

THE VILLAGE VOICE

A Newsletter From Your Village Administrator: Douglas Hockman

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THOUGHTS: I find it hard to believe that April is upon us. It is time for all our Spring Celebrations! For many of us, the Easter Celebrations or Passover will bring our families “back home” at the beginning of the month. The daffodils are blooming and trees and shrubs are budding out... Don’t forget that April 19th is the Holocaust Remembrance Day, a good day to educate our children concerning that period of history.

During this month or whenever family visits, please take the time to show them our beautiful Village and especially our Howell Park. I hope you share in the pride of a park that provides a beautiful setting with well maintained facilities. In fact, it is my desire to have the restrooms open and operating within the next two to three weeks if the weather holds and there is no further threat of freezing pipes. (It is still the end of March!)

Speaking of well maintained, a special thank you and shout out to Steve Huber who helped repair and restore the benches in Howell Park. Most of the benches were bent or twisted out of shape. We pulled the benches out of the ground, built new frames and supports, and then replaced the seats and backs. The Village workers painted the benches bright red! What a beautiful contrast to the green horseshoe pits and the green on the shelter house.

As you meander around the walking path, be on the lookout for new birdhouses! The scout troop in Bremen hung a number of these residential facilities for our feathered friends. Thank you so much for adding to the sightseeing of our park. Bring your binoculars!

The April “VISIT WITH THE VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR” will be on the second Thursday, April 12th, from 9:00 am – 10:30 am at the Bremen Bulk Foods and Mercantile on West Main Street. Have YOU had your free cup of coffee? I always enjoy our conversations concerning issues in and around Bremen.

Since this is TAX MONTH... remember we are a part of R.I.T.A. the Regional Income Tax Agency. Information is online www.ritaohio.com or call 1-866-252-0913 with questions. Customer Service can be reached at 1-800-860-7482. If you have any questions, please call these numbers or give this information to your tax preparation person.

WHEN YOU SEE THE AMBER FLASHING LIGHTS of the Village Services vehicles, please use caution. Those lights or the signage in the street tell you that our workers are near by whether you see them or not. Proceed slowly with caution. I ask that you obey the directions given. Any fine from the sheriff just isn’t worth it... Slow down... Please.

WHEN YOU HEAR THE SIREN... That means there might be a tornado, hazardous materials spill, or train wreck; unless it is 12:00 noon on Wednesday. An ATTENTION or ALERT Warning Signal is a three minute steady signal from the sirens, horns or other devices followed by seven (7) minutes of silence then the siren repeated as needed in this sequence. In addition to any other meaning or "requirement for action" determined by local government officials, the ATTENTION or ALERT signal indicates "TURN ON YOUR LOCAL TELEVISION OR RADIO AND LISTEN FOR ESSENTIAL EMERGENCY INFORMATION"

When the emergency is over... a one (1) minute signal means "ALL CLEAR". AGAIN, a test procedure is conducted in Bremen every Wednesday at NOON, the ALERT WARNING signal sounds for one (1) minute or less. With storm season upon us, pay attention when you hear the siren go off. Prepare now to establish a routine of safety for when the siren sounds.

CAT STUFF --- I have been working with Jackie Hardman of 2nd Chance Companions. I shared with her some of the concerns residents have about feral and wild cats. We have agreed to re-emphasize this work in the Village by creating a KAT KOMMITTEE. This group will put together a program of "TRAP, NEUTER, AND RELEASE" (back in the same area) for cats. We know there are colonies of cats in about 5 or 6 areas of Bremen. We will target those areas first.

We are looking at 1. Behind the Firehouse; 2. School Street and Spring Street area; 3. Mill Street and Mulberry area; 4. Oak Street and Collins area; 5. Oak Street and Highland Blvd area. There may be other areas to explore. As we organize the Kat Kommittee, the input of home owners are encouraged as well as participation in the capture and release. We will train you. If you are a homeowner and wish to be a part of this important work in the Village, please call Jackie Hardman at 569-4548.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO HOMEOWNERS WITH PET CATS.... If you have a pet cat and do not wish for it to be caught and sterilized (males and females) then it is your responsibility to maintain the whereabouts and roaming of your cat. Do not allow your cat to roam the neighborhood if it is a pet. When the cats are sterilized, the right ear will be tipped.

2nd Chance Companions operates on the good fortune of receiving grants as well as the donations of companies and private citizens. If you wish to make a donation to help the cause then please call Jackie Hardman at 569-4548. Your help is appreciated.

RECYCLING WILL BE APRIL 2ND AND 16TH . Please note there are 5 Mondays. We only recycle on the first and third.

TRASH PICK UP WILL BE APRIL 5TH, 12TH, 19TH, AND 26TH. Please remember to put your recycling and trash out the night before pick up. Big "O" starts early in the morning!!!

ATTENTION TEENAGERS AND ADULTS: lifeguards needed. If you train and become certified this Spring and are hired by the Bremen Pool, we will reimburse your fees at the rate of \$10.00 per week until you are paid back (2 summer commitment). Contact the "Y" in Lancaster for upcoming classes and training.

OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION was received yesterday, March 28th, informing the Village of Bremen that our request for financial assistance in the form of a grant has been approved for the project entitled **FORT STREET IMPROVEMENTS** in the amount of \$164,211.00. The whole grant request was for \$225,000.00. The grant request was structured with the Village offering \$60,789.00 as “in-kind labor”. In the grant, we asked for help to replace the curbs and gutters on the remaining area of Fort Street while the Village would supply the labor to reposition the brick streets along the new curb/gutter.

This is a huge move forward with repairing our infrastructure in the Village. There are other grant requests in the pipeline. I also recently received the go-ahead to write the application for an historical grant through ODOT to revitalize the infrastructure of sidewalks, curbs, and street on West Main St. The process began with my writing a proposal for the project. This go-ahead was their response to my proposal. Let’s keep our fingers crossed and wish for the good fortune of this grant also. It was submitted for a project cost of \$250,000.00. Being an ODOT grant, they will pay 80% of the project.

A third major project I am working on is the repair and revitalization of our Waste Water Treatment Plant. I am projecting this request to be in the \$250,000 - \$300,000 range. We are soon needing to replace the pumps at the WWTP as well other repairs including the upgrade of our lab facility, and painting the exterior of the physical plant.

A fourth major project is the Village in cooperation with the **BESAFFE Committee of Bremen Elementary and ODOT**. This is part of the “Safe Routes To School” campaign. The initial request (already approved) is for an ODOT representative to come to Bremen and meet with us. We will do a study to determine what the Village and School need to do to make the routes to school safer and provide educational programming to the children of the Village about walking to and from school. The Grant possibilities offer up \$100,000 for educational programs and up to \$500,000 for Village infrastructure; sidewalks, curbs/gutters, intersections, signage, provide adult supervision in strategic areas, and many other possibilities. We are in the early stages of this process which could span a number of years.

I am always looking for smaller grant opportunities for other items such as a new **WALKING TRACK** at Howell Park, the expansion of **PARK LANDS**, stuff for our **SWIMMING POOL**, equipment for **OUR CHILDREN’S PLAY AREA** at the park, and anything else that I feel will enhance the quality of life for all who live in the wonderful Village of Bremen!

IF YOU BELONG TO AN ORGANIZATION OR COMPANY WHERE YOU WORK THAT HAS CHARITABLE MONIES OR A FOUNDATION and the Village would qualify for the possibility of a gift please call me, come see me, or email me. It is important that we are all involved in the continued care of our Village parks, streets, water supply, waste water treatment, Schools, OR anything that has to do with living in our Village. Sometimes our employers will match contributions given toward a project or will make a donation on behalf of their employees who live in certain areas.

Many times we never know.... Unless we ask. Thank you for your help in helping Bremen!!!

I WANT TO REPORT A HUGE SUCCESS AND SAY THANK YOU... to all who purchase water from the Village of Bremen. One of the situations last summer was our need to mail out delinquent notices to those behind in their water bills. I was mailing out between 70 – 90 notices each month. After we passed our new Ordinance in August which gave better detail as to handling water bills, we saw the beginning of a continued decrease in the number of delinquencies. I am happy to report, in January 36 letters were sent; February 26 letters were sent; and March was 22 letters.

I know in this economy, it took some concerted effort for these families to catch up and become current. I just want to say a hearty THANK YOU to those who have made the effort!

GARDEN PLOTS ARE AVAILABLE... The empty lot on Ford Street has been marked for individual plots for those who need space and want to have a small garden. The BSAFFE committee of Bremen Elementary is offering this opportunity. If you are interested in acquiring a plot for vegetables please contact Rose Ann Elliott at 740-438-3596 and leave a message with your name and phone number. Plots will be given out on a “first come – first served” basis. Those participants who are chosen, would contract to care for their plots, including planting, weeding, watering and harvesting; as well as to contribute to the overall care of the community site. Happy Planting!!! Nothing is as good as fresh vegetables!!!

A BIG THANK YOU to David Kessler who was our guest speaker at the March Block Watch Meeting. His presentation was extremely informative. Next Block Watch Meeting is April 18th at 7:30 pm at the Firehouse. All Village residents are cordially invited!

MOSQUITO SEASON... I have already talked to our community sprayer about the upcoming mosquito season. YOU CAN HELP! Please look around your property for old tires and other containers that can hold water as breeding places for mosquitoes. Especially along the alleys, I have see numerous tires, rims, old buckets, plastic sheeting, and much more that can hold water from rains and will become a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

RENTING THE SHELTER HOUSE... On Saturdays and Sundays, we are trying to set up a lunch schedule from 11 – 4 and a dinner schedule from 4:30 – 8 for those wishing to reserve the shelter house. When you call in and ask for a reservation, you will be asked if you want a lunch period or dinner period.

LET’S GO OUT TO THE BALL GAME... Take advantage of watching the area youth playing baseball on the Westerman Fields at Howell Park in the evenings and on the weekends.

I have seen a number of families out flying kites and picnicking. When in our park, please be courteous to those around you; please follow the age limits on the playground equipment; take your turn and be patient; and remember you are UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYES OF OUR CAMERAS IN THE PARK AND AROUND THE VILLAGE PROPERTY!

I wish for you always... happy and sunny days! I am always available to you if you need to talk and share your thoughts about the Village.

Douglas Hockman, Village Administrator