

# Heritage Herald

## Managing Lead Dust

By Chris Irvine, Morris Ave. Resident, and  
Laska Nygaard, Community Organizer for Public Safety

We live in one of the most lead-contaminated zip codes in Michigan, with some of the highest rates of child lead poisoning according to the Kent County Lead Task Force. While national and local headlines concerning lead-contaminated drinking water have raised public awareness of lead poisoning, exposure to lead **dust** – from lead-based paint that is almost ubiquitous in our cherished historic homes – is the driver of lead poisoning in our community. Lead dust exposure poses the greatest danger, by far, to children, who can experience severe learning disabilities, lowered IQ, and behavioral problems. And no level of lead exposure is safe for children – the detrimental impact can occur at even the lowest levels.

But lead exposure can be prevented. Contamination from lead dust overwhelmingly comes from three sources in this order:

1. Lead-based paint is disturbed, as during painting or renovation, and containment practices aren't followed.
2. Delaying maintenance of chipping and cracking painted surfaces, causing lead paint chips and dust to spread.
3. Children are exposed to contaminated soil during play or when it is tracked inside on shoes.



When we, our neighbors and local landlords hire service providers who don't take the proper precautions – or paint their own homes in ways they may not know are noncompliant – it poses a threat to all of us and, most

importantly, our children. In this article, we'll share information on exterior painting, including how to find a safe contractor, what practices to look for and



how to report violations. In a future article, we'll cover interior lead safety, including where lead paint is most likely to exist inside your home, how to test for the presence of lead paint and dust, getting annual blood lead level tests, employing safe renovation practices and how small steps – like frequent handwashing and removing your shoes inside – can help stop exposure.

### Finding a Lead-Safe Contractor (RRP Certified)

If you need to have your Heritage Hill home painted or renovated:

- Make sure that your contractor is RRP certified. (RRP stands for Lead "Renovation, Repair and Painting." The EPA requires that projects that disturb lead-based paint in homes built before 1978 be performed by lead-safe certified contractors.) Ask to see a copy of their

(cont'd on page 4)

## The Heritage Hill Association

252 State St SE Ste 101  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
616-459-8950

Facebook:  @heritagehill

Instagram:  @heritagehillassociation

Hours: 9 am - 5 pm, Mon. - Thurs.  
Voicemail available for after-hours messages.  
EMAIL: [heritage@heritagehillweb.org](mailto:heritage@heritagehillweb.org)  
WEBSITE: [www.heritagehillweb.org](http://www.heritagehillweb.org)

**Want to be in the know and included in neighborhood e-blasts?**

**Contact our office to add your email address!**

### Purpose:

The purpose of the Heritage Hill Association is to provide neighbors a way of collectively building a healthy, historically preserved community in which people can live and work in a secure and stable environment.

### Office Staff:

Barbara Draughon, Executive Director  
Maria Zache Starkey, Office Manager  
Laska Nygaard, Community Organizer

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Heritage Hill Association board of directors meets at 7pm at the Community Education room of Trinity Health at 200 Jefferson Ave SE. The meetings are open to the public. Please contact the office at [heritage@heritagehillweb.org](mailto:heritage@heritagehillweb.org) or 616-459-8950 for access codes for any upcoming meeting.

*The Heritage Hill Association provides information and encourages neighbor participation to keep Heritage Hill safe and vital. This community organizing engages neighbors to work on issues that arise. As an association of neighbors, we have a strong voice but we have no regulatory authority.*

**The GR Historic Preservation Commission regulates the City's Preservation Ordinance. Applications and approvals are needed from this city department before beginning any exterior work or repairs. Contact 456-3451 or [rbaker@grcity.org](mailto:rbaker@grcity.org).**

### The Heritage Herald - Circulation 4,000

The Heritage Herald is published by the Heritage Hill Association Board of Directors six times a year (bi-monthly). The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Board of Directors. We reserve the right to edit. Address correspondence to The Heritage Herald, 252 State St SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

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**New website.** Heritage Hill Association was selected by the volunteers at Code for Good as one of nine local nonprofits to work with their team of experts to re-develop our website. We are ever-grateful for the Code for Good team who spent a weekend (dawn-to-midnight 3 days in a row!) working with our staff and volunteers to give us a new, streamlined look that will be more user friendly for our neighbors and friends. We were very fortunate to be selected, as this is a once-a-year opportunity for a select few applicants. Check us at [www.heritagehillweb.org](http://www.heritagehillweb.org)!

There is a lot going on at the city level regarding the crafting of a new **20-year master plan** as well as proposals for **new language in our Planning and Zoning ordinances** as it pertains to the ability to add an Accessory Dwelling Unit (think, "Granny

# This and That

by Barbara Draughon, Executive Director

Pad" or space for a short term rental) to one's property, as well as considerations to increase from 4 to 6 the number of unrelated individuals permitted in a household. We hope you will continue to follow these issues directly by attending meetings in-person or watching them online at your convenience (via the city's YouTube channel). They occur the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month. City Commissioners will be hearing recommendations from the Planning Commission during their meetings in January and February and coming to a vote soon thereafter. It's important to be informed! Talk to your City Commissioners:

2<sup>nd</sup> Ward: Lisa Knight [lknight@grcity.us](mailto:lknight@grcity.us) and Milinda Ysasi [mysasi@grcity.us](mailto:mysasi@grcity.us)

3<sup>rd</sup> Ward: Nathaniel Moody [nmoody@grcity.us](mailto:nmoody@grcity.us) and Kelsey Perdue [kperdue@grcity.us](mailto:kperdue@grcity.us)



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**New year, new you!** Interested to help shape the future of your neighborhood? Consider volunteering your time in Heritage Hill! Got a head for numbers? Inquire about our Finance Committee. Are you more the social networking type? Consider joining our Community Engagement Committee and help plan activities in one of our neighborhood parks, holiday caroling, or annual picnic. If committee work isn't your thing, reach out about targeted activities we need help with (think: litter clean up, weeding and mulching our neighborhood parks, or distributing flyers). Of course, our keystone event ALWAYS needs your help: the Annual Weekend Tour of Homes, which is enjoyed by thousands of people from around the Midwest and shows

what urban living can be; but we need your help to pull it off!

Contact our office for ways to help out.

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## Managing Lead Dust (cont'd from page 1)

certification. You can search for or look up certified contractors online on the EPA's website at <https://cdxapps.epa.gov/ocspp-oppt-leadhub/firm-location-search>.

- Ask the contractor about the methods they intend to use at the job site and consider whether they conform to the requirements we discuss below.
- Pay attention to how the contractor responds to your requests. If they don't know what you're talking about, or if they are dismissive, these are

warning signs.

- Also look out for a price that is suspiciously low. Applying lead-safe practices takes time and effort, and it's unlikely that a reputable contractor who will carry out the requirements will be the cheapest option.

### Exterior Painting Requirements – What to Look For

As noted above, any contractor hired to paint your home's exterior is required by federal law to follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination and be RRP certified. The three parts of EPA compliance are containment,

proper work methods, and cleanup.

**Containment.** Containment establishes the work area and contains dust within it.

- Warning tape and signs must block off the work area.
- Plastic sheeting must be placed on the ground before any painted surfaces are disturbed. The poly sheeting is required to be put down before work begins each day, and disposed of at the end of each work day. Canvas tarps **are not** sufficient; they are often reused and spread further contamination.
- Other rules apply, such as the closure of nearby windows and doors (to avoid dust intrusion) and work must not be done on days that are too windy.

**Work Methods.** Some methods of paint removal generate too much dust and are prohibited.

- Hand tools should be used.
- Paint removal with power tools is **prohibited** (unless very specific lead-containment equipment is employed) because they inherently generate too much lead dust. (Power washers generate wastewater that contaminates anything it touches. Power sanders without special dust collection are prohibited.)
- While power washers are dangerous, mist is helpful. Using a regular spray bottle or mister to mist all work areas with water will reduce ambient dust as paint is removed.

**Clean up.** Clean-up is required daily.

- Ongoing vacuuming should be done. HEPA vacuums are prescribed by law. Internal vacuum bags must be used, otherwise lead dust will spread.
- At the end of each day, all



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## REMEMBER HERITAGE HILL PROPERTY OWNERS:

There is a City Preservation Ordinance that governs all exterior changes, repairs and/or additions to Heritage Hill properties. Call the Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission at 456-3451 for information on approvals. You can access the application form at the City's website, [www.ci.grand-rapids.mi.us](http://www.ci.grand-rapids.mi.us) at the Planning Department section or at the Heritage Hill Association's [www.heritagehillweb.org](http://www.heritagehillweb.org).

This ordinance applies to all exterior changes, repairs, and/or additions to your home and property. Items such as doors and windows including storms, yard structures, driveway and sidewalk approaches, and fences do need HPC approvals.



remaining debris and paint chips must be collected and vacuumed up, the poly sheeting must then be misted with water, carefully rolled in toward the house burrito-style, and disposed of in heavy-duty garbage bags.

### Report Unsafe Practices!

Grand Rapids' Property Maintenance Code incorporates the RRP lead-safe rules into its Lead Safe Work Practices requirements – and **it applies to both homeowners and their contractors**. If you see exterior paint work being done that doesn't appear to follow the lead-safe practices outlined above, **call 311 to report a violation of Lead Safe Work Practices**. Code Compliance will respond, investigate, and take the appropriate enforcement action. In addition, a contractor can be reported to the EPA (<https://echo.epa.gov/report-environmental-violations>), who is authorized to impose significant fines (**\$37,500 per violation, per day**). Grand Rapids is part of Region 5, and our local EPA office is in Chicago.

### Resources

HHA will be posting a list of lead-related resources when our new website launches in early 2024. In the meantime, feel free to contact our office to receive a copy of this list, or call the National Lead Information Center at 800-424-LEAD.

**Chris Ervine** is a Heritage Hill neighbor. This is a personal issue for his family after they had a terrible experience with lead poisoning a few years ago.

**Laska Nygaard** is a Heritage Hill neighbor and HHA's Community Organizer for Public Safety. She is working with Chris this year to raise awareness of lead safety issues in Heritage Hill.

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# Neighborhood Potpourri

## January is National Radon Action Month and February is National Cancer Prevention Month.

We have FREE radon test kits for renters and property owners alike!

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer deaths among nonsmokers in America and claims the lives of about 22,000 Americans each year. You can't see, smell or taste radon gas, so the EPA, CDC, the Surgeon General and the Kent County Health Department urge all Americans to protect their health by testing their homes, schools and other buildings for radon. A test is easy to use. A test filter is hung in your house for a few days, then sent to a test center in a self-addressed, pre-stamped envelope. January is considered a best time for testing as our homes have been

closed up from fresh air for several months, aiding detection of the gas.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that seeps into buildings from the ground. It is present to some extent in all buildings, old and new. The question is whether the level of radon in a home is dangerous. Where radon is detected at levels that threaten health, steps - such as radon-safe closure of cracks and proper venting measures - can be taken to protect families. So radon exposure is a preventable health risk.

Kent County is typically categorized as having a moderate to high levels of radon. 1 in 4 homes in Michigan test has having high levels of radon. **For a free test kit, contact our office.** Free

kits are also available this month from the KCHD's main clinic at 700 Fuller Ave NE. Keep in mind that it is recommended that you re-test every 2-3 years, as factors in the environment and building structures can shift and increase radon levels.

Want more information?

- KCHD has a two-part podcast (released January 6 and 15, 2020) regarding radon in Kent County, available at <https://www.accesskent.com/Health/AMOPH.htm>.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/radon/index.html>

**Help Protect Our Neighborhood Postal Carriers.** The Customer Service Supervisor of the Grand Rapids Postal Service briefed neighborhood associations in mid-November 2023 that Grand Rapids



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postal carriers had suffered 88 dog bites, an 18.2% increase from the 72 in fiscal year 2022. Carriers were lunged at, charged at through closed screen doors, attacked from out of nowhere with no warning. There were bloody bite injuries to hips, arms, fingers, legs, elbows and faces. Nationally, over 6,000 carriers suffer dog bites, and nearly 100% of the dog owners involved thought that their dogs "would never bite".

Obviously, we need to help keep our carriers safe, and it is also the law. Follow these steps if you have a dog:

- Do not leave you dog outside unattended during delivery hours.
- When a carrier comes to your door, put your dog in another room behind a closed door before you open the door to your carrier.
- Do not let your dog out until your carrier is safely out of your area or safely back in their vehicle.
- **NEVER** assume that your dog will not bite.

We also need to keep our delivery routes safe for carriers, particularly in winter. Sidewalks, steps, porches and driveways should be kept free of snow and ice. Approaches and exits to curbside boxes should be

*(cont'd on page 8)*



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## Neighborhood Potpourri

(cont'd from page 7)

cleared. Adding a grab bar to your front steps or porches is highly requested, too, and there are many inexpensive solutions for our historic homes. Contact Rhonda Baker at the city's Historic Preservation Office for insights [rbaker@grcity.us](mailto:rbaker@grcity.us).

### "Put a Freeze on Winter

**Fires."** Winter is the season to be especially careful about fire prevention. Half of all home heating fires occur in December, January and February, and 1-in-every-7 home fires, and 1-in-every-home fire deaths, involve heating equipment. Take these steps to help prevent winter fires:

- Keep anything flammable at least 3 feet from fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators, or space heaters.
- Keep portable generators outside, away from windows, and as far from your home as possible.
- Install carbon monoxide monitors and test monthly.
- When using a heat-producing appliance like a space heater, plug only one into an outlet at a time. Do not use any sort of extension cord.
- Have a chimney professional clean and inspect your chimney and vents every year.
- Ashes should be stored outside, at least ten feet from your home or other buildings, in a tightly covered metal container.



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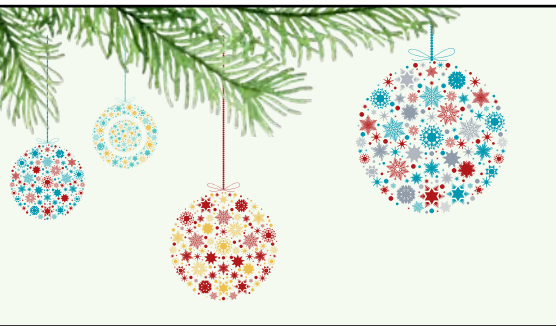
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# Tell Me About It: Neighbor Spotlight Edition!

[As seen on our social media, brought to you by HHA board member, Abi Larimer]

## neighbor SPOTLIGHT



*Liz Prins*

### Neighbor Spotlight: Meet Liz Prins

Q: Tell us about yourself

A: My name is Liz Prins, and I am a local farmer-florist. My whole world is flowers from seed to soil and making eco-friendly, accessible florals for all. Last year I created Earth Worship to further connect the community to locally grown flowers and intuitive designs. When I'm not on the farm, you can find me freelancing for weddings on the weekends or in heritage hill with my cat Pepper taking in inspiration.

Q: How long have you live in HH?

A: I've lived in HH since July 2020, so about 3 1/2 years.

Q: What do you like most about living in HH?

A: What I love most about living in HH has to be the old architecture and thoughtful residential gardens and landscape. Also, watching the seasons shift while walking.

Q: What would make living in HH even better?

A: With the abundance of garden tours and green-based thinking, I believe HH would benefit from a community garden with the intention to grow seasonal food and flowers. I think it would give apartment dwellers and multiple generations a chance to come together to grow and learn on top of providing resources for our local community and hopefully a bounty to share

## neighbor SPOTLIGHT



*Toni & Aubrie Bassett*

### Neighbor Spotlight: Meet Toni & Aubrie Bassett!

Q: Tell us about yourself

A: Hi, I'm Toni and my husband is Aubrie Bassett! We live at the McCabe-Marlowe house with our loud energetic corgi, Mozzarella Cheese Stick. If you've ever passed our corner, odds are you've seen (or heard) her through the window. She takes it upon herself to "protect" the neighborhood. I am a fifth grade teacher and Aubrie works at Spectrum Industries, his family's business. We like to spend our free time exploring restaurants and bars in GR, traveling, and of course fixing up this old home to bring it back to its original glory.

Q: How long have you lived in HH?

A: We have lived in HH for a little under two years. Prior, we lived in the Heartside neighborhood and would walk up and down the HH streets marveling at the historic homes. When it came to purchasing our first home, we wanted to find a house with character and we sure got one!

Q: What do you like most about living in HH?

A: We love the walkability of Heritage Hill! It's great being able to walk to local coffee shops, restaurants, and downtown easily.

Q: What would make living in HH even better?

A: We really enjoy the outdoor events that HH puts on during the summer, and would love to see more of those activities. Whether that's concerts in a park with local bands, intramural sports, and everything in-between, it would be great to have more activities to enjoy the summer weather!

If you see us in the neighborhood on a walk with Mozzi, please stop us and introduce yourselves

# Board Notes

*Discussion at the October 18, 2023 Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting included:*

**Public Comment:** Thanks to board members who attended Planning Commission meeting last month. Updates on ways communication has been improved requested.

**Committee Reports:**

**Administrative:** 2024 board elections – please submit interest by November 1.

**Home Tour:** Five homes currently volunteered – need one more.

**Land Use:** New Chairperson: Matthew Smith – Wayne will continue serving on the committee. Community forums/Zoning roundtable discussion groups scheduled for November 1 and 4 at Central Reformed Church. 300 Wealthy: Barbara, Jim P., and Char K. attended last month’s meeting at HPC. Trinity Health Properties: Plans for developing parking lots on Jefferson within the next three years – mixed use (apartments, retail, office space) buildings, parking garage “framed” by apartments, expanded DASH bus service. Heritage Hill Park Artwork: exploring adding a sculpture, process for renaming of the park.

**Community Engagement:** New office space open house November 8. Caroling December 10. Annual Meeting at Sweet House December 12. Plans for 2024: same events as 2023 plus exploring more movies in Pleasant Park and an Artist Market.

**Ad hoc committees:**

**Tech/Website:** Request for Proposals issued; receiving consulting from Code for Good West Michigan (free service).

**Staff Reports:** Written reports were submitted.

**Old Business/New Business:**

Received punch list from WOOD TV for old office – mostly minor cosmetic items. Request for pick-up of old office furniture.

Reports of continued harassment and intimidation of customers at adjacent businesses from protesters at Planned Parenthood on Cherry St.

*Discussion at the November, 2023 Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting included:*

**Treasurer’s Report:** 2024 budget to be reviewed in executive session following the open meeting. Budget was accepted as presented.

**Public Comment:** Neighbor reported being the recipient of unwarranted public criticism by another attendee of the community forum on density and requested more neighborly discourse be required at future HHA events. Neighbor suggested that procedures and training for conflict management and de-escalation be implemented. Neighbors discussed, evaluated and provided detailed feedback of the community forums for board consideration. A call to action was made of the HHA board: Oppose the proposed increase in occupancy from four unrelated adults to six; request that Heritage Hill become a designated overlay district so that its unique needs as a federally recognized historic district be considered and not indiscriminately bound by the

citywide overall strategic plan. Another neighbor thanked the organizers of the community forums, and noted that Heritage Hill is currently 27% owner-occupied; our goal isn’t to reduce occupant density, but to not increase it. He also noted that when zoning issues are presented as “rights”, unique neighborhoods like Heritage Hill lose their voice and eventually their uniqueness.

**Committee Reports:**

**Administrative:** Expectations for respectful conversation will be stated by hosts at all HHA events in the future. Board member with training in conflict de-escalation volunteered to conduct training for HHA staff and board members.

**Nominating:** Committee selection: Suzanne De Haan (chairperson), Mary Robinson, Jim Payne, Jim Talen, and Lisa McManus. Candidates: Liz Bracken, Chris Ervine (incumbent), Julia Hawkins, Liz Hoonhorst (incumbent), Laura Joyce (incumbent), Kimberly Lucas, Jim McClurg, Jennifer Meeks, Jeff Phillips. Absentee ballots will be available November 30. Ballots submitted before the annual meeting on December 12 will be transported in a locked box to the annual meeting. In-person voting to occur at the annual meeting between 6:30 and 8:00 pm. Votes will be tallied by the nominating

*(cont'd on page 14)*

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# Board Notes (cont'd from page 13)

committee between 8:00 and 8:30 after which the five new board members for 2024-2026 will be announced.

Home Tour: Four single-family homes and two apartments currently volunteered – need one more. Homework assignment for board members: provide names and/or addresses of one potential future home tour host. Suggestions to appeal for hosts at the annual meeting and on social media.

Community Engagement: Annual meeting at Sweet House December 12. Caroling December 10.

Fundraising: Liz H. and Denise C. identified Printify to maintain website and inventory of merchandise. They will meet with Barbara to work out website login procedures. Hoping to be operating by December 12. Rich suggested they also consider locally-owned The Mitten State.

Land Use: Community forums/ Zoning roundtable discussion groups – Approximately 100 people attended each of the two meetings. Rowan Brady, planning consultant, HH neighbor, and a member of the HHA land use committee, opened

the meetings with introductory remarks and summary of relevant terms. Break-out sessions followed by comments and feedback. Land use committee to issue a written report.

Ad Hoc Committees - Office Relocation: Don Rietema completed most of WOOD TV's punch list pro bono.

Tech/Website: Meeting with Code for Good West Michigan went very well. Website is still in development but the framework is in place. Jeremy C. proposed to make the Tech/Website committee no longer ad hoc but permanent. Barbara to check bylaws to determine the procedure for creating a new permanent committee.

Old Business: Reports of harassment and intimidation of customers at adjacent businesses from protesters at Planned Parenthood. GRPD advised that there has been no enforceable actionable items but there has been an increase in police presence.

New Business: Stoffer Home annual event. No record of permits at the city's Code Admin office. Reports of traffic and parking challenges.

Adjournment for executive session to discuss 2024 budget: 7:54 pm. 2024 Draft Budget approved in executive session.

*If you would like an item placed on the Board agenda, please call the HHA office at 459-8950 before 4:00 p.m. of the second WEDNESDAY of the month. If you would like to address the Board regarding an agenda item, public comment is taken at the beginning of each meeting. For non-agenda items, public comment is taken at the end of each meeting. Typically, Board meetings run from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.*

*If you would like to receive monthly Board agendas via email, please email us your request.*



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*Thanks to all who came out for the last guided walking tour of 2023.*

*Victorian Christmas Walking Tour with Caroline Cook of GR Running Tours was a sold-out event and we look forward to more in 2024!*

*[photo courtesy of Caroline Cook.]*

*Thanks to outgoing HHA President, Richard App, for hosting the incoming and outgoing board members at his home before the holidays!*

*Pictured, left to right: Bryan Cody (incoming President); James Scozzari (Secretary); Suzanne De Haan (Vice President); Richard App (outgoing President); Barbara Draughon (Exec. Dir.); Carolyn Ferrari (Treasurer).*



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*Neighborhood Improvement & Public Safety organizing efforts of the Heritage Hill Association are in part funded by the City of Grand Rapids' Community Development Block Grant Programs.*



**2024 DATES TO REMEMBER**

*All Heritage Hill Association Meetings are open to neighbors.*

**Wednesday, February 21,  
 March 20, April 17 @ 7pm**

HHA Board Meeting  
 Community Education  
 Conference Room

*Trinity Health/Hauenstein Center,  
 220 Cherry St. SE*

**Wednesday, February 7,  
 March 7, April 3, 5-7pm**

Heritage Hill First Wednesdays  
 Happy Hours  
*The Commons, @ The Oakwood,  
 547 Cherry St. SE*

**Monday, February 19, 2024**  
 Herald content deadline  
 March/April issue

**Annual Dates**

**Saturday and Sunday  
 May 18 & 19, 2024**

Annual Weekend Tour of Homes

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