

Spotlight on Crestwood Blooming of the Garden Committee

I have found many fascinating stories about Crestwood's property. But none were as funny or better told than John Gretz's tale of John Royse's terrible day (These are the two Johns of the last Spotlight story). Of course, it wasn't too funny for John R. Apologies to him for bringing back the memories.

Some years ago, Crestwood used to host work days when members gathered to repair, clean, and straighten the church inside and out. "It was actually quite fun," John G. remembered nostalgically. One of those weekends, a group was working outside in the areas around the North entrance and the Mission Center. John Royse was down in the deep retention basin, cutting the overgrown weeds.



Suddenly, a loud scream was heard and John flew up the steep hill and across the parking lot, yelling. He was surrounded by a swarm of very angry yellow jackets. "It was just like the cartoon of a bear being chased by bees," his friend recounted. They were under his shirt, all over his head and trailing behind him in pursuit. The infuriated stinging insects followed him until he was far enough away from their nest to be of no more danger. John was covered with stings - I believe he said seventeen! Keep in mind a yellow jacket sting is a bee sting multiplied many times in pain. What people endure for their church!

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Crestwood has a history of congregational involvement, albeit less painful, in keeping the property neat and attractive. My sons remember their excitement over 40 years ago when it was their dad's turn to mow the big field around the church long before the mission center was built. They got to ride along with him on the mower—something that would surely send insurance agents into tail spins today. More and more I learn how much the congregational members have long actively worked in, and supported, the church's facilities.

The Property Committee was spotlighted in the last article. This week it is the turn of a subsection of Property - the Garden Committee, headed by Ward Ransdell. Ward, his wife Linda, Annetta Carter and Karen Blakeman are among the ones we mostly have to thank for the current improvements we are noticing on the grounds. Other dedicated gardeners have gone before but have turned the task over to younger folks now. Today, the grass cutting, mulching, and some hedge trimmings are contracted by Lawn Cats, but the garden committee stays continually busy with weeding, trimming, and planning for the future. If anyone has an itch to weed and get their hands dirty, I am sure Ward and his small bunch would welcome more help.

Looking into the future, Ward says they have a vision to get more color and flowers into the landscape so that eyes are drawn up the rise to our beautiful church structure. To that end, he and Linda planted 120 bulbs around the church sign last spring. They hope to do the same each holiday when members donate bulb plants to decorate the sanctuary but don't pick up their gifts afterwards. Ward predicts we should notice the changing landscape within the next five years or so.

As with our gardens at home, it takes constant work to keep things under control. To actually develop and change landscaping requires much more work. To complicate things, the gardening and live growth came into discussion recently as the church considered new

security issues. Meetings were held with the police, fire department, EMS, and Risk Management systems as they evaluated our campus security issues. Even the landscaping was considered.

It was discovered that the current foliage was interfering with security cameras, views of entrances, etc. So, working with those groups, the garden and property committees are rethinking other aspects of landscaping, and have already removed intrusive limbs from the north parking lot. Being a tree lover, I often get nervous at the mention of removal of branches, etc., but I am convinced Crestwood is in the capable hands of Ward who has a deep appreciation for growing, living things. He is a quite skilled nature photographer. He and his group of hard workers are responsible for all the outside gardens, including the high-maintenance garden and gazebo behind the sanctuary. But I won't talk about that area today. I found that the Lafferty Garden has its own complicated, touching, and fascinating story. The spotlight will land there next time before leaving Property behind for a while.

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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.

