
◊ Oakridge News ◊

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A Publication of the Oakridge Neighborhood Association

June - 2003

Message From the Mayor

~Reprinted from the Garland City Press

Yellow ribbons on their lapels or tied around trees, flying "Old Glory" and the sending of care packages are just some of the ways that the people of Garland have shown their support for our soldiers. The intense days of fighting of Operation Iraqi Freedom are over and many of our troops are coming home; however, there are still peacekeeping efforts that will require some of our men and women to remain in Iraq for a period of time. Whether or not you agreed with the President about going to war, we all must agree that the young men and women of the Marines, Army, Air Force, and Navy deserve our continued support for putting their lives on the line each and every day to protect and defend the United States and for their role in liberating the people of Iraq.

Ten employees of the City of Garland have been called to active duty. Several employees of the Garland Independent School District and numerous other citizens and employees from businesses throughout Garland are also serving our country. Members of the 254th Combat Communications Group of the Air National Guard located here in Garland are also serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom. In fact, one of Garland's own

was part of the team from the 1st Marines, 3rd LAR-Delta Company that rescued the seven POWs in Tikrit on April 13.

We have had a front row seat for Operation Iraqi Freedom with so many of the news media outlets having embedded reporters with the troops. This has given us a first hand account of what life is like during war. At times it has been very disturbing and at times very heartwarming. Rob Milford, news reporter for CBS who traveled with the Marines of the 2nd Tank Battalion, related in an e-mail to friends the following about the night before he left Iraq, "I look up at the stars and cry softly. The tears come down my cheeks, soak to the sleeping bag that has been my home, and I want to take it all in, to hold it....to never let the moment go. To bring all this with me, to tell the story of these young men who do what their country asks. It has been a huge privilege to be a witness to it all ... and that overcomes the dirt, and sweat and fear that were the prime components of my life with the Marines, I have changed in ways I don't even know."

Our appreciation for those who serve has certainly been heightened during the last few months, and they have changed our lives and the lives of others for many years to come.

FROM OUR CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

Council Completed Busy Retreat

By Mark Monroe, Garland Council Member, District 7

Dear Friends and Neighbors of Oakridge:

Last month, Council took its annual retreat to formulate its goals for the upcoming fiscal year. One of the main topics was homestead exemption. Those of you receiver my e-mail updates have seen a detailed explanation of the benefits and consequences from this. (E-mail me at council7@ci.garland.tx.us if you would like to be added.) The basics are a 5% homestead exemption and an extra \$5,000 for senior citizens per year. This will equal approximately \$32 a year for houses \$100,000 and less. It will also have an impact on city services as it will reduce the operating budget by approximately \$1.5 million. I have no concerns about the

effect on this year's budget, but next year's will start off \$4 million in the hole.

Other issues discussed at the retreat were the bond program for 2004, senior/assisted housing development, Eastgate Area development plan, municipal courts operations, electric billing process, shop Garland marketing program, and multicultural strategy, to name a few. Furthermore, we reflected on the items that were discussed at last year's retreat. All in all, I felt that we have made many positive strides for Garland.

Closer to home, Hertiage Square Animal Clinic, located in Richardson, will be moving to Garland at Collins and Jupiter. We welcome him and his business to Garland.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 972-495-8028 or council7@ci.garland.tx.us.

OAKRIDGE WOMEN'S CLUB

THE OAKRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD ANNUAL 4TH OF JULY PARADE

This event has become a favorite in our neighborhood. Please decorate yourself, your bikes, wagons, golf carts, etc... and join the parade! We will meet at the main entrance to Oakridge Country Club at 9:00 a.m. and the parade will begin by 9:30 a.m.

We will again ask the C.O.P. members to join us in making this a safe and fun neighborhood event.

The OWC would like to especially thank **Nazly** and **Sarah** for coordinating this event!

We would ask that all members of the neighborhood mark your calendars now and plan to attend this wonderful event. Bring your children, grandchildren, friends, etc... Please take this opportunity to show your pride in our Country, and to meet some of your Oakridge neighbors.

Refreshments and small prizes will be provided. This event is FREE to participants, as it is funded entirely by the OWC and through donations. We will list all donors in next month's newsletter.

We are seeking active and retired military members to make this year's parade special by wearing their uniforms. We would like our children to have the opportunity to meet some real live heroes!

Our July meeting will be a swim party on Monday, July 7th at Tracy's house. Please contact Tricia to coordinate an item to bring.

If you would like more details about upcoming events or joining the OWC, please contact our President, Tricia at tklimko@attbi.com or 972-414-9141.

Oakridge Women's Club is open to all women in the Oakridge neighborhood who share a strong common bond in the love of our children and families. We welcome prospective new members at all meetings! Annual dues are \$20.00.

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The refrigerator repairman is coming today but you have an important meeting

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You need a week away, but Kitty and Rover don't want to go to the Kennel

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Going away?

Get a 'sitter' to fool burglars

-Reprinted from the Dallas Morning News Ask Ben article

Dear Ben: Each summer we go away for three to four months. We do everything we can to secure our home (stop mail and newspaper delivery, have lawns and hedges cut, inform neighbors, have someone check our house periodically, etc.), but I don't know how we can stop people from leaving fliers, notices, ads, etc., on (or around) our front door.

After a few days it's a dead give-away that we're not around. We've asked neighbors to be on the lookout, but they often forget. Any suggestions?

Rob, via e-mail

Dear Rob: You're a good scout, Rob! As a former paperboy (I threw an afternoon route for three years and a morning route for two more) I easily spotted who had gone out of town through the "dead giveaway" signals you mention.

Vacationers openly invite the bad guys to break into their homes (or apartments) thanks to overflowing mailboxes or newspapers stacking up on the porch.

But the bigger challenge that's completely out of our control? Those advertising fliers or occasional phone book deliveries - wildcards that are impossible to predict or prevent.

Are you a pet owner? Consider hiring a pet sitter. Internet-friendly pet owners can find a wealth of resources online.

Studies have proved that pets that are allowed to stay in their home environments suffer far less stress than those shipped off to the confines of pet jail. Have multiple pets? Most pet-sitting services will cut group-rate deals that can save you some real cash when compared to the boarding alternatives.

Obviously, verifiable references and bonding are a must before you (literally) throw the keys to your home to a perfect stranger, but assuming you find someone you're comfortable with to take care of Fluffy and Fido, a dependable pet sitter can double as an effective deterrent to rouge fliers and assorted direct-response advertising that end up on your front doorknob or in your mailbox.

What, no pets? There must be a trustworthy entrepreneur living nearby who would be happy to stop by your house every day to pick up these stray materials from your porch or yard.

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Red Light Photo Enforcement

-Reprinted from Garland City Press

Each year, red light runners cause as many as 218,000 traffic collisions in the United States. 181,000 people are injured and 880 people are killed in these crashes. These injuries and deaths cost the public some \$14 billion annually, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

In 2002, more than 3,100 collisions occurred on Garland roadways, injuring almost 2,500 people. 1,362 crashes occurred at Garland intersections resulting in two fatalities. The Garland Police Department issued more than 9,000 tickets for red light violations last year. The City plans to utilize technology to supplement the manpower required to enforce red light running laws. The Garland City Council passed an ordinance on March 4 to create the Red Light Photo Enforcement program in Garland. Automated cameras will be set up at several Garland intersections. These cameras will photograph vehicles that cross into the intersection after the light has turned red.

"Every time a motorist runs a red light, they run the risk of serious injury or even death for themselves, occupants of other cars, or pedestrians," says Garland Police Department Public Information Officer Lt. Don Martin. "The goal of Red Light Photo Enforcement is to change driver behavior, which will save lives and reduce injuries."

Such programs are in use in more than 70 communities across the nation. Studies indicate that Red Light Photo Enforcement reduces intersection injury crashes

25 to 30 percent. In Howard County, Maryland, the number of crashes at every camera location dropped from 21 to 37 percent each.

Garland's enforcement program will start with four sets of cameras at three intersections: one at northbound Plano Road at Buckingham Road, one at southbound Jupiter Road at Kingsley, and two at Northwest Highway and the LBJ Freeway service road. Each intersection will be clearly marked as a photo enforcement site.

"Other cities have seen a 'spillover effect' meaning that drivers not only are more careful at intersections with photo enforcement, but they're also less likely to run red lights at other intersections," says Lt. Martin.

The City has contracted with ACS State & Local Solutions, Inc. to install, monitor, and maintain the enforcement camera systems.

The City will pay a monthly base fee of \$5,600 per intersection approach, provided the revenues from fines meet or exceed the base fee. Any monthly deficits will be rolled over to the next month for the life of the contract.

"The program is intended to be self-funding," says City Attorney Charlie Hinton. "Any revenues in excess of the costs of maintaining the program will be reinvested into community education or additional traffic enforcement or safety programs."

To find out more about the City's Red Light Photo Enforcement program, contact Lt. Don Martin at 972-205-2130 or Dorothy White at 972-205-2879.

C.O.P./Crime Watch

By Bill Olive

Over 50 Oakridge residents have signed up to participate in "**Operation Blue Siren**". At O.N.A.'s, May general membership meeting, Garland police officers, McCully and Tannock, explained this new, innovative program. Blue Siren will enable our N.P.O.'s or any Garland officer to e-mail alerts to me or and my alternate who will then forward the alerts to all 50+ residents. This will give Oakridge the ability to know of serious problems, which might affect our area, almost immediately. Here is an example: Suppose there is an escape from the Plano jail (of course, Garland doesn't allow this) and the prisoner was last seen walking along Jupiter Road near Oakridge. Officers Tannock and McCully would send an e-mail with attachments (if available) to the Oakridge C.O.P. We then forward the e-mail to Oakridge "Blue Siren" participants. When residents receive the e-mail, they can look out their windows and report any sightings of the wanted person as well as share the information they've received with neighbors. This is a "win" "win" situation for Oakridge and the Garland Police Department as it gives the police department an additional 50 pairs of eyes in the event of such an occurrence. A GREAT BIG THANK YOU to all residents who've signed up. I sent e-mail's to persons who had listed their e-mail address in our last O.N.A. directory, however many of those addresses were no longer valid. If you would like to be part of this program, give me a call at 972-495-3402 and provide your e-mail address, or e-mail me at in-dexva@attbi.com. The more people we have participating, the better. Understand that this will not be a daily occurrence; we may only have one-two incidents per year so this isn't going to be a full time job. We also need to thank officers Tannock and McCully for bringing this program to Oakridge. I know they've spent many hours of their own time working on this. Oakridge is the first neighborhood in Garland to initiate "**Operation Blue Siren**", but it has been successfully tested in the many apartment complexes in Garland.

April incident not previously reported:

2800 block of Big Oaks, 4/30/03, "burglary of habitation."

May incidents reported within Oakridge:

3300 block of Ridge Oak, 5/2/03 "burglary of habitation".
2700 block of Stoneridge, 5/5/03 "criminal mischief", 1:15pm.
2100 block of Rolling Oak, 5/13/03 "vehicle burglary" 6pm-9am.
2600 block of Meadowridge, 5/26/03, "unauthorized use of auto".

Now that vacation time has arrived, please remember that the Garland Police Dept. offers a program to residents called "vacation house watch". Garland Police's non-emergency # is 972-205-2150 to call and obtain information about this program. A uniformed police *volunteer* will check your home while you are away. The C.O.P. will also keep an eye on your home while

we patrol. Just give us a call and let us know the dates you will be away. By the way, if you need to contact a City of Garland department and don't know the number just call 972-205-2000 (main number) and ask the operator for assistance.

Did you know? During calendar year 2002, Garland patrol units made 24,634 traffic stops! A word of advice, police still don't like to be called "cops". The media and many others use this term extensively, however, "officer" would be a much more respectful term. Remember, if you're pulled over, here is one thing you should **never** say!

"Aren't you the guy from village people?"

There is still room for anyone wishing to sign up for C.O.P. training. Classes are sponsored and taught by the Garland Police Dept. If interested, call me and I'll get you an application.

Many of us, because of the heat of summer, leave our garage doors partially open. Unfortunately, this is a potential invitation to someone wanting to gain access to your valuables. Make sure that the opening isn't sufficient for someone (including children) to roll under the door and gaining access to your garage valuables as well as possibly your entire home.

As a word of warning, test your security system monthly! The Garland police have a program in which they will check out your house and show you potential security problems to help you protect your home. **Finally**, check your deadbolt locks, many of them are the originals which were installed by the builder, and one of our residents recently learned (the hard way) that some deadbolts don't fully set into the metal slot, this makes it easier for someone to jimmy open your door. Better still, invest in one of the newer, more secure deadbolts that are available at Home Depot, Lowe's and local hardware stores.

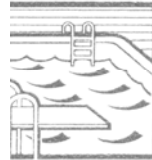
IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Police & Fire Emergencies	911
Police Non-Emergencies	972-205-2150
Lone Star Gas	1-800-817-8090
Solid Waste & Recycling	972-205-3500
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Tommy Cobb	972-485-6418
Animal Services	972-205-3570
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