



Things haven't changed much since Charles Dickens wrote: "It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold." He just didn't say how hard the wind can blow.

By the time you read this, things will be pretty much back to normal at Crestwood after the storm, but getting it back to normal has been interesting, complex, and a little bit funny. I knew we had some damage, but in order to nose around, I thought a Spotlight article might give me an excuse.

The winds began late Friday afternoon and ran into the night. As trees started cracking and lights went out, our Rev. Kory Wilcoxson worried about our church. He got a call from a Boy Scout leader who was in the building at the time that one of our skylights had been damaged. When the storm lessened, Kory called Ward Ransdell, who lives across the street from Crestwood, and asked if he would look around and let him know if things were OK.

I can't resist adding a personal note here. We used to live in the house where the Randells now live, and when we moved in, someone told us never to accept the keys to the church or we'd be busy all the time. Someone failed to pass that warning on to the Ransdells!

Anyway, Ward blew over to the church and found a scout troop inside preparing for their Pinewood Derby the next day as if nothing was happening outside. He also found the skylight near the children's wing had blown off and was elsewhere in pieces on the roof. The area was open to the sky and something had to be done. Calls floated through the evening between a number of people, including Kory, Tye Reece, our Scout liaison, and even Mitchell Smith of our property risk management team, who was in Florida. John Gretz of the property team was also in Florida and promptly returned home.

The hole had to be covered that night, so Tye held the ladder while Ward clamored onto the roof. He had to recover the skylight, which had blown far across the flat roof. He laughed that trying to replace it in 50-mile-an-hour gusts was "rather exhilarating." He got it covered with a tarp and taped down.

Now, I suspect he'd rather this go untold, but I can't help myself. When he finished the task of sealing the hole, he realized he had no way off the roof! So he had to undo his work, come inside and try to pull the broken pieces back in place and attach from the inside, all on that tall ladder with the wind still blowing the cover.

While Ward was up on the roof, he noticed a bright spotlight shining on his house that wasn't supposed to be there. When he had finished with the skylight, he explored and found the light pole in the South parking lot had broken off, but the light was still working, shining the light across the street instead of in the air. That meant the line was hot and dangerous and was in the area where the children and cars come in and out daily. With nothing else to use, he placed the church vans around the pole, wires, and lights, and taped it off so that no one could get near. Without that, cars would roll over hot lines.

There is more, but eventually the storm subsided and our property committee and others descended on the church to view the damage. We did have power but the broken pole took down the phones and internet which were out for days, interfering with the live recording of the Sunday church service and causing difficulties with communications and with the Childcare program. Trees fell across the back of our property, crushing the neighbors' fences. Two trees were on power lines, still live. A tree in the playground broke off.

In the next few days a lot happened, although some of it took a while. Our Facilities Manager, Jim Cristi, took over with phone calls to the utility company and insurance company, and started arrangements to have both skylights replaced and the roof repaired around them where there was damage. The skylight opening was covered more securely. Jim was active in helping with the Childcare Center issues.

By the time the property committee had promptly gathered, John Gretz had written and distributed a letter to the neighbors, reassuring them we would take responsibility for removing the trees and rebuilding their fences. As days went on, the electricity to the fallen lines was finally disconnected. Our lawncare service, Lawncats, removed the downed trees and cleaned the property of natural debris.

Things were especially complicated at the Childcare Center after the storm. Rick Tittman showed up at 5 am on Monday and at 5:45 am for days until the hot lines could be disconnected. He and Ward directed cars, teachers, and parents to new parking places and showed them new ways to enter the center. Mid-week, a cement company showed up to lay concrete for a sidewalk and step at the center, adding to the confusion.

Without phone or internet, the childcare teachers had no way to communicate with parents, so teachers had to make their cell numbers available. A week later, just as tuition billing and payroll payments were due, the power came on and the staff could be paid.

I continue to be amazed at how Crestwood members jump in and help whenever things are needed. Many more were involved than I've mentioned here. I learn more about members' goodness and activities with each Spotlight article. And, without exception, they keep begging me not to mention them and all they've done. I don't always obey, but I do recognize what they are saying. One might have to step up at a particular time and almost get blown off a roof, but, in total, it's a group effort that keeps things chugging along at Crestwood.

I might mention, the Scouts' Pinewood Derby went on without a hitch on Saturday. And Kory successfully defended his dissertation on Monday. Congratulations soon-to-be Dr. Wilcoxson!

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



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