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# ◊ Oakridge News ◊

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Vol. 12 No. 03

A Publication of the Oakridge Neighborhood Association

August - 2003

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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.

Oakridge Daytimers  
by Mary Musseman

The daytimers are embarking on their 6<sup>th</sup> year and we're forever thankful to Roberta Jones for taking the initiative to bring together our neighborhood ladies in such a won-derful organization. I hope everyone is having a great summer and looking forward to our next **COFFEE** which will be on Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 a.m. at the home of **Betty Prickett** at 2013 Diamond Oaks, 972-495-1885. Bring along a new neighbor to join us.

**BOOK CLUB** will have their first meeting at the home of **Betty Thomas** at 2706 Laurel Oaks Dr., 972-414-1547 on Friday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. There's still time to read *A Spanish Lover* by Joanna Trollope and join us for a lively discussion.

**BRIDGE** is still going strong on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. and on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. If interested in joining or substituting, please call **Mary Pattie** at 972-496-6486.

**CANASTA** is played every Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. and **Barbe Brunette** at 972-530-4288 keeps track of the daytime schedule and **Margaret Fowler** is in charge of nighttime.

**STITCH & CHAT** will gather with their half finished or forgotten projects on Tuesday, September 16<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at the home of **Norene Murphy**, 2830 Stoneridge, 972-530-6669.

The **ARTS and CRAFTS** group has been recently renamed to **ETC.** **Becky Parks** will gladly share their upcoming adventures, just be prepared for a fun time.

**FUN ON THE RUN** and **OUT TO LUNCH** will be co-chaired by **Lucy Brock** at 972-414-9778 and **Valerie Harper** at 972-495-7236. More info on September 9<sup>th</sup>.

Ladies, **PLEASE** remember you **SECRET PALS.** I'm sure they're looking forward to their next surprise.

**DAYTIMERS** is a social organization that requires residence in Oakridge and \$12.00 annual dues. Daytimers Promotes the Oakridge Community and the Oakridge Neighborhood Association.

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## August C.O.P. Report

by Bill Olive

### July Incidents

7/11/03, Burglary-Vehicle 2800 block of Grand Oak - time Late night  
7/13/03, Burglary-Vehicle 2900 block of Oak Springs - time Late night  
7/20 & 7/28/03, Burglary-Vehicle 2600 block of Meadowridge - time Late night

C.O.P. patrolled over 70 hours in July, A NEW RECORD!

### Welcome New Oakridge Patrollers

On August 2, 2003, The Garland Police Department held its 2003 C.O.P. training class at Oakridge Country Club. Oakridge had two graduates from this class--- welcome and congratulations to Kathleen Gannon and Mark Edwards! A BIG THANKS to the Oakridge Neighborhood Association and the Garland Homeowner;s Coalition for sponsoring the event. Approximately 20 trainees, from all over Garland, participated. At one point there were 5 Garland police cars at the club and we understand Joe Don Davis, the Club's Manager, was asked several times if there was a problem. Golfers were well protected that Saturday! A great big "Attaboy" to all the G.P.D. Officers who did the training.

### C.O.P. "Investigative Unit"

C.O.P. has established an investigative unit to begin looking into the various crime incidents here in Oakridge. We plan to utilize this info to help determine how, when, what, and hopefully, why these incidents occur and determine if there are opportunities for either the C.O.P. or the Garland Police Department to prevent some of these incidents. Jim and Dorothy Tucker will

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.

be heading up this unit, so if you've had an "incident" in the past expect to be hearing from them as we move ahead with this project.

### Blue Vests

After seeing Oakridge Citizens on Patrol's blue vests, Officer Tannock asked if there was some way we could get 20 made up for other C.O.P. organizations in Garland. Logically, if all Garland patrollers wear the same type vest, it will be easier for officers and others to recognize the volunteers. Being the good husband that I am, I conned my wife, Brenda, into making the vests and they were presented to the C.O.P. trainees at the end of their "grueling" class.

### Night Patrols

We're patrolling more during the evening hours trying to reduce the incidents that occur during those hours. Oakridge Citizens on Patrol has also requested that the Garland Police step up patrols in Oakridge during the early morning hours. In addition, we've increased our patrols around the country club property and we will call the GPD when we find unauthorized use of the property per discussion with the club manager. We urge all residents to be considerate of club property and be aware that Oakridge Country Club is a private club, (it's on the sign right in front) the sign doesn't say the property is a bike/play/dog walk area for Oakridge residents. The club is one of the reasons people want to own property in Oakridge, anything that diminishes the value of the club also diminishes the value of your personal property.

### Back to School

By the time you read this article school will be in session for the 2003-2004 school year. Let's all drive carefully and watch out for the students. C.O.P. will be patrolling in the area as much as possible as school buses drop off their precious cargo.

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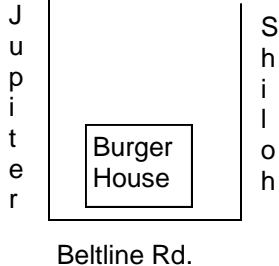
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**CRIME WATCH**

By: Brenda Olive

The magazine "salespeople" are back again. They have sob stories as to why they must sell their magazines-don't believe a word of their song and dance. We've noticed they don't have order books, paper or pens/pencils to take orders. Some of them are plain pesky and won't take no for an answer! Don't let them inside your home or garage. Don't give them an opportunity to check out your property to see what can be easily stolen or easily pawned.

Last week we called 911 and the officer "suggested" to the unwanted visitor that he might find another city more agreeable to his offers. These guys are in mid-teens, look sort of scruffy, they're traveling in vans (last week's vehicle was a dark blue Chevy with Louisiana plates). Unfortunately, I've been advised that because they're "selling out of state articles" they have a right to solicit because of federal interstate commerce laws-HOWEVER they can not solicit you if you have a no soliciting sign in front of your house. If you have one of the signs-and you're approached, simply call 911. If we keep after them maybe they'll get the "you're not welcome in Oakridge" message.

**Good lights vs. Bad lights**

Bad lights! A bad light is an outside light that's on all day. It tells everyone that you're not at home and expect to return after dark. It gives a thief the message that he has plenty of time to rob your home. It also gives other types of criminals the opportunity to secret themselves so they can attack you as you come home.

Good Lights! Purchase a "sensor" at Home Depot or Lowes. Remove the existing light bulb, screw in the sensor, then screw your bulb back into the sensor. Bingo, you have a light that comes on at dark and goes off at dawn. There are some inexpensive ones and they work well. Anyone who can change a light bulb can install one, but if you have any questions, ask for Phil at Home Depot at Jupiter and Buckingham. He'll be able to show you the available options and explain how each works. There are also similar fixtures that fit into existing sockets that have sensors to detect motion, these are another option if you don't want a light on all night.

Bad lights! Another bad light is those little key chain flashlights that are supposed to help you see the key hole. Wonderful!! So you see the key hole, now how do you maneuver the key that's on the same key chain, around so you can get it into that hole?

Don't get me wrong, they're better than nothing, by just a little.

Good Lights! Get a powerful flashlight and keep it in your car in a spot that's easy access for you. If you come home after dark and the power is out (like a couple of weeks ago here in Oakridge) at least you'll be able to see to get into your home more easily and safely. Some flashlights are big enough, long enough and heavy enough to make a great weapon for protection in the event you're stranded on the highway. Get one of those and you're getting to valuable tools for the price of one-just don't forget to put it back in the car if you have to take it out and periodically check it to make sure the batteries are strong.

(Next month-garage door openers-some safety tips.)

**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	972-205-2122
tannock@ci.garland.tx.us	



## GARDEN CORNER

By: Lover of Green Things

This month we're not going to discuss planting, digging, etc. IT IS TOO HOT! Instead, I'll simply remind you to dead head any blooming plants and water them more than your lawn and shrubs. Your lawn should be watered in the morning, about twice a week, with about ½ inch of water each time. If you have spots near the street or drive that dry quickly, water these areas more frequently. Be careful not to over water the remaining lawn to insure you get good, deep roots, so the lawn can withstand cold weather later on.

We're concentrating this month on the dreaded, hated mosquito, with some tips to help keep you safe from the possibility of contracting West Nile Virus. This can be a dangerous, even fatal disease, so every one needs to do their part to prevent it.

1. Check around your yard, look for any standing water. Mosquitoes will lay their eggs and grow in tiny amounts of water. Check the saucers under potted plants, if there's water there, dump it on a concrete surface where it will dry quickly, and then scrub the saucer clean of any remaining scum. If you dump the saucers frequently scum won't have time to grow-less scrubbing!

2. Empty and wash bird baths frequently. With the recent 100+degree weather, most bird baths haven't needed emptying, but they may have that scummy stuff remaining in the bottom. Pour a little household bleach inside (a couple of caps full is all you'll need, add a small amount of water, let it sit for a few minutes, then use a brush to scrub the bowl, and rinse well with your hose- remember to stand back from the bowl when rinsing, otherwise you'll get a scummy, bleach filled shower! After thoroughly rinsing, put it in the sun to dry, then fill it with some ice cubes and water-the birds will love you! And, the scum won't grow as quickly because you've bleached the bowl.

3. If you're "watering in" your foundation, make sure there are no areas where water puddles. Remember, the object of "watering in" is to not to drown your foundation and too much water can be just as damaging as too little.

4. Check around your air conditioner for dripping water-humidity from inside your home condenses outside the a/c and can create an environment for mosquitoes. These pesky little bugs can find water-even small amounts-to lay their eggs!

5. Go to Home Depot or Lowes, look in the insecticide section and you will find small round cakes that are designed to kill mosquito larvae. These can be placed in bird baths (they're not harmful to birds) or other places where water pools or stands. I use them in my bird baths and have found that the scum doesn't seem to grow as quickly so they help reduce my outside workload and keep me in the comfort of air conditioning!

6. Finally, be sure to wear light-colored clothing when working or playing outside, avoid perfume, perfumed soaps, hairsprays etc. and put on lots of insect repellent with Deet to prevent being bitten.

When exercising in the early am or late evening expect there will be more of these nasty little bugs flying around and they're attracted to carbon monoxide (your breathing) so be extra careful during those times. (Of course, you can buy one of those expensive mosquito attracting gadgets and rid your 8 ft. of lawn of mosquitoes as long as you have it on!)

NEXT MONTH-GETTING READY FOR SPRING! (doesn't that sound cool!!!)

SMILE AWHILE BY: E.S.

This month we're bringing you some "goofs" from church bulletins.

- \* The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled due to a conflict.
- \* Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.
- \* Smile at someone who is hard to love and say "hell" to someone who doesn't care much about you.



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### MEMBERSHIP!

Jackie Griffin

Another month has passed and we are still getting members! We are up to 515! This really great! There are still some people who have belonged that haven't rejoined, but that list is getting smaller. Brenda Olive is working hard to get advertisers for the directory and we are trying to get in touch with as many people as possible before we start on the directory. We want to give everyone a chance to join up so they can be part of the directory!

Thanks all of you who have sent in extra money for beautification with your membership dues. It is greatly appreciated!

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