

#### Spotlight on Crestwood

#### Every Church Needs Two Johns

I've been warned about two things to avoid if you want any spare time: Don't accept an office on the board of your Home Owners Association, and don't head up the Property Committee at your church. John Royse and John Gretz are either gluttons for punishment or have short memories. But, more importantly, they are valued people.

The two men have just accepted the co-chair position of Crestwood's Property Committee. It is their second time sharing this leadership role as well as serving for many years as worker bees around the church. I really shouldn't mention the number of hours they donate to Crestwood for fear of scaring off other badly needed volunteers.



I knew it would be a fun visit with them when they introduced themselves as 'the two Johns.' "Every church needs two Johns," they added with a grin. They jokingly declare that John Royse is the inside John and John Gretz is the outside John. Truth is, they work everywhere and are responsible for much more than restrooms.

John and John first began working together on the property ministry team back in 2002 and continued that for fourteen or fifteen years. They agreed to pick up the mantle of leadership again this year even as their own years have advanced. They aren't supposed to climb ladders anymore, but it's clear they don't fully adhere to those aging guidelines. They live near the church, know the facility like the backs of their hands, and spend a large amount of time there.

If I've learned anything doing these Spotlight articles, it has been understanding how large, complex, and expensive our physical structure is today. Crestwood has completely changed inside and out since I was an active member years ago. The facility has nearly doubled in size, and the landscape has changed dramatically from the field that used to surround the buildings. The grounds are beautiful and well-developed; the inside is complicated and extensive. I wanted to learn more. I knew that Jim Cristi, our facilities manager, could not be caring for it all alone.

Like the kitchen I highlighted in the last column, it looks like much of the work done around the church, especially the grounds, is kept running in an informal way with kind, generous members filling in as they can. The formal nature of the property committee has somewhat fallen by the wayside, but about eight or so members, now led by the two Johns, show up or stay in touch with Jim about the physical needs around Crestwood.

Their task is not small as Crestwood is an aging facility, with the Mission Center hitting the twenty-year mark. The sanctuary is fifty years old. The Child Care Center (Hopper Hall) is even older. We have about thirty-three heating and air-conditioning units, many of which are feeling their age, as is the roof on all the buildings. The committee works with our facilities manager about troubling issues as they arise. Think of your own home's breaks and leaks and multiply it many times for a place this large.

Things become even more complicated as Crestwood changes over to energy-efficient and environmentally responsible systems as things need replacing. We are moving to heat pumps in an effort to become all electric. There will be no more florescent lights – all

replacements are LED. The childcare center has already transitioned to all LED. I notice the lights in the restrooms automatically turn on and off as one enters the room, saving electricity. I need to see if that is true in other areas- I haven't paid attention. It is too easy to take such advances for granted.

The Property Committee is also responsible for the Child Care Center, although the Center is increasingly becoming more self-supporting. The church, however, is paying to replace the roof there.

When I met with the Johns, they were discussing with Jim about the possibility of adding a tint to some windows to cut down the bright sunshine that causes the electric bills to go up. They also discussed together what the correct thermostat settings should be in the week. I never realized such decisions were so complicated or important.

We spend an astounding \$80,000 a year for utilities, not counting the phones, so the finances of our energy use are important. The thermostats can be adjusted during the week to save money, but it's not as simple as that. They have to consider how long it takes the buildings to re-cool or reheat by Sunday, and what day that adjustment should start. Each section of the church has different needs and different uses during the week that have to be considered. Hearing about some of the details sure makes me think of things in a different light. Have you ever had a "conversation" at home about the temperature of varying individuals? Churches are no different, I'll bet.

The property committee admits that the outside growth of plantings is hard to keep up with these days. Nature presents a whole new set of issues on top of the physical challenges inside. In our next edition of Spotlight, I will shine the light on the outside property and especially on the Lafferty garden and gazebo which were new to me.

But first I want to explain the attached picture of John Royse (left, pointing) and John Gretz (right). We have an unusual grove of fourteen ash trees on our church campus which is a rarity, as most ash trees in the area were killed off by the Emerald Ash Borer. The borers have killed tens of millions of ash trees in thirty states in the last few decades. The two Johns have nursed, cared for, and treated our prized trees, losing only one ash. The picture connected to this article shows them standing in front of one of those special trees. We thank them for the many services they have given us over the decades.

Next time as we discuss the grounds and gardens, we'll recount John Royse's most memorable incident as he worked on the property. We owe him a lot for his efforts and try not to laugh at his pain.

.....

If there is some area of the church you would like to know more about, please share your ideas with me. Let's explore together.

Gaye Holman: [gdholman@bellsouth.net](mailto:gdholman@bellsouth.net).

