A few spyware symptoms are:

- Sluggish PC performance
- An increase in the number of pop-up ads
- An unexplained *home page* change (the home page is the first web page you see when you have connected to the internet)
- Mysterious search results
- Unusually slow Internet access
- New or different search toolbars
- Unidentified toll charges on your phone bill

If you find that one or more of the above applies to you, you may have spyware on your computer.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I THINK I HAVE SPYWARE? The first step is to get the spyware removed. You can hire a professional to do this, or try to do it yourself. If you choose to do it yourself, there are many spyware removal tools offered on the Internet. Many of these applications are available to the public for free, while some request a small donation from those who use their tool.

Two of the more popular, effective and free programs are **Spybot Search and Destroy** (<http://www.safer-networking.org>) and **Adaware SE** (<http://www.lavasoftusa.com>). These products have been proven winners in the spyware removal business. Each program offers simple removal instructions for even the most novice of users. Keep in mind that free web sites are effective in removing many, but not all of the spyware files and

can't always remedy problems associated with them.

If you use a spyware removal program, it is a **MUST** to keep current with your updates and run these programs on a regular basis. A good rule of thumb is to run your spyware program once a week. Be sure to follow the software's update process to keep current with the most recent version of the spyware-removal software.

If your computer continues to have performance issues even after you have removed the spyware, then perhaps it might be time to call in a professional. Computer professional often have the knowledge and tools to completely remove and protect your computer from the ever-increasing, ever-changing spyware programs of today.

So whether you're sending an email to your aunt in Kentucky or reading the latest news on a website, be aware that any connection on the internet makes you a target for spyware. Spyware removal is a must in order to keep your private information safe from spyware predators.

Thank you Pat Ames for submitting this article.

Pat Ames is a network administrator, Cisco instructor, and runs The Computer Guy computer service & repair. He can be reached at tcguy@mn.rr.com or 952-240-7451.

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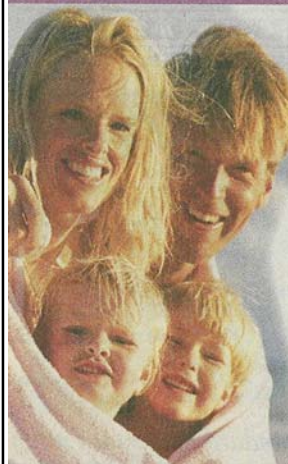
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