
◊ Oakridge News ◊

Vol. 12 No. 02

A Publication of the Oakridge Neighborhood Association

July - 2003

OAKRIDGE WOMEN'S CLUB Parade was a great success!

The OWC's annual 4th of July neighborhood parade was a great success! This event was possibly the biggest parade Oakridge has ever seen! The OWC would like to especially thank **Nazly Haroon** and **Sarah Justiss** for coordinating this event, and to the **Oakridge C.O.P.** volunteers for blocking all the streets and making sure everyone was safe. The C.O.P. volunteers should be commended for all the work they do to keep our neighborhood safe on a daily basis.

There were several donors and volunteers that made this event possible. The OWC would like to thank:

Albertsons donated food and drinks.

All OWC Members for volunteering your time and energy to make the event possible!

OWC Members **Amy Jahnel** and **Pam Trutna** made donations for the event.

Chuck E. Cheese – Richardson sent Chuck E. Cheese to be in the parade.

C.O.P. volunteers handed out flyers, cleared the streets and kept us safe.

Doug Klimko – C.H. Robinson Worldwide made a donation.

Garland Fire Station 3, A-Shift brought two fire trucks, an ambulance and lots of firemen.

Garland Police Department sent squad cars.

Oakridge Country Club provided golf carts, drinks and the grand prizes for the event.

Peggy Richey – Keller Williams Realty provided prizes (flags, balls, stickers, etc...).

Starbucks Richardson provided prizes for the event.

Our August meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on August 5th at Taste of Italy restaurant. Please R.S.V.P. to Tricia. The program is officer elections and to plan the 2003-2004 year, so please plan to attend this important meeting.

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.



JULY'S GARDENING TIPS

By Garden Lover

Driving around Oakridge its obvious many people had flowering plants early in the season, but have allowed their beds to grow barren or straggly. Although we were fortunate to have rain throughout the spring, as summer comes and it grows hotter, we may find that the spring rains have gone away, but our plants still want water. Now is the time to start conditioning your yard and plants to deal with less water—use your sprinklers wisely, but remember that blooming plants generally need to be watered more than the lawn. Get out that hose, or, if you have a sprinkler system, turn on those zones that water your shrubs and flowers and water them more frequently than the zones for the grassy areas.

Deadhead (remove spent blossoms) from flowering plants and shrubs frequently to prevent them from growing lanky and going to seed and thereby cease blooming. Fertilize and water the plants according to the specific needs of the plant, don't over fertilize. Too much nitrogen will encourage green growth, but reduce the flowers, so use a fertilizer that has less nitrogen. I've found that a 14-14-14 type fertilizer produces nice flowering without overgrowing.

Didn't plant blooming plants earlier in the season? It's not too late, nurseries still have a variable selection that can be planted now and will give you blooms on into the fall. Annuals, such as zinnias, plumed celosia and petunias, as well as vinca, and colorful non-flowering plants such as coleus can still be planted. So you say July's too hot for you to work outside? This is Texas—it never gets too hot! Buy your plants late in the day, take them home and water them if the soil in the pot(s) seems dry to the touch. Then get up early the next morning, and plant them! Water well around the plants after you put them in. I've found that using a small amount of root stimulator in a watering can will help the plants take hold and grow quickly and stronger. (For those who don't know, Root Stimulator can be purchased at the local "home supply stores", it comes in a jug, and you need to use only a small amount, mixed with water, in a watering can to get great results with any newly installed type plant, including trees!) Don't forget to add mulch to keep the soil moist around the plants.

Watch for insects—summer is a prime time for aphids. Aphids attract ants and you certainly don't want to encourage them to move into your yard! Check with your local hardware, home supply store or exterminator for specific methods to protect against these little pests or to remove those that may have already attacked your plants.

Some plants are classified as butterfly attractors, and they're the favorite food of caterpillars, so when purchasing plants, look for tags that indicate it is a favorite of butterflies. Butterflies will lay their eggs on or near these plants. When the eggs become caterpillars, you may notice some damage to the leaves on your plants, but they generally don't kill the plant. Best of all, those ugly caterpillars will later become beautiful butterflies flitting around your garden.

Most of all, plant specimens you like—try to include flowers and shrubs that add texture, color, and smell good and enjoy your garden, no matter what the size. We hope you have fun in your garden—and stay cool- until next month!

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CRIME WATCH/PREVENTION

BY BRENDA OLIVE

Did you know that statistics show that a typical burglar will push or pry on a door or window for only 60-90 seconds—if he can't get in within that time he'll go somewhere else. This tells you that basic home security is made up of two things: making sure your home looks like it will be difficult to get in, and ensuring that forced-entry is a problem for anyone who is foolish enough to try. Below are a couple of basic security measures to take to help prevent you from becoming a target. I'll provide more next month.

Unlocked doors and windows: Most burglaries occur between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. and a great many are done without picking, prying or breaking anything to get in. It's important to check your doors and windows; make sure you haven't left one unlocked.

Door chains: While these may seem like a good idea, a peep hole is better. A good shove can pull the door chain right out of the door and provide quick entry.

Peep holes: Use this to see who is outside your door—if you can't see, don't open the door! A crook may knock or ring your bell then duck down to wait for you to open your door.

Invitations!!! This is a big one—don't advertise your new purchases, such as computers and its accessories, TV's, stereos, power tools, etc. by putting the empty boxes outside for garbage pick up. Break the boxes down, make sure any printing/labels are turned inside and if possible, put them into a large garbage bag. If the boxes are too big, then break them down, turn them inside out and tie them up so they don't spring open.

Finally, let's talk about vandalism—when you damage someone else's property you are vandalizing that property. This seems to be a problem in Oakridge according to the monthly crime stats. Hitting someone's mailbox can be a federal crime, and breaking side mirrors, or windows on cars or trucks can result in a court appearance, (at the very least). If you're a parent, talk to your child; warn him/her about the consequences of committing the act of vandalism. If you're a golfer and you accidentally break a window, contact the home owner, don't just drive or walk on by—this too can be considered an act of vandalism.

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Homestead Exemption - A Rush to Judgement

At its June 16, 2003, meeting our city council members voted in a new 5% homestead exemption. This new exemption will be reflected in our property tax statement we will receive in October 2003. Enjoy your savings!

It appears to this writer that four councilmen attempted to buy votes by approving, at the last minute, an approximately \$32.00 savings on a home valued at \$100,000.00. If we have a mortgage on our home there are likely to be escrow accounts for taxes and/or insurance, thus we will **never** see the savings. If one is fortunate to not have a mortgage, we too will not see the savings. One additional councilman's position on this matter is logical and defensible, thus the vote was 5 vs. 4. A question was asked by one of the four (who voted in favor of the exemption) what the city's financial position would be as a result of this new exemption. The answer given by the city budget department indicated an approximate \$2 million dollar deficit. A follow up question was asked by the same individual, what would the city's position be without the new exemption. The budget department indicated our city could expect to be in a break even situation. And the council voted in the exemption. The deficit grows even larger in coming years. Did our council act fiscally responsible with their vote?

Where will our elected officials get the additional \$2

million dollars for fiscal year 2003– 2004 and beyond? Raise our tax rate or "borrow" from GP&L? If it "borrows" from GP&L, 85% of the residents will be paying for 100% of the money "borrowed"! Is that fair? It is of utmost importance that we as GHC members, as individual association and as individuals become keenly aware how our city council acts. It is not "political" to be concerned as to how our money is expended by the city.

Mike Rose

COMEDY CORNER

By: E.S.

For those who're feeling a bit older and missing those great old tunes, there's some good news! Some of our favorite artists have re-released their great hits with new lyrics to accommodate us—their aging, but faithful audience.

- A. The Bee Gees – "How Can You Mend A Broken Hip"
- B. The Temptations – "Papa's Got a Kidney Stone"
- C. Nancy Sinatra – "These Boots Aren't Made For Bunions"
- D. Marvin Gaye – "I Heard It Through The Grape Nuts"
- E. Procol Harum – "A Whiter Shade of Hair"
- F. Johnny Nash – "I Can't See Clearly Now"
- G. Leo Sayer – "You Make Me Feel Like Napping"
- H. Commodores – "Once, Twice, Three Times To The Bath"

July C.O.P. Report By Bill Olive

June was not a great month for crime incidents within Oakridge. We had 8 incidents reported; however, seven were simple "criminal mischief". We are going to discuss this problem with our NPO officers and see if we can get more frequent G.P.D. patrols within Oakridge during the late evening and early morning hours.

Incidents

The following addresses had Criminal Mischief:
3100 block of Ridge Oak, date: 6/02, time: around 8pm
2500 block of Meadowridge, date: 6/03, time: early am.
2800 block of Stoneridge, date: 6/03, time: early am.
2800 block of Stoneridge, date: 6/04, time: early am
3300 block of Ridge Oak, date: 6/11, time: unknown
2800 block of Stoneridge, date: 6/22, time: early am
2400 block of Golden Oaks, date: 6/26, time: 7:30 pm

The following address had Burglary of Vehicle
2600 block of Suncrest, date: 6/23, time: early am

Parade

The C.O.P. had the pleasure of helping The Oakridge Women's Club with their annual 4th of July Parade again this year. We had 8 enthusiastic patrollers available. A special thanks to G.P.D. Officer Mike Guentherman, who was able to break away from the city's celebration, to add his police cruiser to Oakridge's parade. Fire station #3 came through again by providing us with three (yes 3!) units. A big thanks to Captain Bellows of shift A. These guys/girls are always there when you need them! In addition, this year there was a Coast Guard Auxiliary boat in the parade---if you weren't there, you missed a great parade, not only because of these "professionals", but also because of the many children who came out and showed their patriotic spirit!

C.O.P. Class on August 2

If you would like to join the C.O.P., now is your chance. Officer Tannock is accepting applications for openings for the next class to be held on Saturday, August 2 from 9am to 5pm. You must get the application into the G.P.D. A.S.A.P. so contact me right away. We would like to have you on board.

Solicitors

We continue to have a great many groups and companies soliciting here within Oakridge. Here are some things you should know:

1. Non-profit organizations and religious groups do not need a permit and may solicit even where there is a sign stating "No Soliciting."

2. A company that is in the business of placing handbills on front doors does not need a permit. However, if a company such as a restaurant hands out fliers for its business, they need a permit (cost \$20) from the

city. If you have a "No Soliciting" sign these companies need to comply.

3. People knocking on doors trying to sell items must have a permit from the city. Most of the groups doing this in Oakridge never have a permit. Many will have a picture ID from their group. This is not proper ID. If you encounter one of these people, do not let them into your home, give them no personal information---rudeness is acceptable.

4. If you have any type of "wrong" feeling about solicitors, call the C.O.P. at 972-495-3402 or the Garland Police 972-205-2150-- press 0. Remember, when in doubt, call them out. If you call the C.O.P. we will try to get someone out to the location and see if we feel police need be called.

Our Neighborhood Police Officers

The C.O.P. has established a great working relationship with our two N.P.O.s, Officer Tannock and Officer McCully. I contact them frequently to get answers for our residents, thereby eliminating the need for intervention by the G.P.D. This allows these officers more time to answer "high priority" calls.

NO SOLICITING SIGNS

JUST A REMINDER, WE STILL HAVE NO SOLICITING SIGNS AVAILABLE---AND THEY DO HELP! THE MORE WE HAVE IN OAKRIDGE THE FEWER SOLICITORS WILL COME INTO THE AREA.

A billion is a difficult number to comprehend, but one advertising agency did a good job of putting that figure into perspective in one of its releases:

A billion seconds ago it was 1959.

A billion minutes ago Jesus was alive

A billion hours ago our ancestors were living in the Stone Age.

A billion dollars ago was only 8 hours and 20 minutes, at the rate Washington spends it. --

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
Code Compliance	972-485-6400
Tommy Cobb	972-485-6418
Animal Services	972-205-3570
Poison Center	1-800-764-7661
Street Light Repair	972-205-3483
Electricity Emergency	972-205-3000
Water & Sewer	972-205-3210
Councilman, Mark Monroe	972-495-8028
Off. Chris Tannock NPO tannock@ci.garland.tx.us	972-205-2122



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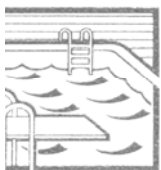
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MEMBERSHIP!

Jackie Griffin

Here it is in the middle of July, our actual membership drive should be over but it seems to be just midway through. At this point we have 444 members! I am hoping to get the directory going and to the printer by the end of August. We still have several people who use to belong that haven't sent in their dues. We hope to contact them soon and see what has happened. The third and final invoice went out last week so we haven't seen the results of that effort as yet. If you know your neighbor hasn't joined, please encourage them to do so! Thanks.

I would also like to thank all of you who have sent in extra money for beautification with your membership dues. There were too many to thank individually.

Oakridge on the Creek

The City Council approved the preliminary plat and detail plan Tuesday, July 8th. It has taken us longer to get engineering plans approval from the City than we had thought. We still do not yet have approval of the flood study and design to reclaim land from the flood plain. We are told by our consulting engineers that they hope to re-submit those plans to the City later this week. Hopefully, then the City will submit the flood study to FEMA. After that, we do not know how long it will take for their approval process. If we are lucky, maybe 2 months.

We may be able to be on schedule for a final engineering plans and FEMA approval approximately October 31st, and a scheduled construction start in November. Five months construction time for excavation, streets & utilities, etc. . Maybe we will be able to start building houses in April 2004.

We have agreed to sell the lots to a prominent national home-builder, already building nearby in Richardson. The Contract is not signed yet, but the lawyers are working on it.

We look forward to being good neighbors to the Oakridge Neighborhood area. Wish us good luck in our project time line.
Larry H. Sumrow, Developer of Oakridge on the Creek

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Something to Think about:

Following are excerpts from a letter written by former Mayor Jim Spence (who is also the immediate past president of TMPA) to the current Garland city council. These comments and ideas expressed should be of concern to all residents of Garland.

"Those of you who I served with during my eight years on the Council know that one of the things I strived to do was to stop the subsidization of the General Fund by the ratepayers of GP&L. As you all know, 85% of Garland's citizens are served by GP&L in a designated GP&L territory and 15% are being served by either TXU or since deregulation, a power company who can sell their power to a Garland citizen customer in a designated City of Garland TXU territory. My philosophy is that any expenditure by the City that benefits ALL the citizens of Garland should be paid for by ALL the citizens of Garland and the General Fund should not be subsidized by the 85% of Garland citizens who are captive customers of GP&L. The City Manager did/does not agree with my philosophy. All of you know that GP&L power rates are set to recover the costs of operating GP&L. This includes GP&L's 47% portion of the cost of operating TMPA. Subsidies going to the General fund are included in the cost of GP&L operating expenses and are passed on in the electric rates charged GP&L ratepayers...."

"With deregulation now firmly in place since January 2002, 15% of Garland citizens have a choice in selecting their power provider and the 85% who are served by GP&L do not have that choice. TXU or any other power entity serving Garland customers only pay to the City of Garland, franchise fees and property taxes. There are no subsidies in their customer's rates that go to the City of Garland General Fund. TXU or any other power entity selling power to Garland customers also pay Federal income taxes, a rate of return to their stockholders, a State Corporate Franchise fee and a State Tax on any Natural Gas they purchase for generation fuel. In GP&L customer rates there are only City Franchise fees and in-lieu-of property taxes. Since GP&L does not pay Federal income taxes, a State franchise fee, a State Tax on natural gas, nor a rate of return to their stockholders (owners/ ratepayers), why is that GP&L rates are not cheaper in comparison to other available rates...."

"The deregulated Texas power market is a different ball game than before deregulation. Whether or not the City Council ever decides to "opt-in" to retail competition, GP&L is in a deregulated market that is operating within the City limits of Garland. Changes in Federal and State Environmental rules and regulations will continue to affect GP&L to a large degree. Couple this with the ever growing debt payment burden at TMPA on GP&L and now the growing TMPA fuel demand charge on GP&L, because of an adverse ruling at the Surface Transportation Board in Washington, D.C., makes it more imperative that GP&L's local operating costs be closely scrutinized and lowered as much as possible.

For instance, I learned shortly before my leaving City Hall, the GP&L budget has in excess of \$500,000.00 a year for travel and professional development. That is over \$40,000.00 per month for around 200 employees. I wonder what else a line-item review of GP&L's budget would reveal...."

"Starting in 1994 with the election of Jamie Ratliff as Mayor and I as District 8 council member, with the help of all Council members, a lot of dollars that were going from GP&L to the General Fund as subsidies were either stopped or moved to the budgets of the appropriate departments. When I was elected Mayor in

1998 I continued this effort. I admit I should have been more aggressive and the job was not finished...."

"It is just a matter of time until GP&L ratepayers figure out there are electric providers serving the 15% of Garland citizens who now have "choice" and these Garland citizens can shop for a lower price for their electricity. Some TXU customers have already determined they can save money by leaving TXU. For all practical purposes, GP&L rates are equal to TXU rates now. There are several power companies allowed to sell power in Garland that are cheaper than either GP&L or TXU, particularly in on-peak times during the summer when everyone's usage goes up...."

"I would hope this Council would continue what was started by the past Council and make every effort to reduce GP&L local expenses, starting now. At the present time there is no benefit to being a GP&L customer. A GP&L customer is paying more for his power than what he could buy it for if he had "choice". He is subsidizing the General Fund through higher electric rates and is responsible for the huge TMPA debt. GP&L customers would be better off if Council cut out the subsidies and raised the property tax rate. At least some GP&L ratepayers could write the property taxes off their income taxes. They can't write off their GP&L subsidies going to the General Fund!! Then 100% of the citizens would be paying for General Fund expenses that benefit 100% of the citizens...."

"I notice the ad is no longer running in the Garland News advertising "GP&L is LOWER". Is this because GP&L rates are no longer "LOWER"? I have noticed that "Utility Rates & Fees" have been discussed by this Council in executive session in recent months. The "Click & Compare" ad is still running but the last information regarding rate comparisons on the GP&L web site was September 2002. In looking at the GP&L web site, most of the information is old. Check it out!! Denton, Greenville & Bryan all post their complete rate information on their web site as well as more current information. Why doesn't GP&L do the same...?"

Is there a cause for concern as a Garland resident? This partial information comes from an individual who knows the politics of Garland and the responsibilities that our elected officials should have to all the citizens of Garland.

USA Today in its 3/10/03 edition had a large article on two Cowboy Churches in Texas. They printed the Cowboy's Ten Commandments posted on the wall at Cross Trails Church in Fairlie, Texas. It was too good not to pass along to you.

Think if we all used these instead of the one with all the "shalt nots" in it, we could probably understand and live up to them a lot better!

- (1) Just one God.
- (2) Honor yer Ma & Pa.
- (3) No telling tales or gossipin'.
- (4) Git yourself to Sunday meeting.
- (5) Put nothin' before God.
- (6) No foolin' around with another fellow's gal.
- (7) No killin'.
- (8) Watch yer mouth.
- (9) Don't take what ain't yers.
- (10) Don't be hankerin' for yer buddy's stuff

Guess cowboys just kinda tell it like it is!!!!

Y'all have a good Day.