



IF HOME IS TRULY WHERE THE HEART IS, my home is still in a neighborhood off Bass Lake Road in Maple Grove; my heart is shooting baskets in the driveway.

I spent nearly my entire childhood and most of my life in that humble house in what I like to call “the last of the real neighborhoods.” It was a nice home, but there was nothing terribly luxurious about it: three levels, three bathrooms, a deck that we eventually added on, a sizable basement that was eventually finished and a garden my mom so cleverly—or so she thought—shaped like a heart (Get it—the Harts? I wasn’t impressed either). But it was good enough for the people who lived there, sometimes better—hence the broken door and railing and the resulting punishments I received for hosting parties in my irresponsible teenage years.

For better or worse, our home was open to all, often serving as a central meeting point for my friends. Whether we were gathering before a big high school football game, having a summer barbecue or sitting around playing video games, that house off Bass Lake Road was where the action was. Like Chris and Stephanie Oleksy (read more about their home on page 16), our house was made to entertain.

But I still find myself thinking about the little things that made that place home: the fence in the back yard used for homerun derbies, the garage door marked with dents from dirty tennis balls and, of course, the greatest basketball hoop of all time. Rain or shine, summer, spring or fall, that’s where I went to think, imagine and—most important—play.

My parents moved out shortly after becoming empty-nesters in 2005, but it’s comforting to know a nice family with two little kids moved in. I’d like to think their childhood memories will be kind of like mine. I hope that old hoop grows on them like it did me. But when the folks are out of town, I hope they have more sense—no parties!

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LETTERS OF THE MONTH



→ I enjoyed reading about myself and our geothermal heating/AC unit in [the November] issue (“Going Green,” page 10). Maple Grove Community Organization is considering offering a “Go Green in Maple Grove” home tour during Maple Grove Days (in July). There is a neighboring house with a solar roof and our house could be one of the demo places. We need to find solar water heating and on-demand water heating. —Ken Pengelly, *Maple Grove home owner*

→ Thanks so much to *Maple Grove Magazine* for sponsoring our first-ever Girl’s Night Out benefitting Hope Chest for Breast Cancer (on October 1, 2009). The event was attended by more than 200 women. We plan to make it an annual event and are confident that we will raise even more money [in 2010]. Thanks again for partnering with us on this fabulous event! —Jennifer Zafft, *The Shoppes at Arbor Lakes*

Editor’s Note: Thoughts to share? Comments on a story you think we just must know? We want to hear everything: the good, the bad and the ugly. Shoot us an e-mail, subject line Letter to the Editor: maplegrovemag@tigeroak.com.

THANK YOU | A special “thank you” goes out to Chris and Stephanie Oleksy for sharing their beautiful home with us, and also to Jeremy Skogquist and NIH Homes for showing us the ins and outs of their fine workmanship. It was a pleasure working with all of you, and I hope it will inspire others to share their home with us.

SHARE YOUR HOME | Did you recently remodel or have some work done on your home? Or maybe you have a unique room you’d like to share? *Maple Grove Magazine* is searching for its next house and home ideas to give our readers a sense of how the community is nesting, so send us a tip at maplegrovemag@tigeroak.com.

GET OUT OF TOWN ... and bring us with you! We’d love to publish a photo of you and your family and/or friends holding *Maple Grove Magazine* while on vacation. E-mail us your high-res photos.