



Mayor Dwight W. Welch

It's all about what's new in a new year. For Country Club Hills it is bravely embracing new ideas to bring new strength to the city at the dawn of a new decade. Perhaps the biggest, and bravest, goal is to see groundbreaking in 2010 for a new outlet mall at 167th Street and Cicero Avenue. In conjunction with this project, the city this summer plans to begin \$1 million of needed infrastructure and road improvements, nearly five times larger than our typical annual budget for road work. This expenditure is made possible by federal stimulus money received by the city. To find out what else is new for the city this year, turn to Page 3 to read "From the Mayor's Office."



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## A CITY WITH OPEN ARMS COUNTRY CLUB HILLS HOSTS PADS FACILITY

There is action in this new year on a decades-long dream of building housing for people who are homeless in the south suburbs, and Country Club Hills is leading the way.

South suburban leaders long have advocated a permanent homeless facility in the region, as the numbers of homeless continued to grow each year at temporary overnight shelters operated by South Suburban PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter) for residents in this region.

Thirteen area communities, including Country Club Hills, long

ago began collecting voluntary \$1 donations from residents on their quarterly water bills, money earmarked for a permanent facility to be built someday in the future. Residents were generous, and in time that fund grew to nearly a half million dollars held in trust by the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association. Then came decision time: Where would this homeless facility be located?



The region suddenly experienced the NIMBY phenomena, "Not in My Back Yard." No community was eager to make the commitment to

have a homeless housing development built within its confines.

That is when Country Club Hills opened its arms to the homeless, and not only agreed to have the housing built in this city but also donated three acres of land for it. Mayor Dwight Welch further nudged the process along by persuading the mayors organization to release the full amount of collected water donation funds to PADS, which has a proven track record of providing emergency housing for people who are homeless. Preliminary work on construction of the 100-apartment shelter is expected to begin this year.

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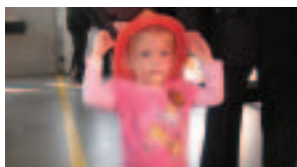
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FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT COUNTRY CLUB HILLS EVENTS AND A CITY COUNCIL CALENDAR, VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT [www.countryclubhills.org](http://www.countryclubhills.org)

## PERRY CAVITT TAKES IT UP A NOTCH ORIGINAL PLAY FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The city's Black History program will be something special this year, as director Perry Cavitt presents his original play "Dare to Dream."

Cavitt wrote the play for the city's annual program presented by the Cultural Arts Commission, set this year for Saturday, Feb. 27. It will feature 35 young actors, all local school students, and another 20 students in support roles. Students interested in auditioning for the play should contact JoAnn Wade at City Hall, (708) 798-2616, Ext. 2232.

*City's annual Black History Program, Saturday, Feb. 27*

"Dare to Dream" is the story of two youngsters researching black history for a school essay assignment, who are magically

visited by a series of great black Americans who achieved prominence in various fields.

"I'm taking it up a notch," said Cavitt, who directed last year's Black History program. "It is a grand scheme," he says with a chuckle, "and I'm putting more of a theatrical touch into the program than we had last year."

Cavitt, who has a bachelor's degree from the Theatre School at DePaul University and has acting and directing credits to his name, has spent a good amount of time working with children's theater groups. "I love working with kids, watching them develop talents they didn't even know they had," Cavitt said. He believes students involved in "Dare to Dream" will get further education on their heritage when they research the roles they will play in the production.

Cavitt and his wife, Kimberly, live in Country Club Hills with their two sons and expect the birth of a daughter in April.



*Perry Cavitt*

## 'SPRING FLING' ALSO HONORS OUR EARTH

The city joins with its Environmental Commission to present "Spring Fling" from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 20 at the Community Recreation Center, 179th Street and Cicero Avenue.

The day is dedicated to celebrating spring's arrival and exploring ways to protect the environment. There will be games, crafts and entertainment all geared to spring, the season of renewal. Activities will be aimed at environmental awareness and demonstrate many ways humans can protect the Earth. A high point of the celebration will be the release of butterflies, and children are encouraged to participate in that event.

A University of Illinois Master Gardener will provide some demonstrations and there will be small workshops on protecting the planet.

This is a free event sponsored by the city and the Environmental Commission.

*Further information on city events is available from JoAnn Wade at (708) 798-2616, Ext. 2232*

### BLOOD DRIVE

Saturday, Jan. 23 is a citywide blood drive sponsored by the Blood Commission and held at City Hall, 8 a.m. to Noon.

### OPEN MIC

7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 23 at Chatham Pancake House, a free event sponsored by the Youth Commission.

### FATHERS & DAUGHTERS

6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 6, a dance for fathers and daughters at the Community Recreation Center, free event

### CITY HALL CLOSED

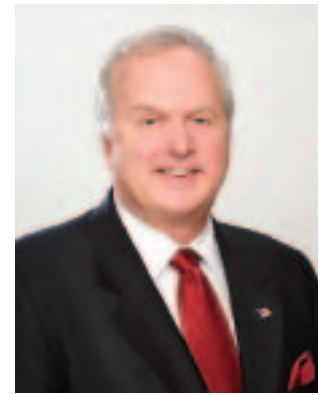
Saturday, Jan. 16 and Monday, Jan. 18 for Martin Luther King observance. Saturday, Feb. 13 and Monday, Feb. 15 for Presidents Day holiday.

### CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS IN

2010  
Jan. 11, 25  
Feb. 8, 22  
March 8, 22  
April 12, 26  
May 10, 24  
June 14, 28

# COUNTRY CLUB HILLS FUTURE IS VERY BRIGHT

## WE ARE BUILDING A BETTER TOMORROW



A new year is upon us in the city of Country Club Hills. As the happy commotion of another holiday season finally recedes and the usual weekly rhythm returns to our busy lives, our minds often return to the resolutions we made as the last moments of the previous year ticked away. These private promises that we make to ourselves, however small and personal, carry with them great power. They form the basis for a new and better year to come, and they give us a refreshing dose of hope as we open a fresh new chapter in our lives. For many of us 2009 was a difficult year, fraught with hard lessons, difficult decisions and uncertainties about our future. But as our city enters 2010, let our resolution be to never fear the innovations that will lead to growth and change in our community. Our brave embrace of new ideas will bring unprecedented strength to Country Club Hills at the dawn of a new decade, and I can already feel our hope and fearlessness growing in the new decade.

Of all our daring new goals for 2010, perhaps the biggest is the groundbreaking and construction of a new outlet mall at 167th Street and Cicero Avenue. Originally scheduled to begin this past summer, economic concerns caused the city to prudently delay the groundbreaking. But now I am proud to say that plans for the development of this exquisite property are back on track with construction scheduled to commence this coming summer. We have signed leases with several national and international retailers, and are in negotiations with the Aldi Corporation. In addition, a professional marketing campaign will be launched in full this coming spring to ensure that we can attract even more businesses to what soon will be the South Suburbs' undisputed economic hot spot.

To coincide with preparation of this new commercial hub in Country Club Hills, I am proud to announce the city plans to begin \$1 million worth of much needed infrastructure

and road improvements this summer. This figure is almost five times larger than our typical annual budget for road improvements and has been made possible by federal stimulus money received by the city for this expressed purpose. These improvements not only will ensure greater safety and mobility of vehicles and pedestrians throughout Country Club Hills, but also will create an inviting, harmonious flow to the traffic created by our new commercial haven, thus preparing our city's roads for the demands of the 21st Century and a busy new decade!

*"It is clear the coming year holds some truly fantastic promise for the city of Country Club Hills."*  
Mayor Welch

An innovative idea that has paid dividends even before the dawn of the new year has been the completion and implementation of our second fire station on 175th Street. This additional fire station has allowed us to dramatically reduce the response time of fire, ambulance and paramedic services to your homes to a mere 90 seconds. I believe the safety and good health of our residents is paramount to our city's fearless embrace of growth and change as we move into 2010, and I swear to you that Country Club Hills will continue its push for increased public safety to make sure that our families can thrive in the new year and beyond.

In addition to continuing our city's important economic, traffic and safety initiatives in 2010, the dawn of another year is a wonderful time to get truly creative and consider brand new ideas for the long term growth and expansion of Country Club Hills. For example, I am currently developing a plan that could potentially save the city more than \$500,000 by combining our public safety dispatch system with the dispatches of our neighboring communities. This proposed joint dispatch center would be located in Country Club Hills and, in addition to saving our city time, money and resources, would dramatically streamline the efforts of public safety officials in our area, thereby promoting increased communication between

departments and ultimately keeping Southland citizens safer. Stay tuned for more developments on this exciting new endeavor in the coming year.

Another unique idea that I propose we consider is creation of a Country Club Hills Equestrian Center on the Stelter Farm property on 183rd Street. I believe development of a riding academy in our community would be truly revolutionary. It would afford young people the opportunity to learn to ride and take responsibility for some truly majestic creatures (a valuable life lesson for adult life, to be sure), and it also would distinguish Country Club Hills as a unique Chicagoland community that is not afraid to think outside the box when it comes to education, recreation and the well-being of its residents. I plan to conduct neighborhood meetings in the Stelter Farm area in the near future so that I might discuss the prospects of this proposed Equestrian Center in greater detail with the residents most closely impacted by its presence, so please stay tuned for further dialogue about this exciting possibility. In the meantime, if any of our residents have any ideas regarding this endeavor, I urge them to please contact me here at City Hall at (708) 798-2616. I would be happy to start gathering input on this plan as soon as possible.

With these projects under way, and some more in development, it is clear the coming year holds some truly fantastic promise for the city of Country Club Hills. This will surely be the decade when our city rises up and takes its place as a pre-eminent place on the Chicagoland map. I can already feel the strength of our community as we rally back from a difficult 2009, and I am nothing less than hopeful about the year to come. As long as we keep our resolution to innovate without fear in 2010, the potential for the city of Country Club Hills is truly unlimited.

May God bless our troops, and may God bless America!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dgt W Welch".



## OUR OWN COUGAR

Meet the Country Club Hills Cougar, pictured on the front page of this edition of City News. He will become our mascot in the months to come, as development continues on our outdoor outlet mall planned for 167th Street and Cicero Avenue. The cougar will be used as a symbol of the development, and become an image repeated in signage throughout the community to advise mall visitors they have arrived in our city. The cougar, native to Illinois, was chosen as our symbol because of its strength in roaring forward, attributes shared by our city as it roars into its future with strength and purpose.

## FITNESS FUN FOR BODY AND BRAIN

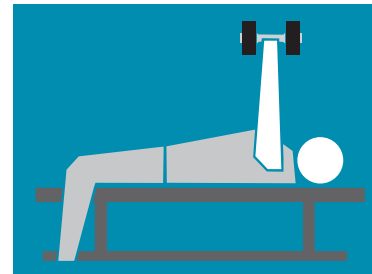
Winter programs of the Country Club Hills Parks and Recreation Department are under way this month, giving residents lots of options to exercise their bodies and brains.

Dwone Ross, superintendent of the parks and recreation department, said he is excited about the many programs offered in this new year and hopes residents take advantage of them. Most of the programs are conducted at the Community Recreation Center, 179th Street and Cicero Avenue, but Ross notes that the department reaches out to the community by offering some programs at other locations.

Swim lessons and swim aerobics are conducted at Hillcrest High School, for example, and "Math Only" math tutoring program takes place at Southwood Middle School. Baseball leagues are offered at Community Park and other parks as needed; yoga classes are at city hall; jewelry making is at Southwood, and a resume workshop can be taken at city hall.

While most winter programs are filled already by mid-January, open gym periods are available on many days.

Ross said his staff already is working on the upcoming spring and summer schedule, and suggests residents check out those opportunities in future park programs or at [www.countryclubhills.org](http://www.countryclubhills.org).



## SALUTE TO OCTOGENARIANS

United Christian Church in Country Club Hills recently honored the octogenarians in its congregation during a luncheon.

Barbara Herschberger of the church said the congregation recognized the wealth of experience, commitment and wisdom these members share with the church. "Friends and family took the opportunity to share memories and appreciation for lives well lived," she said.

In the fall, United Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) celebrated the 20th anniversary of the merger of United Christian Church of Country Club Hills and First Christian Church of Harvey. Many of the octogenarians are among the first residents of Country Club Hills.

Honored at the luncheon were: Ed Bockelman, Doris Dombrowski, Dorothy and

Van Fowers, Lois Frere, Maysel Galiga, Leona Lendecker, Ed Noyes, Barbara and Bud Oliver, Pearl Shaffner, Bettie and Bob Swanson, Avis Sykuta, Al Weiner, Dorcas Condit, Jean Hurn, Linn Johnson, Beulah Owings, Russ Serviss, Dorothy Taylor Williams, Earl and Helen Burkett, Rose and Samuel Chavis, Eleanor Cote, Maurice Cotton, Samella Davis, Alberta Ellis, Bill Foss, Lola Lettman and Genora Sandifer.

### City News

City News is provided by the office of Dwight W. Welch, Mayor of Country Club Hills. It is published quarterly and distributed free of charge to all residents and businesses in the city, and additional copies are available free at City Hall. The mission of City News is to motivate residents to become active citizens of Country Club Hills. It provides current local information to enhance community pride and encourage community participation in a wide variety of events. City News promotes local business retention by encouraging residents to shop locally. It also features articles of interest about residents of the community. We welcome comments or submission of news items. Send them to [mseltzner@countryclubhills.org](mailto:mseltzner@countryclubhills.org).

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### BE BIG ON BOOKS!

The Grande Prairie Library District, serving Country Club Hills and Hazel Crest, has lots of ideas for learning new things in the new year.

With some programs aimed at adults, and others geared for children, the library has helpful classes ranging from writing resumes and filing federal taxes to cooking soul food and stretching food dollars. There are reading and gaming groups for youth, and a special program for college-bound high school students. Family Movie Night is offered once a month.

Further information is available from the library, located at 3479 W. 183rd St. in Hazel Crest, telephone (708) 798-5563.

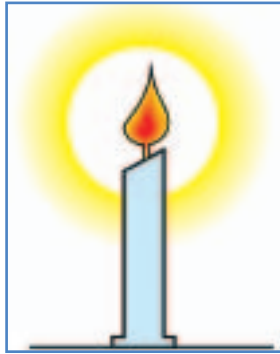
## AN EDITORIAL A NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW HOPE

The book is closed on 2009, and with the dawn of 2010 we marvel at how quickly this first decade of the 21st Century unfolded. Was it really 10 years ago that we worried about Y2K wreaking havoc on the world's computers?

As with all new years, we welcome the opportunity for a fresh start in 2010. In Country Club Hills, 2009 brought much sadness to some in our community and we seek to recover from our grief.

But the year also brought moments of great hope on the national stage. Americans of all races united to put the first African-American President in the White House. The recession that has dogged us for two years shows signs of fading in this new year and brings us new confidence for a recovery. Our national leaders have put some limits on the lingering wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, offering reason to believe our soldiers will come home soon.

Locally, tragedies that hurt us so deeply in 2009 now are sowing the seeds of hope. The start of 2009 brought with it the unrelated murders of five in our midst: Minnie and Leon Taylor, George Britton Jr., Sheryl Jones and John Weatherspoon. It was an unprecedented string of violence in Country Club Hills, a major deviation from the calm we normally enjoy. All but one of those crimes has been solved, and police are aggressively pursuing justice in the final case.



A triple tragedy at the start of 2009 gave birth to a tremendously hopeful development. Mathew Welch, son of Mayor Dwight W. Welch and active in many community events, died in January after a brief illness. A month later, U.S. Army 1st Sergeant Anthony Wilcox and his wife, Anita, died tragically of accidental carbon monoxide poisoning in their own home. Sgt. Wilcox spearheaded many U.S. Army initiatives in our city, and was a good friend to Matthew Welch.

The mayor chose to remember his son with the Matthew Welch Scholarship Fund to help deserving students pursue college degrees. The first awards from this fund went to the three children of Anthony and Anita Wilcox, giving them hope for college degrees and fulfilling careers. A total of \$26,000 in scholarships was awarded to Country Club Hills children. Application for scholarship can be made at [www.mattwelchfoundation.org](http://www.mattwelchfoundation.org).

For our local economy, there is great optimism. Work continues toward bringing a 200-store outlet mall to the city's northwest side commercial district. Also, city officials announced a zero increase in this year's tax levy for municipal services.

We all face tragedy at some point in our lives. It is part of life. But it eases our burden when we come together as a community and help each other out, as Country Club Hills citizens did last year. It gives us precious hope in this new year.

## GENERATIONAL BUILDING PLANNING 50 YEARS OR MORE INTO OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

Country Club Hills is embarked on a program of generational building, which means creating a future in this city for our children and their children by planning and financing the elements needed to keep the community strong.

The grand opening in November of the city's second fire station is an example of generational building. With the addition of a second station that will serve residents well into the future, the fire department's response time is only a minute-and-a-half after fire equipment is dispatched to a scene. It offers further protection to lives and property in Country Club Hills. With the new station came new, state-of-the-art equipment, including a 104-foot aerial truck that delivers 2,000 gallons of water per minute. The truck is so big that it won't fit under all of the viaducts in the region, and firefighters have plotted alternative routes for those occasions they have to take this piece of equipment to a neighboring community for a mutual aid call.

Mayor Dwight Welch and the city council realize that generational building takes vision, both to plan physical facilities like the new fire station and figure out how to pay for them.

Government finances are tricky in these economic times, as the nation comes out of the worst recession since the Great Depression. Yet, finances in Country Club Hills have remained stable in spite of significant drops in state revenue from income tax and motor fuel tax. City officials have cut the 2009/2010 budget twice in order to adjust to declining income, but they have done so without eliminating any jobs. "Keeping people employed is very important to our domestic recovery in the U.S. and follows the guidelines of our current administration in Washington," the mayor said.

In contrast to steps being taken by other local governments in the region as they struggle to generate more revenue from their residents, Country Club Hills officials announced in December that there would be no increase in the tax levy for municipal services. The city also eliminated vehicle stickers while other towns are raising that fee.

There are some bright spots in the city's finances. Over the past 10 years equalized assessed valuation of property in the city has risen steadily, posting a 185% increase from 1999 to 2008. Also, new dollars have flowed into the city because Wal-Mart chose our community in which to build a new store. Municipal and home rule sales tax dollars increased significantly as a result.





# RED-LIGHT CAMERAS GET RESULTS

Country Club Hills is reaping more than revenue from red-light cameras at two intersections in the community. Mayor Dwight Welch recently expressed his support for the program, despite the misgivings of some elected officials in the state.

“This law makes sense. Intersections are not chosen at random for the program. They are locations that have a high rate of multiple-injury traffic accidents, commonly called T-bone accidents,” the mayor said. “Our red-light cameras are posted at locations that exceed the criteria for installation of this technology. We have responded to very bad accidents at 183rd Street and Cicero Avenue and 167th Street and Pulaski Avenue.”

The cost of these accidents is enormous, from loss of life to millions of dollars for hospitalization of those with serious injuries. We all pay the price of these accidents, he said, when premiums rise for our own auto and health insurance.

“I believe this technology is good, and a strong deterrent to traffic violations at red lights. The program provides ample review of violations and opportunity for motorists to contest tickets. Many offenders, when viewing the videotape of their violation, seem surprised by the evidence and declare they won't do that again,” the mayor continued.

There is an unexpected benefit from these cameras, which provide streaming video 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In many instances, the police department and many others use the video to solve crimes that occur in the vicinity of red-light camera intersections. For example, a vehicle involved in an ATM break-in near such an intersection was captured on video. The video provided a make and model of the vehicle, and led to solving the crime.

*A red-light camera stands guard over traffic at an intersection in Country Club Hills.*

The mayor said he doesn't dismiss the revenue being generated from this program, though it levels off as motorists become more aware of the cameras. Country Club Hills is putting this new revenue into crime prevention programs.

“We urge state legislators who are reconsidering this program to take these issues into account. It is important for the life and safety of every citizen of Illinois. Lives are being saved by this program,” the mayor said.



# CITY WINS GOVERNOR'S HOMETOWN AWARD FOR YOUTH MENTORING PROJECT



Ald. James Ford

neighborhood. He went door-to-door, gathering the men in his community on a mission to work with troubled African-American youth.

“We know that African-American males age 11 to 17 are at risk in our society, at risk of losing their potential and all hope for their future. We teach them, 'Here's a better side to life.' We

give them values they can hold onto,” Ford said.

He enlisted the aid of elected officials, parents and educators as volunteers when the program grew. Ford oversaw training of volunteers and establishment of standards, and credits volunteers with making the project successful. It was clear that many young teens wanted to interact with adults who could help mold their

futures, Ford said. From the first meeting in January, 2008 through mid-year 2009, membership swelled from an initial seven young men and some parents to more than 80 boys and girls with 25 adult volunteers.

“Some of these young people are missing a lot at home. It's a lifestyle, one that's missing basic guidance from a mother and a father,” Ford said. “These teens are being raised on their own. We work with them to prove the statistics wrong. That's our motto: PTW: Prove Them Wrong.”

*“By bringing professionals from our community into the program, we are showing youth other options in life.”  
Ald. James Ford*

Ford said: “By bringing professionals from our community into the program, we are showing youth other options in life. Many now have goals of becoming teachers, lawyers or policemen. We are always looking for people with different skills, to show our young people some of the possibilities in life,” Ford said.

Country Club Hills has received a Governor's Hometown Award for its youth mentoring program, a volunteer effort to intervene in the lives of at-risk teens and set them on an education and career path.

Project director Ald. James Ford established the program in 2008 in his 4th Ward following the murder of a young person in his

## FACES IN THE NEWS

### Excellence on the court

Southwood School girls basketball coach Burnetta Mack (far right, back row in photo) took her 8th grade team downstate to state finals this year, the third time the coach has accomplished that feat. Coach Mack says she is proud of the way her girls played all season, and also is proud of their scholastic achievements. The girls had a 14-1 record before winning regional and sectional games, then competing downstate. Team members are Jazmine Turner, Diamond Couch, Caitlin Sudduth, Tiera Doss, Ariel Robinson, Nadika Jackson, Kaylamarie Toy, Lexus Couch, Taylor Flowers, Jade Franklin, Jocelyn Hicks, Bhrea Griffin, Jasmyne Cameron, Phymia Nunn and Mecah Lee.



### The yellow ribbon lady

Pamela Carter, above, led the way in her Country Club Hills neighborhood to affix yellow ribbons in many locations as a reminder to give thanks for the sacrifices of our armed forces personnel. Here, clutching a photo of her grandson who is serving in the U.S. Marines, Mrs. Carter is honored during a City Council meeting. She also received a dozen yellow roses from city officials.

### Bringing smiles to St. Coletta's

City Hall staffers JoAnn Wade (left in photo at right), and Ovie Thrower wrap holiday gifts for residents of St. Coletta's home for developmentally disabled residents. Each year city employees buy gifts for the residents, then deliver them and celebrate the holidays. The project is a special favorite of Mayor Dwight Welch, who invites city employees to join in the giving each year.



### Keeping it green

Maria Lehner, left, director of grounds maintenance and our city arborist, and her staff work year round to keep the city green - with a splash of color added each season. Their work can be seen at all city facilities, with especially lush displays around city hall and the city theater. Here, Maria tends to plants being grown in the city arboretum, which is located near the theater.



### The right touch

Larmont Van, mechanic with the city's public works department, keeps Country Club Hills' snowplowing equipment in good shape throughout the winter. This year the department is providing free driveway snow removal to more than 800 residents registered in the annual program that is offered to senior citizens and disabled residents. More information on the program is available at city hall, (708) 798-2616.



# COUNTRY CLUB HILLS PUTS ITS NEW ARSON DOG TO WORK FOR THE REGION

At times it seems Malcolm would just as soon roll around and play with you, his big tail wagging and his tongue licking you. But then Police Sgt. Eric Berger straps a feed bag around his waist, and the black Labrador is instantly at attention and ready to work.

“He’s a fabulous dog. He lives in my house and plays with my kids. But when he’s working, he’s totally focused on the job of arson investigation,” Berger said.

Berger introduced Malcolm to the Country Club Hills City Council this week. At 2 years old, Malcolm is an ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms) certified accelerant canine, a single-purpose dog. He was given to the city by the U.S. Department of Justice for use in the city and in the MABAS (mutual aid box alarm) fire system that serves 26 south suburbs. Berger and Malcolm also are on the ATF callout list to assist that agency anywhere in the country during fires or explosions.

Malcolm came to the ATF program after working with the Guiding Eyes for the Blind program. His easy manner made him a natural for training in the arson program. He and Berger spent six weeks in Virginia undergoing ATF training, and Berger also subsequently took a fire and arson investigation course.

“Malcolm is a passive dog. When he alerts on an accelerant at a fire scene, he sits perfectly still so that evidence won’t be disturbed,” Berger said. “We train every day, and he’s a food reward dog. He eats out of my hand, and that’s his food for the day. So he has to train if he wants to eat.”

There’s a change in Malcolm’s behavior when he finds accelerant at a fire scene, when he’s “on odor.” That allows Berger to move in and take crime scene samples. Malcolm hits on hydrocarbons in accelerants and his nose is extremely sensitive.

“At one fire scene, he found a gasoline pour that was over a month-and-a-half old. This dog will put arsonists in jail,” Berger said.



*Police Sgt. Eric Berger introduces Malcolm, the Country Club Hills ATF certified fire accelerant canine, to the city council.*

## CRIME FREE HOUSING: MAKING GOOD NEIGHBORS

Nobody wants to live next door to a drug dealer or a gang member, but traditional wisdom says you can’t choose your neighbors.

In Country Club Hills, however, city officials are embarked on a crime prevention program that greatly improves the odds of having good neighbors. The city approved a crime free housing ordinance in October, 2008 and has been enforcing it since May of 2009 when it began training property managers in Country Club Hills to build a stable, satisfied rental tenant base. That, in turn, is leading to reduced crime and improved quality of life.

Police Officer Doug Alba is the law enforcement coordinator of the city’s program, and he loves this new job. A 24-year veteran of the Country Club Hills police department, Alba says he believes the program will help the city protect the value of its housing stock.

Most of the city’s landlords have gone through the training program, which consists of three phases that must be completed under the supervision of the police department. Property managers become individually certified after completing training in each phase, and the property becomes certified upon successful completion of all three phases.

property now, and tenants have a crime free lease addendum that requires them to live in a lawful manner.

The police department partners with the city building department in this program. The building department is charged with registration of rental properties and some training assistance.

Rental property in Country Club Hills is primarily in condos and single-family homes. Alba estimates there are 400 to 500 rental properties in the city at any given time. Just a few months into the new program, the city had completed a half dozen tenant removals for violation of their crime free leases. A number of other properties had “strikes” on them, meaning there is documented criminal activity on the property and the owner has been notified.

“I do wish that residents who are having problems with nearby rental properties would tip us off now and then,” Alba said. “That way we could be more watchful and solve those problems early on.”



*Police Officer Doug Alba is the law enforcement coordinator of the crime free housing program in Country Club Hills.*

“Landlords support this program 100%,” Alba said. “They are behind it most enthusiastically. It helps them in the long run. It provides for more efficient screening of tenants.” Alba said there is more accountability from landlords of rental

# NEW FIRE STATION GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION



Country Club Hills Fire Department personnel lined up in front of the new fire station for a group photo Nov. 14 during the grand opening day celebration. At far left is Fire Chief Gary Kasper, while Mayor Dwight W. Welch is in the center.

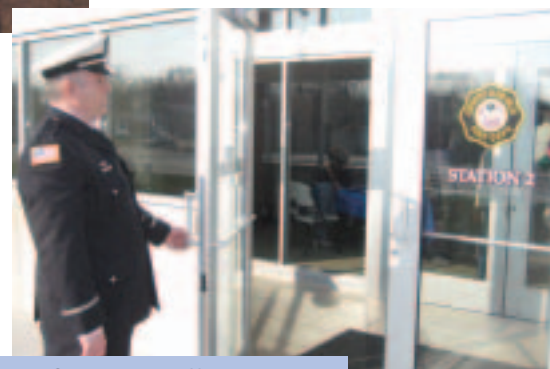
Mayor Dwight W. Welch greets State Rep. Al Riley (D-38) during an open house at the new fire station, 4520 W. 175th St.



Wanda Comein (above), director of community relations, serves cupcakes to the crowd. At right, the Country Club Hills Police Explorers drop in to enjoy the day.



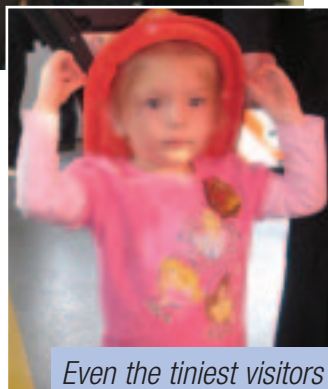
Deputy Fire Chief Joe Ellington leads the march into the new fire station on grand opening day.



Lt. Glen McAuliff opens the door to visitors at the new fire station.



Lt. Michael Kilbert hosts a tour of the new fire station during the grand opening celebration.



Even the tiniest visitors to the new Country Club Hills fire station got into the swing of things by sporting special fire hats.



Paramedic Engineer Norm Boyd gives a little visitor an upclose look at one of the new fire trucks.

Photos by Maqbool Rashid



# SANTA KICKS OFF THE HOLIDAY SEASON



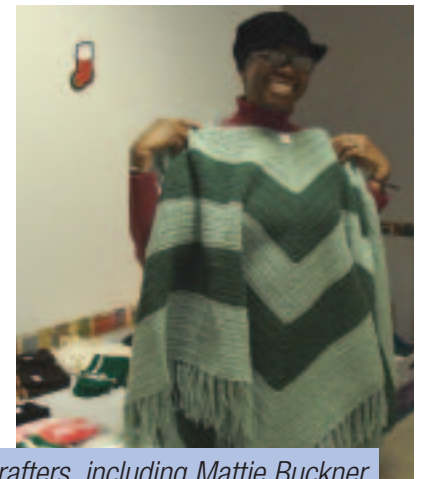
*Santa arrived by fire truck at the Country Club Hills annual community Christmas party Dec. 5 (left), and then spent some time with the littlest guests at the party.*



*City Manager Henrietta Turner took the microphone during the party at the city's recreation center to welcome the crowd.*



*There were big smiles from winners of prizes given by Radio Disney during the Christmas party.*



*Several local crafters, including Mattie Buckner, displayed their wares during the party, giving visitors a jump on their Christmas shopping.*



## HOMES WITH HOLIDAY SPIRIT

Members of the Country Club Hills Environmental Commission toured homes in the city that were entered in the annual Holiday House Decorating Contest, and enjoyed the spirit and creativity expressed by residents through their home decorations.

The Reginald Lewis family on Oakwood Court earned top honors as the 2009 "best in the city" winner of the competition. Judging was done by Environmental Commission Chairman Jennifer Denton; Commissioners Onetta Outlaw, Curtis Jaynes and Barbara Swain; and Wanda Comein from the city's Community Relations office.

Following are first and second place winners by ward. They will be honored during the Jan. 25 City Council meeting.

Ward 1: First place, Martha Alexander, Devon Drive; second place, Anthony & Priscilla Vaughn, W. 178th Street

Ward 2: First place, Sherry Smith Glover, Park Lane; second place, Curtis & Donna Harris, Jr., W. 175th Place

Ward 3: First place, the Schmidt Family, W. 186th Street; second place, St. Coletta's (Sandy Vanoskey), W. 183rd Street.

Ward 4: First place, Barbara Swain, W. 189th Place; second place, Charles Davis, Oakwood Court

Ward 5: First place, Glenn Vlach, Anthony

# 2009 BEAUTIFICATION AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Winners of the city's annual Beautification Awards were honored recently with certificates designating their property as "outstanding."

The program was created by the Environmental Commission and city staff in 1993, and is an annual project to honor residents whose property is judged to have good maintenance and visual appeal. All properties in Country Club Hills, including residential, business, institutional and manufacturing, are eligible to receive awards. No applications are necessary to participate in the program, and all property in the city is viewed from public sidewalks and streets during judging in the month of June.

Special recognition is given each year to properties that have earned five or more awards in the program. Award-winning properties are not affected by changes in ownership, and awards are cumulative at a specific address.



*Top honors in this year's Beautification Awards program in Country Club Hills went to the home of Ernest and Shirley Powell, which has earned recognition in the program for 10 years now. Here, Ernest Powell accepts his award from Mayor Dwight Welch.*

## 2009 Beautification Award winners:

Emma Williams, Eva Cowley, Tony Murff, Lorraine Griffen, Douglas McArthur, Rev. Emerson Cool, Glora Terrell, Ernest & Shirley Powell, Mr. and Mrs. Emil Flores, Ramona Melson, Eric & Constance Welsh, Dan & Bobbie Fenn, Maxine Neal, Olivia Rallings, Monica Olson, Anderson Family, Orey McDonagh, Ronald Specht, Diaz Family, Margaret Davis, Richmond Family, Dwight W. Welch, Maria Lehner, Kieth Vosler, Beckford Family, Charles Jaris, Mary Ann Washington, Carolyn Sims, Willie & Theresa Lenard, Dwayne & Sharon Holbrook, Juan & Sandra Reed, Tascha Davis, Annette Lauderdale, Mitchell L. Carr, George Carter, Mr. & Mrs. Goldston, Lovette Family, Cathleen Morgan, JoAnn & Herman Wade,

Zandra Lewis, Joseph & Mary Blake, Gina Garnes, Dressie Winchester, Dan & Lori Barr, Bob & Connie Levvy.

Rob & Dawn Straley, Williams Family, Mr & Mrs Louis Hall Jr., James Thomas, Chambers Family, Robert A. Hurt, Marlene Mehmel, John Marsh, Willie J. Watkins, Jeffery Smith, Diane James, David & Regina Hammock, Lee Family, Raymond Graves, Frank & Dora Ciceraro, Ike Milsap, Willie & Vivian Ridley, Helen Myers, Dr. Wanda Bradford, Ward Family, Joyce Green, Susie Ware, Mr. & Mrs. Ross, Harold & Sandra Tolliver, Kathi Holiday, Ollie Allen, Kathi Holliday, Linda Oattes, Harold & Teresa Shields, Renya Price, Tennie Mae Fitts, Martha Hayes, Pamela Banks, Benjamin Pabellon, James & Monalisa Franklin, Pamela Carey, Raye Ann Saunoris, Clifford Johnson, Devoe Family, Marke Des Forges, Bradford Plough, Bill & Liz Kiss.

Alma Hilton, Magellan Tate, James and Lillie Littles, Nate Plenty, Willie Butler, Joseph Blackman, Michael Little, George Husband, Ronald Townsend, Maggie Gamble, Dwight McReynolds, Glanton Family, Michael Chamber, Jones Family, Jerryelyn Leonard, Herman Miller, Bernadine Bangmon, Pat Bragg, Apostolopoulos Family, Michael Gidding, Cheryl Van Kempema, Brenda Garland,

Robert House Sr., Barnes Family, Mary Devine, Donna Norman, Thelma Samuel, Sherrie Smith,

Mary Wells, Sue Olson, Lillie Robinson, Anderson Family, Vivian Wooten, John Ware, Shirley Knight, Cherise Martin, Loretta Baker, Edwina Powell.

The Griffen Family, McNeal Family, William Preston, Thelma Ray, Sanders Family, Baffield Family, Vivian Driscoll, JoAnn Johnson, Cocroft Family, Verdel Edwards, Birdal Edwards, Lisa Pearson, Erin Lewis, Juanita Rosebar, Tommie & Bertha Toliver, Mr. & Mrs. Sherley, LaSonya Sherley, Barry Jackson, Richard & Linda Sievers, Rita Harrison, Curtis & Icle Atkins.

*Members of the Chambers family of Country Club Hills, first-time winners in the city's annual Beautification Awards program, are all smiles as they receive their award from Mayor Dwight Welch.*



*The Beckford family was honored for winning a Beautification Award five times in recent years for their property in Country Club Hills. Here, Ms. Beckford shows off her award.*





## OAK NEWS AND NOTES

### Stay healthy in the new year

A number of medical screenings are available to the area's senior citizens through the OAK (Older American Coalition) program at Country Club Hills City Hall.

Advocate South Suburban Hospital will provide the free health services in the Oak Senior Center on Tuesdays from 1 to 3 p.m. on the following dates. No fasting is required.

- Feb.9, cholesterol and blood pressure
- April 13, glucose
- June (date to be announced), Senior Health Fair from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., with cholesterol test
- Aug. 10, glucose and blood pressure
- Oct. 12, cholesterol
- Dec. 7, glucose

### Money and Medicare on the agenda

Guest speakers will enlighten senior citizens on two topics during the February and March monthly meetings of the OAK program, which meets in the senior center on the lower level of Country Club Hills City Hall.

A local representative of the National Aging in Place Council, Wayne Landon, will discuss "Senior Financial Survival in Tough Economic Times" in a program Monday, Feb. 8 at 1 p.m. The presentation will cover federal and state programs for seniors, loan modifications, reverse mortgages and bankruptcy.

The Monday, March 8 meeting beginning at 1 p.m. will feature Ken Wzorek, who will discuss Medicare for Seniors.

### Seniors have all the fun!

There's line dancing, billiards, Wii parties, crochet and knitting, movies with popcorn -- even Bid Whist and Pinochle Tournaments. And there are trips to exciting places every month. All of this activity is offered to the area's senior citizens through the Country Club Hills OAK senior program. Membership fee is only \$12 a year per person, and each month's calendar is filled with interesting programs and fun activities. There is an additional cost for the bus trips and line dancing classes.

In January and February, Bid Whist Tournaments are offered on the second and fourth Monday evenings from 6 to 9 p.m. in the Oak Room on the lower level of City Hall. There's line dancing on Tuesday mornings, with a beginner class at 10:30 a.m. and an intermediate class at noon. Game Day and Billiards are offered afternoons on Tuesday and Friday. Movie and Cards days are planned Feb. 22 and March 22 from 1 to 5 p.m. There are pinochle tournaments every Tuesday afternoon in March, and crochet/knitting classes are on most Thursday afternoons both months.

Information on the OAK program is available from Linda Braun at (708) 798-2616 Ext. 2248.



*Opal Gill, left, and Eloyce Sturghill chat as they create Christmas wreaths during a craft session of the OAK program at city hall.*

# GIVING THANKS AND MAKING MERRY



*John Grayson (seated, left), greets Mayor Dwight Welch during the city's annual Thanksgiving luncheon for senior citizens. The event was Nov. 11 at Hillcrest High School. Joining Grayson in welcoming the mayor were Dorothy Ellis and Stephanie Grayson (seated, left) and Jannie Sanders, Curley Hudson and Olivia Brown (seated right).*

*Linda Coleman of the recreation and parks department served lunch to guests at the senior Christmas party.*



*Good food and good company were on the menu as seniors gathered for the OAK Christmas party and cookie exchange.*

*Linda Braun, OAK program coordinator, greets senior citizens during a Christmas party at the senior center.*





## 8TH GRADERS GET A TASTE OF HIGH SCHOOL

A group of Southwood Middle School eighth-grade students has the opportunity to experience high school level learning, thanks to Country Club Hills District 160's Enrichment Program.

In an effort to provide challenging course work for qualifying eighth-grade students, District 160 offers the High School Enrichment Program through partnerships with Hillcrest and Rich Central high schools. Students whose scores on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and the high school entrance exam meet the Enrichment Program criteria qualify to enroll in algebra I and Spanish II at Hillcrest and Rich Central high schools. District 160 transports the students to and from the schools.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for our students," said Supt. Earline Scott. "With passing grades, they receive high school credit and are able to advance to the next level when they begin their freshman year in high school. The program allows them to work toward advanced placement, which will prepare them for college."

During the opening days of the 2009-2010 school year, the students expressed enthusiasm for the chance to be involved in high school course work.

"Our Spanish teacher is the best," said David Holden of his Hillcrest High School Spanish class. "The class is great, and the teacher makes learning fun."

Lawrence Thomas, who attends Rich Central, said he enjoyed the program and noted, "We have the chance to get a higher learning experience."

Classmate Ciarra Collins, who attends Hillcrest, added, "It's a great opportunity. The program opens more doors for us."

The Southwood students involved in the high school program are David Holden, Lawrence Thomas, Elyse Tyson, Ja'Niece Whaley, Jalen Hendly, Vashaad Thomas, Iynoma Ogbomoh, Ciarra Collins, Nnebuhe Maraizu, Claudia McGee, Jeremiah Henderson and Jesiah Allen.

## GOOD NEWS ABOUT GOOD STUDENTS!

Three Country Club Hills teens were playing for the Hillcrest High School Chess Team as it launched the new season by winning the Thornton Fractional North High School Invitational Tournament recently. After defeating TF South, Bloom and Bloom Trail, Hillcrest defeated TF North in a thrilling five-minute blitz tiebreaker. Congrats to Shawn Perkins, Josh Nixon and Anthony Guerrero.

Hillcrest High School basketball player Darren Tillman, a Country Club Hills resident, earned honors on a national level recently when the senior was nominated to play in the 2010 McDonald's All-American High School Games. Since 1977, the top boys' basketball seniors nationwide have been selected to play in the games, which will be in March 2010.

Two young ladies from Country Club Hills were on the Hillcrest High School Girls Cross Country team when it finished the season on a great note, placing 17th in the state. Our team members are Delvina Harris and Joann Weddington. All of the Hillcrest runners ran personal best times at the state championships.



Three students from Country Club Hills were among those receiving the Cook County Sheriff's Youth Service Medal of Honor during a recent ceremony. The honored students are Derrick Singleton, Hillcrest High School; Isaac Rodgers, Lydia Urban Academy; Wade Hutson, Marian Catholic High School. The awards are given to students grades 9-12 who provide meaningful volunteer service to their communities for a minimum of 100 hours. You set a great example for all of us, gentlemen.

*Cook County Sheriff Thomas J. Dart, center, presented Youth Service Medals of Honor to (from left) Wade Hutson, Isaac Rodgers and Derrick Singleton. At right is Country Club Hills Police Officer Anthony Prater.*

Two Country Club Hills teens were among three Hillcrest High School students named 2009 Voice of Democracy essay contest winners at the Markham VFW Post. They are Dancy York and Berrett Chestleigh. Additionally, Berrett was selected by a panel of three judges to represent Hillcrest at the regional competition banquet in January. The regional winner will continue on to the state competition in Springfield.

*Winners of the Markham VFW Post's Voice of Democracy essay contest were: Dancy York (left), Berrett Chestleigh (right) and, Lamesha Abrams (center).*



## WALMART GETS BEHIND CITY INITIATIVES

Jason Thomas, store manager at the Country Club Hills Walmart, presented two checks to the city recently in support of municipal programs. Additional funding from Walmart was presented to PADS homeless shelter sites in the city. Here, Wanda Comein from City Hall accepts a donation in support of the city's Radio Disney partnership. Thomas presented another check for a fire department community service program.

At the holidays, Walmart employees brought and served dinner to the men housed at St. Emeric church in the PADS program one evening, and delivered Christmas gifts to the women and children sheltered at United Christian church another evening.



## CITIZENS INFLUENCE CITY POLICY THROUGH SERVICE ON COMMISSIONS

Dozens of Country Club Hills residents are involved in the operation of their city through volunteer positions on 17 commissions that advise and assist the city council.

The city is always looking for residents to donate their time and talent to the commissions in order to ensure a broad range of perspectives on issues that come before these advisory bodies. Commissioners analyze and review matters before making recommendations to city officials.

Some commissions sponsor regular activities in the community. The Youth Commission, for example, hosts family game nights and dances. The Cultural Arts Commission produces a fall art show and the annual Black History program. The Blood Commission runs four blood drives each year. The city's very popular Beautification Award program is a project of the Environmental Commission.

Wanda Comein has been appointed liaison to city commissions, volunteer programs and the chamber of commerce. Residents interested in serving on any of the commissions listed, or in volunteering in any capacity, can contact her at (708) 798-2616, Ext. 2260.

### CITY COMMISSIONS

FIRE AND POLICE • 911 • HOUSING  
PASTORAL • YOUTH • SENIOR CITIZEN  
VETERANS • FISH • CULTURAL ARTS  
BLOOD • CABLE • HISTORICAL  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT • PLAN  
ZONING • ELECTRICAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL

## WE ARE BUILDING A TEAM

### COUNTRY CLUB HILLS IS HIRING PART-TIME FIREFIGHTERS

The path to a firefighter career includes completion of a six-month emergency medical technician class, available at South Suburban Hospital. The next step is a 12-month paramedic class, available at Ingalls Hospital.

Finally, applicants complete a six-month firefighter II class at the 3rd District Fire Academy. If you have these qualifications, or would like to attain them, talk to us about a future as a Country Club Hills firefighter.

Salary for a part-time firefighter ranges from \$10-\$14 per hour, depending on certifications.

Applications are available at 183rd Street Fire Station,  
4350 W. 183rd Street, Country Club Hills, Illinois 60478  
Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Also available at City Hall, 4200 West Main Street.

**Country Club Hills is an equal opportunity employer,  
and welcomes minority and female applicants.**



## City of Country Club Hills

4200 Main Street

Country Club Hills, IL 60478

**Hours:** Mon. 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
Tues.-Fri. 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Sat. 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon

### Members of the City Council

Dwight W. Welch, Mayor

Deborah McIlvain, City Clerk

Michael Gleason, City Treasurer

Ward 1 Lillian Lee  
Cynthia Singleton

Ward 2 Vincent E. Lockett  
Sherman Williams

Ward 3 Tyrone Hutson  
Thomas Comein

Ward 4 James Ford  
Steven Burris

Ward 5 Robert Battie  
Frank B. Martin, Jr.

Police Emergency 9-1-1

Police Non-Emergency 798-3191

Fire Dept. Emergency 9-1-1

Fire Dept. Non-Emergency 798-3270

Water & Sewer Dept. 799-1390

(8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

Water & Sewer Dept. 798-3191

(After Hours & Emergency Only)

City Hall 798-2616

TDD/TTY 798-3191

Parks & Recreation Department 798-2616

Bus Reservations 798-6384

[www.countryclubhills.org](http://www.countryclubhills.org)

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# THE NEW COUNTRY CLUB HILLS, HONORING OUR HERITAGE WHILE EMBRACING OUR FUTURE

## COMED AT WORK IN OUR CITY

ComEd has completed a \$480,000 project to replace or reinforce miles of underground distribution cable in three south suburban communities, including Country Club Hills. The investment will improve reliability and reduce outage frequency for customers directly served by those underground lines, according to ComEd officials. They also said that underground cable can be damaged in many ways ranging from lightning striking the ground where the lines are buried to general wear and tear over time. Because the lines are buried underground, they can take longer to repair when a portion is damaged. Some of the longest lengths of locally replaced and reinforced underground lines were located along Baker Avenue and Flossmoor Road in Country Club Hills.

