



# Oakridge News



Vol. 13 No. 2

ONA web site [www.oakridgena.com](http://www.oakridgena.com)

July 2004

From the ONA President:

It's been a good week. I've celebrated as a special person (who we watched grow up with our kids all through school) won the **National America's Junior Miss** contest, and all the while quoting Scripture. We know Shannon well, and she's the real deal. That resplendent smile of hers comes naturally.

Because of my service on the City Charter Review Committee, my wife and I had the privilege of watching from the hospitality section as **Shannon Essenpreis** sang the National Anthem with a group of distinguished firemen at the Star Spangled Fourth celebration. (Richard Elliot and Roberta Flack performed also.) City Councilman and Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Monroe made arrangements for the rest of our family to join my wife and I in the hospitality section. What a great city we live in, folks. My hat's off to the City Council for pulling off this amazing event every year.

Saturday morning, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, was a turning point for me as the "first lady" and I sat at the kitchen table sticking address labels and closures on last month's newsletters. (Yes, these get done by hand at the kitchen table, by someone, every month.) As I peeled labels off the sheets and sheets, I was suddenly overwhelmed by the support of the ONA these represented. I realized for the first time that each one of those labels represented someone voluntarily paying \$48 to support our ONA efforts.

You see, I'd had a particularly troublesome week. I'd received a letter from a former ONA member criticizing the ONA and personally attacking me – even referring to me as a hypocrite. It was troubling to me that someone who I had never met, never spoken to, never seen face-to-face could have such anger for me. And, I wasn't for sure how I was going to handle this over the next year as ONA President.

Those labels did the trick. Now I know. With this kind of support, the ONA can do great things. We just have to stay focused on the goal, keep our eye on the prize. My hat's off to you, the dues-paying member of the ONA. Thank you for your financial support and encouragement of the ONA. We live in a great neighborhood, folks.

Now, here's an **update** on what we're up to.

August 3<sup>rd</sup> is **National Night Out (NNO)**. Our own Scott Youzva is the ONA coordinator for our NNO efforts this year. Oakridge is officially registered with the national organization, and we hope to get some digital pictures of our neighborhood get-togethers to send them.

I hope you didn't miss how beautifully the **Citizens on Patrol (COP)** decorated the bridge for July 4<sup>th</sup>. We owe the COP and Crime Watch group (now the Crime Prevention and Safety Committee) a lot of gratitude for making Oakridge not only a safer, but a more-friendly place to live.

Please only call the COP if you have a true COP issue. They have been receiving some general ONA calls over the past weeks, and they just have to refer those to me. If you have non-COP type questions or comments, I would love to get your e-mail at [nelsonprater@comcast.net](mailto:nelsonprater@comcast.net) or your call at 972-495-7769.

We're continuing to gather our documentation for the **Neighborhood Vitality (Matching) Grant Program**, and we're making good progress. Another reminder – if you want to repair your sidewalk as part of this program, please contact me as soon as possible. Our deadline is quickly approaching to turn in all of our paperwork. I'll know more details by the time this newsletter hits your mailbox.

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The ONA Board has established the Third Thursday of each month as the standing Board meeting day.

The ONA Board also set the dates (Thursdays) for the General Membership meetings.

Mark your calendars:

September 23, 20004

March 24, 2005

May 26, 2005

Check the ONA web site for current information



“LET SUE DO IT”

SO THE REFRIGERATOR REPAIRMAN IS COMING TODAY BUT YOU HAVE AN IMPORTANT MEETING?

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New Item  
Gift Certificates

“LET SUE DO IT”

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*continued from page 1*

Finally, one of my goals as ONA President has always been to introduce health and wellness as an ONA topic. I'm especially excited that at our next **ONA General Membership meeting on September 23**, we're going to do just that. A physician from **Garland Baylor Medical Center** will be one of our keynote speakers at the meeting. He or she will be speaking on the subject of **hypertension**, answering questions and handing out materials. We will also have at least one R.N. doing blood pressure checks. The **first 50** folks who get their blood pressure checked will receive a **free hypertension brochure** from the American Heart Association (one per household, please). Please join us at the meeting, and bring all of your friends and neighbors, and take a step towards better health. The social and blood pressure checks will begin at 6:30 p.m. at Oakridge Country Club. The first keynote speaker begins at 7:00 p.m. sharp.

Our **Neighborhood Police Officer (NPO) Tony Blassingame** will be our second keynote speaker on September 23. You won't want to miss hearing Officer Blassingame speak.

We'd like to start an **e-mail based communication method** for ONA members. If you'd like to be on this distribution list, please send me an e-mail at [nelsonprater@comcast.net](mailto:nelsonprater@comcast.net), and I'll add your e-mail address to the list. We'll use this distribution list to get critical information out to you in between the monthly newsletters. I won't share your e-mail address with anyone else.

Also, if you'd like to receive your **Oakridge News by e-mail** in a readable/printable PDF format, rather than by hard copy in the mail, please let me know. We're publishing the last two newsletters on our **website** at [www.oakridgena.com](http://www.oakridgena.com).

As of right now, we're also in need of a **District 5 Director**. If you'd like to represent District 5 on the ONA Board, please let me know. That's about it for now. I hope you're having a good summer, and I look forward to hearing from you soon. Nelson

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Some Observations from the Environmental Committee Chair  
Chuck Teske

Year to Date: This year we are off to a pretty good start with the addition of perennials at all of our entrances. New perennial plants include Red & Pink Miniature Roses, Yaupons, and Nandinas. The Miniature Roses are of a variety that bloom nine months of the year. These new perennials will allow the ONA to save money on Fall/Winter plantings. With all 5 sprinkler systems functioning well, the existing plants will continue to prosper.

Future Plans: During this Summer and into early Fall, we are going to be working on a few minor maintenance items and the completion of the landscape installation on the Ridge Oak islands. The islands at this entrance are now fully irrigated and the existing trees are beginning to come out of their malaise. On the east island there is a gap where a tree once stood. Our plan is to plant a pot-grown Oak tree, ring the tree with colorful perennials and install edging around the new plants. Additionally, both Ridge Oak Islands will need more Red Miniature Roses planted at their tips for symmetry. Contributions for this project would be greatly appreciated. The plants are very expensive and most of our budget is consumed by mowing and utilities expenses.

Community: Oakridge is a fairly private neighborhood with limited access and homes built closely together. That being said, we have to see each other every day, why can't we be a little more neighborly?

- When someone waves at you, smile and waive back.
- Take it easy on the gas pedal, please keep it under 30MPH.
- Stop means Stop, not Yield. The Garland Police are stepping up enforcement.
- Pick-up litter when you see it at our entrances...paper, bottles, signs etc.
- To reiterate...the entrances are city property and garage sale signs will be removed.

If you have comments or questions regarding environmental, please visit the ONA website at [www.oakridgena.com](http://www.oakridgena.com).

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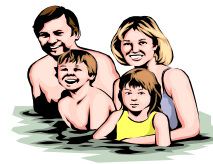
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## National Night Out, Tuesday August 3

**National Night Out** by Scott Youzva 972-495-1833

The National Night Out is an event throughout the USA to promote Crime Watch through neighborhood involvement. This year's event will take place on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, from 7pm to 10pm. This is a very informal way to meet your neighbors and find ways to look out for each other. Participation only requires that you attend and this is as simple as stepping out your front door.

I would encourage everyone to use this as an opportunity to meet many of your neighbors. I would suggest that you try to enlist some of your neighbors to help you plan the evening by making signs or other notices announcing the event. You may want to plan food, such as watermelon or baked goods, but this is not necessary. I would strongly suggest that you have nametags available so that everyone can try to learn names.

The process of having barricades set up for block parties is available if you wish to have this done on a street near your home. Please let me know if you would like a copy for your use. If you are unable to block a portion of the street, try to coordinate an area that has low traffic to assemble. Please have the permission of the neighbors in this area before it is announced.

Good luck with your planning and have fun with this event. I look forward to seeing many of my neighbors on Tuesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

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### Editor's note:

If your group would like to have information published in the ONA newsletter please submit your copy to the ONA web site webmaster. If an individual has a poem or short bits of information they would like published they should, also, submit that to the webmaster.

## GARDEN CORNER by Garden Lover


Watering your lawn and gardens certainly wasn't a problem in June was it? If anything, many flowers, trees and shrubs are suffering from over watering this year. Because of the rain, trees are heavily leafed this year, making limbs heavier and more apt to break or split. Take a good look at your trees to make sure they are in good condition. While driving through Oakridge I have noticed some broken and cracked limbs and if left unchecked this could become a hazard, to you, your family, your home or someone else. If the damaged limb is low and lightweight you can probably remove it yourself. Be careful to cut it as close as possible to the trunk and don't let the bark peel to prevent disease and insect invasion. If the limb is high or heavy, call a professional tree trimmer; don't climb onto your roof or a ladder to remove tree limbs. I recently saw one of our residents on the roof, hacking away at an over-hanging limb. This is far too dangerous---and can cost a great deal more than hiring a tree trimmer. In addition, time spent in the hospital, undergoing surgery or doing therapy and recovering, is time you could be spending on the golf course or other fun activities. Besides, you'll need your strength and good health to rake all those leaves this fall. It looks like there's going to be a lot of them to rake!

When pruning shrubs, cut the branch back to an intersection or where you can see new leaf buds or existing leaves. This will allow the shrub to branch out more and keep you from having "sticks" for shrubbery.

You can also prune or pinch-back flowering plants that are becoming leggy. Again, use an intersection, a new leaf bud, or existing leaves as your marker. This will encourage new growth and extend your flowering season.

Of course, on most flowering plants you need to deadhead to keep the blooms coming. You may also need to mulch again in some areas because the rain has washed the mulch away. Unfortunately, hot dry weather is bound to come in Texas and mulch helps retain moisture as well as keep the soil cooler. Everything, including your plants, like "cool" during hot summer days. Now, where did I put my clippers and lemonade?

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**Crime watch/C.O.P. report** by Brenda & Bill Olive

**Crime stats for June:**

- 6/1 Burglary Habitation 3100 block of Ridge Oak approx. time noon
- 6/3 Criminal Mischief 2800 block of Laurel Oaks approx. time 1pm
- 6/4 Criminal Mischief 2900 block of Grand Oak approx time 11pm
- 6/4 Burglary Vehicle 3200 block of Laurel Oaks approx time midnight
- 6/8 Unauthorized use of Vehicle 2400 block of Lone Oak approx. time 9pm
- 6/22 Burglary Vehicle 2200 block of Diamond Oaks approx. time 1am
- 6/24 Burglary Vehicle 3000 block of Big Oaks approx. time 3am
- 6/24 Burglary Habitation 2600 block of Oak Point approx. time 2am
- 6/24 Criminal Mischief 2200 block of Overview approx. time 7pm

**July 4, 2004**

Thanks to a local realtor, almost everyone in Oakridge had American flags placed in front of their houses. In addition, perhaps you may have noticed that "the bridge" at the club had 50 flags flying, compliments of your Citizens on Patrol. Realizing that not everyone enjoyed a day off, the C.O.P also provided Fire Station #3 with some energy producing "patriotic" cup cakes.

**Help**

After training in August, the C.O.P will have two additional patrollers joining our group. You can bet we'll have them patrolling ASAP.

**Isn't Anything Sacred**

On the evening of July 5<sup>th</sup>, Mark Edwards and myself (Bill) took a few minutes to take down the July 4<sup>th</sup> flags from the bridge. Much to our amazement, we found that four American Flags were missing. One would think that The Flag would be above this type of thing. Next year, we will be asking for volunteers to watch over the bridge from the time the flags are put up until they come down. Call us if you would like to take one of the 3 hour shifts.

**Happy Birthday to our NPO**

July 17<sup>th</sup> is Officer Blassingame's birthday. Have a great one Tony!!

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## Oakridge Women's Club (OWC)

The **Oakridge Women's Club** normally meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m.  
 Thank you Rita for our Lovely Enchilada dinner this month! You outdid yourself as always!  
 We are not having a July meeting. We have 2 important dates for you to mark on your calendar. We are having a pool party and meeting for the ladies on Tuesday August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7pm. The second is our family swim and cookout. These are both at Tracy's house. Please come and join us. We would love to meet you and your family.  
 If you would like more details about the upcoming events or joining the OWC, please contact our President, Tracy Murphy at 972-496-3165. Or you may e-mail Libby Morse at TOMLIB@comcast.net

*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.*

## Neighborhood Vitality Program Stands to Benefit All

*by Mark Monroe, Mayor Pro-Tem City of Garland*

In the recent May election, bonds for a Neighborhood Vitality Program were passed. Basically, any organized group, whether it is an existing neighborhood association or several neighbors getting together to improve the quality of their neighborhood, can work on a list of projects that would benefit their neighborhood from this program. Some of these might include streetlights, security gates, repair to structures including sidewalks, to name a few. *continued on page 7*

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Councilman, Mark Monroe	972-495-8028
NPO Officer Tony Blassingame	972 -205-2740

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**Just In!**

Be on the lookout for an older two-tone gray and black van with a ladder on the roof. The van has taillights duct taped. The driver is a light skinned male with long stringy hair. There was a second person in the van, but we don't have a description of him/her. The long haired person was seen trying to open front doors of two houses along Pepperidge on July 6 around 5pm. When he noticed an owner observing him he took off. Police, and the C.O.P., searched for but could not find the vehicle in our area. If you see this van, get as much information as possible-----tag #, driver description, etc. and contact the GPD or C.O.P. as soon as possible.

*Make sure you keep your front doors locked....if either of the doors this person tried had been unlocked the culprit could have been in the house in seconds!*

**Internet Scam—be on the alert!**

There is an internet scam coming from Lagos, Nigeria....the individual is trying to get someone to respond to him to "claim 35 million dollars being held in a bank there". This is an old scam, it pops up periodically, and invariably people fall for it. If you receive one of these e-mails, delete it; never respond to it. The culprit doesn't have your actual name and oftentimes he/she is asking you to respond to a different e-mail address than the one the original message came from. People who have been foolish enough to respond in the past have found their computers compromised, or worse, their bank accounts, etc. One last word of warning, if you haven't updated your anti-virus program on your computer recently, do it now...there are several new worms and viruses that are being piggybacked onto legit e-mail and websites. It's just another way that crime is being perpetrated on unsuspecting people.

**Stay safe-enjoy the hot summer days...**



continued from page 6

One big area that could be enhanced is sidewalk repair. Typically, when sidewalk repair is needed, a homeowner is responsible for the sidewalk on their property. The city sets aside money to assist a homeowner with 50% of the cost. With the recent bonds of the Neighborhood Vitality Program, a homeowner has the opportunity to be responsible for only 15% of the repairs.

Other benefits from this program are neighborhoods wanting safety features such as security gates or walls. Additionally, some neighborhoods have seen a deterioration of retention ponds. All of these repairs would typically be at the cost of the neighborhood; this program provides some assistance to those wishing to improve the quality of the place where they reside.

The Neighborhood Vitality Program has a deadline of September 1 for applications. Individuals cannot apply for this bond money, only an organized group. An example would be an existing association such as a mandatory or non-mandatory homeowners association, or even a crime-watch group. Furthermore, several neighbors may join together to submit the application. Items such as estimates for repair will be included on the final application.

This is the first time that the City of Garland has had a program such as this. It stands to benefit everyone because, previously, money was not available to get into the neighborhoods. The goal is to see the quality of neighborhoods improve that, in the past, may not have had the funds to do so. I hope that associations and groups will take advantage of this great program to make their neighborhoods even better places to live. If you have any questions or comments on this or any program, you may contact your councilperson or me and I will be happy to pass the information along.



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