

# COMMUNITIES BEGIN TO RESTRICT LEAF BLOWERS

Many residents of Ansley Park may remember fall as a season to be outside and enjoy the changing color of the trees. Shuffling through fallen leaves or raking them into piles to jump in are joyful memories of my childhood. Today, however, leaves seem to have become the enemy of our manicured lawns. Gas powered blowers arrive every week, year round, tediously removing leaves while polluting the air with unhealthy gas exhaust and loud noise that is nearly intolerable. How did we get to this point?

Backpack blowers were originally invented for use as chemical foggers. In the 1970s they were modified and marketed to clear leaves. Sales exploded. In the 1990s California passed regulations that forced manufacturers to make slightly quieter and less polluting machines. Even with improvements, 2-cycle gas engines still create more pollutants in 30 minutes than driving a Ford pickup 3,800 miles. And they produce sound in the 100 decibel range, causing unhealthy noise exposure to operators and even to persons hundreds of feet away.

Some communities, especially in California, were quick to realize that they had a problem. Carmel-by-the-Sea and Beverly Hills banned gas blowers in the 1970's. Now twenty California cities have gas blower bans. A few cities outside of California also have complete bans,

notably Washington, D.C. Many cities restrict gas blower use during certain hours or prohibit especially noisy machines. These partial restrictions, however, are difficult to enforce. The most dramatic development in gas blower regulation is California's coming statewide ban on the sale of all small gas engines. Beginning in 2024, new lawn equipment must be powered by quieter, less polluting electric motors.

In Georgia such a gas blower ban is very unlikely. In fact, a bill was introduced in the state legislature last year to prohibit regulation of gas-powered lawn tools. It didn't pass, but it did have a chilling effect on some communities that were considering blower bans. The Atlanta city council resolved in 2021 to explore the possibility of further restricting gas blowers, but for now, Atlanta only prohibits their use between 8 pm and 8 am.

We may not need government intervention. There are now many lawn care companies that have switched to battery electric tools. Some residents of Ansley Park are already using these companies and others are thinking of changing. If you haven't switched yet, please consider your neighbors and make the change.

– John Long, Contributor



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## MOVIE NIGHT

**WE'VE GOT THE SCREEN**  
**WE'VE GOT THE PROJECTOR**  
**WE'VE GOT THE POPCORN,**

Now we just need your lawn. Oh, and a little electricity,  
but we have the extension cords too!!

The APCA Special Events Committee is starting an Ansley Night at the Movies series. We are looking for folks with a front or back lawn to help make this event happen and you can have input on the movie selection! Contact **Randy Stearns** at 415-269-3887 or [randy.stearns@outlook.com](mailto:randy.stearns@outlook.com)

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