


Oakridge News

Vol. 12 No. 08

A Publication of the Oakridge Neighborhood Association

February - 2004

from Bob Day, Mayor

In May, the citizens of Garland will be called upon to do three important actions relating to our representative government: vote on Council representatives, vote on General Obligation Bonds and, perhaps, vote on changes to the Charter.

On May 15th, the citizens of District 1 (North Garland), District 2 (Central and East Garland), District 4 (Southeast Garland) and District 5 (Southwest Garland) will be electing the individuals that will be representing them on the Garland City Council for the next three years. Although the filing deadline for these positions is not until March 15th, you will soon be hearing about the candidates and their ideas for improving Garland. For our representative form of government to work properly, citizens must become informed about the candidates and make their choices known by voting on elections day, May 15th.

Also on May 15th, the citizens of Garland will be asked to vote to fund new projects and programs through General Obligation Bonds. When approved by the citizens, these bonds allow the City of Garland to borrow money to pay for large, long lasting projects, such as roads, alleys, buildings, land purchases and drainage. Most of the projects authorized in the previous Bond Elections in 1991 and 1997 are already completed or will be begun during this year. Therefore, in May, the City will put before the voters a list of new projects and programs for the 2004 Bond Election.

During the last 6 months with the help of the Area Implementation Committees, Library and Parks Boards and Community Multi-cultural Commission, the City Council and staff have been working to cut a \$700 million "wish list" to a proposal of approximately \$200 million with 70% being street, drainage and infrastructure. By the middle of February, the City Council will finalize the list of projects and program.

Additionally, on May 15th, revisions to the Gar-

land City Charter may be on the ballot. As a Home-rule City under the laws of the State of Texas, the City Charter is the "constitution" for Garland. According to City Council policies, every two years, after the State Legislative session, the Charter is reviewed for any changes that are necessary because of new State laws or that might be desired. The City Council has appointed a Charter Review Committee that will be meeting during January to formulate recommendations to the Council. In February, the Council will consider those recommendations and decide whether or not to put the Charter changes (amendments) before the voters on May 15th.

NEED WELCOME WAGON HOST/HOESSE

BY: Brenda Olive

This is a help wanted advertisement: As many of you know, I took on the job of acting welcome wagon chairperson a little over a year ago because no one had been doing it for sometime. Now I feel it's time to let someone else take charge of this program and reap the benefits of meeting and greeting newcomers to Oakridge. You not only get to know the neighborhood, but at the same time, you get to meet newcomers as well as visit with long time residents. I have baskets, items to enclose in the baskets and the "Welcome to Oakridge" brochure that I will pass on to any willing individual(s). Please call me at 972-495-3402 if you are interested.

I have really enjoyed Welcome Wagon, but, my plate is more than a little full and I'm sure there are others in Oakridge who can do a much better job!

General Meeting

Date - Thursady March 4, 2004

Time - 6:30pm social
7:00pm meeting

Speaker - meet Mayor Bob Day who will discuss what is happening in Garland election of a nominating committee

OAKRIDGE DAYTIMERS

Mary Musseman

Our February Tea was an outstanding success with 46 ladies in attendance. Our heartfelt thanks to Kazue Masuda who demonstrated a Japanese Tea Ceremony with her friend Tadako Rhodes. Thanks to the following ladies who helped make this day possible: Barbe Brunette, Chris Beyers, Valerie Harper, Audrey King, Audrey Golden, Sue Pauley, Karen Bretzke, Betty Prickett, Mary Jo Herring and Mary Pattie.

Our next **COFFEE** will be on **Tuesday, March 9th at 10:00 a.m.** at the home of **Chris Beyers**, 2205 Fulton Drive, 972-530-8292.

E.T.C. will gather on **Monday, March 15th at 10:00 a.m.** at the home of **Dianne Winter**, 2805 Oak Springs Drive, 972-530-6210.

STITCH & CHAT is on **Tuesday, March 16th at 10:00 a.m.** at the home of **Norene Murphy**, 2830 Stoneridge, 972-530-6669.

Our **BOOK CLUB** will meet at the home of **Audrey Golden**, 2506 Creighton Drive, 972-495-6197 on **March 19th at 10:00 a.m.** We will be discussing the book *Will's War* by Janice Woods Winde.

OUT TO LUNCH will meet at the Oakridge pool on **Thursday, March 25th at 11:30 a.m.** and will carpool to Patrizio's. Please R.S.V.P. to **Lucy Brock** at 972-414-9778.

Here are a few names and numbers in case you're interested:

BRIDGE-Mary Pattie 972-496-6486
CANASTA-DAY - Barbe Brunette 972-530-4288
CANASTA-NIGHT-Margaret Fowler 972-530-8585

Any questions regarding Daytimers should be directed to **Chris Beyers** 972-530-8292 or **Mary Musseman**, 972-414-1098. 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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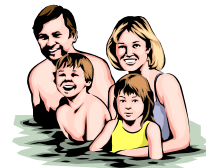
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Crime Watch/C.O.P. Report **By Brenda & Bill Olive**

During the month of January there were three incidents within the Oakridge community, one vehicle burglary (late night) on Golden Oaks, one criminal mischief (late night) on Meadowridge, and one burglary-habitation (daylight hours) on Hickory Bend. This is a welcome decrease from the previous month's number of incidents, however, still three(3) more than we would like.

On Feb. 8, 2004, we issued Oakridge's first "Blue Siren" alert. It was in connection with a vehicle-burglary attempt on Stoneridge Dr. Two males were interrupted when they tried to burglarize a vehicle parked in the alley. This brazen attempt happened at around 12:30pm. The owner did not get the tag # of the car but did call the C.O.P. and the Garland PD. When the C.O.P. responded and was waiting for the police to arrive, we observed the same suspects in their car exiting the Stoneridge alley. They had returned to try again to get the car. The victim began giving chase on foot, however, luckily did not catch the suspects. Their car pulled out onto Stoneridge right in front of the C.O.P. vehicle, turned onto Big Oaks, and then left Oakridge on Shiloh. The C.O.P. patroller in his vehicle DID get the tag # of the suspect's car. A quick call to Garland dispatch was made, tag # given along with a description of car and occupants and direction taken. The police now have some substantial leads to go on to get these suspects.

They were driving a 1992 Honda, red in color, 4 door, tag # C06LMP. The suspects are two Hispanic males, driver quite short, ages around 20-30. If you see this car in our neighborhood (or anywhere) please contact Garland PD (972-205-2150). We hope, next month, we will be able to provide everyone with a positive update. C.O.P will be working with our NPO and Garland detective to provide them with additional information on the suspects.

Our garage door recently developed a habit of not closing completely. We sprayed the moving parts and runners with a silicone spray and the problem seems to have been solved. We mention this to alert homeowners to watch and make sure your garage door closes tightly when you go out or come in. Two weeks ago, an observant home-

owner called us to report that she had not seen her neighbor in about two days and that his garage door had been open all that time. After visiting the home and trying to get someone to answer the front door, the C.O.P. patroller called the Garland PD. An officer responded, got the information from the patroller, and went into the garage. All the officer needed to do was turn the knob on the inside door and he was inside the home. The officer did remove his sidearm and proceeded to search the inside of the house. It turned out that the owner had neglected to make sure that his door had closed when he went away. Thanks to the "heads up" proactive neighbor this homeowner's possessions are still his. In another instance, an alert neighbor noticed his neighbor's garage door had been open for more than 24 hours. He also called the C.O.P. We responded, and after considerable knocking, we roused the neighbor and advised her of the garage door; apparently her son had inadvertently left the door up, she is temporarily physically handicapped and didn't know he hadn't closed the door. Again, the door entering the home from the garage was unlocked. Again, fortunately, nothing had been taken and everything was all right. We remind you, always, always, check to make sure the garage door is down and stays down, and always lock that door going from the garage into the house.

Our NPO, Officer Blassingame, has been attempting to spend about 5 hours per week in our neighborhood. We intend to ask Officer Blassingame to introduce himself at our next ONA general membership meeting. We will also have some more "no soliciting" signs available for purchase.

C.O.P. and Oakridge need your help. Why not spend one or more hours a week patrolling the Oakridge community. It is not as boring as it seems! You will get to meet many of your neighbors and some great police officers. Yes, according to our tax specialist, some of what you do is tax deductible! Give Bill Olive a call at 972-495-3402.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Suitable for Framing Also
Crocheted Angels, Bells, Snowflakes, & Doileys
Call Norene Murphy 972-530-6669

reprinted from the Garland Homeowners Coalition Newsletter Statesmen Series author is former Mayor Jamie Ratliff

During the early and mid 1990's the City of Garland was able to enhance its bond rating with all three of the major debt rating agencies: Moody's, Fitch and Standard and Poors. Because of the financially responsible actions of previous councils, staff and citizen bond review committees, the City of Garland currently enjoys one of the highest ratings nationwide for its debt instruments. These high ratings save citizens hundreds of thousands of dollars (perhaps millions) over the life of these debt issues. However, as witnessed recently with the City of Dallas, debt ratings can be lowered.

What do rating agencies look at when reviewing cities for new debt issues? Everything! Agencies look at everything from existing outstanding debt, to how rapidly the tax base is expanding (or contracting). They look at the overall stability of the local government. They look to responsible planning and budget spending. Future growth prospects are studied as well as overall citizen tax burdens. In essence, the rating agencies look at everything, even going as far as employing clipping services of local newspapers to try to determine what is going on in a community.

During the last couple of years a number of financial concerns and questions have needed to be addressed. Garland's sales tax base as well as ad valorem tax base have not been keeping up with the general increases throughout the Metroplex area. Municipal spending in Garland actually increased by a larger percentage than the corresponding increase in the tax base. City spending has been increasing at a faster rate than the generation of tax and fee revenues.

(continued on page 2 - Ratliff)

OAKRIDGE WOMEN'S CLUB

Upcoming Events

The Oakridge Women's Club has some great activities planned. We will be having our Progressive Dinner on February 21st. Our annual meet the babysitter night will be March 2, 2004 at Libby's house. This is a great opportunity to meet the babysitters in the area and get to ask them questions. The Spring Party / egg hunt will be April 4th from 2 - 5 p.m. The April meeting has moved to April 13th 2004.

If you would like more details about the upcoming events or joining the OWC, please contact our President, Tracy Murphy at 972-496-3165.

The Oakridge Women's Club is open to all women in the Oakridge neighborhood who share a strong and 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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FREE ESTIMATES

(continued from page 4 - Former Mayor Ratliff)

Last year the City Council initiated a 5% home-
stead exemption without corresponding spending
decreases or tax increases. Where did the differ-
ence in needed funding come from? It appears that
like a squirrel eating its stored nuts before winter,
we are spending our reserves. A large portion of
the money came from the water and waste water
reserve accounts, but the council raised our rates to
cover the projected shortfall. Just recently, some
of us learned that Garland Power & Light "lent"
Firewheel Golf Park approximately four million
dollars. Reportedly, this loan was made interest
free for a ten year period. Though GP & L will
carry this amount as a note receivable (an asset) for
ten years, what happens when the rate payer needs
this money for rate mitigation or debt service?
Will electric rates have to increase to accommo-
date for this loan and other misallocations of GP &
L reserves? When asked about raiding the Garland
Power and Light reserves, several of the current
council members cloak everything about GP & L
as executive session material (competitiveness)
claiming it cannot be publicly discussed.

It appears that most of the money spent out of
the reserves is being spent for reoccurring ex-
penses like salaries, supplies, utilities, etc. What
happens in subsequent years when there is insuffi-
cient monies in the reserve accounts to accommo-
date these expenses? When asked, one councilman
said "We will worry about that next year." In the
upcoming proposed bond program, there very well
may be monies programmed for current operating
expenses. If that happens, do we as a community
really want to pay for next year's operating ex-
penses over the projected life of the bonds with
interest?

There are a large number of financial issues fac-
ing this City over the next several years. Many of
the current elected officials will say that the new
mall will solve all our problems; however, the mall
(with significant incentives from the city) will not
to open till the end of 2005. Assuming this is cor-
rect, revenue generation will not start for nearly
two years. Over the next couple of years it will be
interesting to see how the rating agencies react to
what has gone on financially within the city. The
analysts for these firms probably know more about

the city's financial condition than most of the
council members. Hopefully this council is not
making too big a mess for future councils to clean
up or the citizens to pay for.

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Code Compliance	972-485-6400
Tim George	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. Tony Blasengame, NPO	

Observations by Mike Rose

Has Winter completed its cycle? Is Spring just around the corner? What outside yard projects are on your to do list. We are all in the same situation – where do I start and how did this list grow so large!

If we all slowly and with great care and concern attack this too long of a to do list it will be completed in time to begin thinking about how we are going to decorate our homes for the holiday seasons. Time continues to march on and the older we get it seems that time marches to a faster beat. Your ONA has a to do list also. Watch for announcements in future ONA newsletters. One way we all can immediately impact the ONA is to ask a friend or neighbor if they belong to the ONA. If not give their name to any one of the Board members and they will take it from there. All the Board asks is that you ask the first question.

The ONA has made great growth strides this year (June 1, 2003 to May 31, 2004) and all members should feel good about that accomplishment. Other than the mandatory associations in Garland, the ONA has the greatest percentage of members. Is 50% and attainable goal? We have 1,167 homes in Oakridge. We presently are at 45% membership. Let's all take pride in our Oakridge community.

The high priority now is to elect a nominating committee whose responsibility will be to place people on the ballot for various officers at our May 27, 2004 General Membership meeting. This responsibility is very short term since the slate of

officers must be published in our April newsletter. Please give consideration to serving your Oakridge community in this small way.

Another way to serve your community is to be additional eyes and ears for the Oakridge area. There were approximately 50 code violations reported by the City Code folks recently in a sweep of our community. How about all of us letting any officer (see the back page of every issue of your newsletter) know of a possible problem or concern that needs attention. The Board will take it from there. No one will know who made the observation. Let's all work together to make the Oakridge community vibrant, beautiful and caring place to live.

Come meet the Mayor and ask him a question or two. Our Councilman (and Oakridge resident) will be there too. Come listen and learn the positive strides your council is taking to improve the quality of life in Garland.

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Dear Friends and Neighbors of Oakridge:

As many of you may know, City Council passed an updated Sexually Oriented Business (S.O.B.) ordinance last month. This will insure that S.O.B.'s will not infiltrate our neighborhoods by requiring them to be in an industrial zoned district and also a 1000 foot buffer between churches, residential zoned areas and other sexually oriented businesses.

Many have inquired as to how this will affect the video store located in our area. This ordinance will help prevent businesses of this type from coming to neighborhoods in the future. As for the current location, it will have to comply with this new ordinance within a three-year time frame. It also allows the store owner to make a decision about his future.

This coming May will be another election where new council members for districts 1, 2, 4, and 5 will be seated, bond packages will be presented for vote as will as city charter changes. In the next few letters, I will be sending updates further detailing this information and expressing my opinions. I do have a electronic file that I can send to you, if you desire.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thanks
 Mark Monroe
 972-495-8028
council7@ci.garland.tx.us





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