



# Oakridge News

<http://www.oakridgena.com>



Vol. 16, No. 01

Feb. 2008

## President's Letter

By Mike Dollar, ONA President

My first introduction to the Oakridge Neighborhood Association Board of Directors was in 2003 when Martha volunteered as a District Director. She would come home after her board meetings and discuss them with me.

In 2005, I volunteered to help Martha as the Membership Committee's Co-Director-at-Large. Keith Engler was president at that time. It was determined that the neighborhood would benefit from identifying long-term goals. Accomplishments from one board would add to the accomplishments of the previous boards and thus larger projects, and greater progress, would be realized. Our goals were threefold: Beautification

and Renovation, Neighborhood Involvement, and Building Community.

Keith established a Special Events Committee, directed by Sherri Rutherford-Franks, tasked with planning and organizing fun activities which would bring neighbors together and help accomplish our goals of building community and neighborhood involvement. District level block parties, Christmas caroling, and the Chili cook-off and dog parade were created and are enjoyed by many of you. In addition, the Welcome Wagon was expanded under the direction of Cecile LaBossiere.

**Mark Your Calendars!**  
*The Next ONA General Membership meeting is **March 13, 2008**, in the Oakridge Country Club. Social - 6:30, Meeting - 7:00*

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### Check out these Oakridge Services!

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## Council Report

By Rick Williams, District 7 City Councilman

I attended the annual Environmental Waste Services (EWS) award dinner recently, as did 8 of 9 council members. As you probably know, EWS picks up your green trash cans, recycled materials (you do recycle don't you?), and bulky/brush items. EWS in Garland is second to none especially when it comes to bulk pick up. I know in many cities you have to practically make an appointment and then wait and wait for the City to come pick up limbs from the tree you trimmed or the old washer/dryer you are discarding, but not in Garland. There is automatic pick up each week on the same day your green trash can is picked up.

One thing I noticed at the awards dinner, was that when a citizen emails EWS with a compliment about the fine

service received, that email is read aloud and recognition is given to the employee. So, if you would like to say something nice about EWS, send an email to EWS Director Lonnie Banks as [lbanks@ci.garland.tx.us](mailto:lbanks@ci.garland.tx.us).

Ever seen a pair of tennis shoes hanging from a telephone or electric line? I have, but never thought much of it. A call from a constituent said it was to establish gang boundaries, and she wanted to know who to call to get them down. I discussed the meaning of hung tennis shoes with a few of my council colleagues, and there were a variety of opinions including one who said it indicated that drugs were sold in the area. Since everyone seemed to have a different opinion, I asked several

*Ever seen a pair of tennis shoes hanging from a telephone or electric line?*

Garland police officers and apparently there is no consistent meaning of this practice. While it could be gang/drug related, it could also just be a prank. If you see hanging tennis shoes, Code Compliance (972-485-6400) said they are the department to call to get them taken down.

We will soon have a public hearing on "wind energy systems" which is a euphemism for windmills in the backyard to produce electricity. Well, I'm all for going green and reducing green house emissions, but the proposed ordinance would permit up to a 40' tower (and the turning blades on top to the

*Continued on Page 8*

## Things Financial and Personal

By Dave Morgan, CPA, Mortgage Broker, Real Estate Broker, and Investor

### THE NEW ECONOMIC STIMULUS BILL

Well, despite the attempt by our Congress to yet again attach even more unrelated spending earmarks to legislation to buy even more votes, there is finally an economic stimulus bill at hand. It is praised by some and criticized by others. Regardless, it's here and you must read the following to make sure you get your rebate. There is already confusion about the bill and this is an attempt to show things in a simple manner.

Utmost, this is a one time tax credit on your 2008 federal income tax return. Note, however, that advance checks are being issued in May or June of this year based on your 2007 federal income tax return numbers. You will do the actual credit calculation on your 2008 return – if you did not get enough credit (the calculation minus the advance “rebate”), you will get the extra difference when you file your 2008 return. If you got an excess advance rebate over the calculation, you will NOT have to refund the difference when you file your 2008 re-

turn – congratulations! Everyone following along with me so far? Good, let's go to the details of the “rebate”.

The return of your money will be based on your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) (Line 37 of Form 1040) – not Total Income (Line 22 of Form 1040) and not Taxable Income (Line 43 of Form 1040). The exception would be, regardless of reported AGI (if any), to also include those living mostly on Social Security or disability benefits (as these income sources are not generally reported as income on the tax return) if they otherwise do not qualify with other income. It took some arm twisting to stop the “rebates” from going to those illegally in our country.

Except for those with Social Security or disability as their primary earnings, you must make \$3,000 in earned income,

otherwise pay taxes (such as AMT). For those single or married but filing separate, you will receive from \$300 to \$600 (the other person filing separate would get the same, of course). For those married but filing jointly, together you will get from \$600 to \$1,200. As for children, an additional \$300 per child will be on its way.

But wait, there's a catch. If the single or married - but filing separate - filers have AGI of \$75,000 or more, say goodbye to

some or even all of your check. The same goes for those married but filing jointly with an AGI of \$150,000 or higher. The rebate is reduced (or clawed back to use a British taxation term) at a rate of 5% of AGI above the appropriate \$75,000 or \$150,000 AGI ceiling. For example, if your AGI is \$10,000 above your AGI ceiling, \$500 (\$10,000 times

**Disclaimer** – You should consult with your professional before acting on any of the recommendations or ideas that follow. The author is not an attorney and does not profess to be providing legal, tax, financial, or personal advice. Dave will be happy to meet with you to see if your personal facts and circumstances would warrant any action on your part.

Continued on Page 9

## Let Sue Do It

*The repairman is coming, but you have a meeting?*

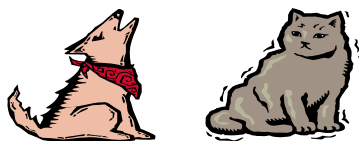
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*Kitty and Rover won't go to the kennel?*

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# Oakridge Daytimers

By Dianne Winter

The spirit of Christmas was present as the Daytimers gathered for a luncheon to celebrate the holiday at the Oakridge Country Club on Thursday, December 13th at 11:30 am.

The president, Cecile LaBossiere, made announcements of upcoming events and introduced the harpist, Jenny Glass, who entertained the group throughout the luncheon with a beautifully presented selection of Christmas Carols.

Shirley Mohler, representative to the ONA, also collected contributions for the Firemen's Fund to present a meal to the firemen on Christmas Day.

After lunch, Margaret Fowler collected name tags for the door prize drawing.

The lucky winner was Jewel Wooldridge.

The Daytimers lingered and visited and exchanged Christmas wishes before departing.

The next meeting will be January 8th, 2008, at 10 am.

The Daytimers observed a moment of silence in memory of Frances Morgen, a beloved member who passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, December 9th.

*Daytimers is a social organization that requires residence in Oakridge and \$15 dues. Daytimers promote the Oakridge Community and the ONA. Questions should be directed to President, Cecile LaBossiere, at 972-896- 9413.*

# Deck the Halls...

## ANNUAL LIGHTING CONTEST



Many Oakridge residents went all out with lights for the holidays, making it difficult for the judges.

Still, our judges managed to narrow it down! The winners of the annual lighting contest were:

**1st place 2605 Oak Point**

**2nd place 2306 Lone Oak**

**3rd place 2702 Ridgeview**

We hope you had an opportunity to visit these and the many other homes that were decorated for the season!

Have you been to the ONA website lately? Visit regularly for current events, Oakridge service providers, pictures, pet information, newsletter archives, and a wide variety of other resources. <http://www.OakridgeNA.com>

The website is also a companion to the ONA newsletter. Sometimes we have more information than space in the newsletter. This can include articles that are too lengthy for printing, additional pictures from ONA events, or website links. For items that miss the print, visit the ONA website.



Family Pet Missing?  
Family Pet Found?  
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Check out the ONA Website!  
<http://www.OakridgeNA.com>



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\*see manager for details

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**What are "Soft Scales" and why are they pests?**

**Visit the ONA website to read the Pest Check articles for January and February!**

<http://www.OakridgeNA.com>

# Handi Gals

*Tired of those minor household jobs that never get done?*

- **Plumbing:** faucets, disposal, toilets, sinks
- **Electrical:** ceiling fans, light fixtures, outlets
- **Security:** door locks or window locks

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972-896-9413 or 972-414-8057  
e-mail: [cmleks@verizon.net](mailto:cmleks@verizon.net)

**NO JOB IS TOO SMALL**

## Notice Something Missing?

*Did you notice the mischief during the holidays?*

*Unfortunately it wasn't gift-giving elves, but the work of thieves that left a number of our neighborhood entrances without signs. Not only is this a theft of private property, but they damaged our brick walls in the process of prying off the signs.*

*In an effort to deter further theft, the ONA Board decided to remove the remaining signs and place them safely in storage until we determine what to do.*

*In the meantime, this is a good opportunity to remind everyone to please be extra aware of suspicious activity in and around our neighborhood. People around the entryways should either be Oakridge residents or those connected with our landscaper (Fred).*

*If you have information that could help lead to the arrest of these sign thieves, please contact the police (they are aware of the thefts).*

*We are currently researching the cost of replacing these signs. However, at this time we cannot promise if, or when, they will be replaced. In addition, we are looking at different methods of attaching signs in the future.*

*Thank you for keeping an extra eye out for suspicious behavior. The ONA Board will let you know if there are any major developments. Also, please forward this to your neighbors.*



*The ONA would like to offer a belated congratulations and Happy Birthday to Oakridge resident Gladys McGhee, who celebrated her 100th birthday during the holiday season.*



Book your next party or event at Oakridge Country Club!

Call Margaret Goff at 972-530-8008 x239

### Pool Membership

Pool Members and their families enjoy use of the swimming pool with access to all social events and dining hosted in the main clubhouses at Oakridge Country Club.

Annual Fee – \$300.00

*Memorial Day to Labor Day*

### Social Membership

Social Members and their families enjoy use of the outdoor, lighted tennis courts, swimming pool and access to all social events and dining hosted in the main clubhouse at Oakridge Country Club.

Annual Fee – \$500.00

*Family includes member, spouse, and unmarried children under age 23 residing in member's household.*

### Sports Plus Membership

Sports Plus Memberships are non-transferable memberships. Members and their family enjoy golf privileges, unlimited use of the outdoor lighted tennis courts, swimming, fitness, and access to all social events and dining hosted in the main clubhouses at Oakridge Country Club, The Shores Country Club, Los Rios Country Club and The Golf Club at Twin Creeks.

Initiation Fee: one time fee of \$199.00

Single Membership \$49.95 monthly

# Firemen's Christmas Dinner

By Keith Engler

Oakridge came through again with a great feast for the Firemen and they were very appreciative!

The two firehouses that received dinner were:

Fire Station 3 - 3501 Bobbie Ln.  
(West side of Jupiter just north of Walnut)

Fire Station 11 - 1940 Belt Line Road  
(Beltline and Sam Houston)

A BIG THANK YOU to the following Oakridge residents that made these dinners possible!

THE COOKS...

- Kim Gingerich* - Honeybaked Ham, 3 sides, & Cookies
- Nelson Prater* - Cookies
- LuAnne Payne* - Green Bean Casserole
- MaryBeth Miles* - Seven Layer Salad
- Sue Hageland* - Fruit Salad
- Karen Engler* - Broccoli Rice Casserole
- Beverly Prater* - Poppy Seed Bread
- Diane Winter* - Dessert
- Joan McDole* - Candy & Snacks

THE MONETARY DONORS (a collective \$130!) for the items that needed to be purchased...

*The Daytimers*

- John & Norma Blumn*
- Clara May Meurer*
- Doris Autry*
- Rob & Mary Jane Rummel*

Items purchased were:

- Apple Pie, Croissant, Apple Cider,*
- Veggie Tray, Cheese, Honey-*
- baked Ham, and sides.*

And, of course,

THE DELIVERY DRIVERS!

*Joan McDole, Karen Engler, and Keith Engler*



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Newsletter Design and Layout

by Heather Englebretson

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## President's Letter *(Continued from Page 1)*

Keith put structure and organization into our long-term goals. In succeeding him as president, I continued to try to build upon this. None of our efforts would have been possible had it not been for the sacrificial work of preceding officers, directors, and volunteers of the association (i.e. you and your neighbors).

I have tried to help the City's Strategy for Vital Neighborhood Program, which identified important issues within our community. Two of these issues were our mismatched streetlights, and our outdated entrances and perimeter. A master landscape plan was sought so that neighborhood improvements would be congruent, and to fulfill our beautification and renovation goals. Many landscape contractors and architects were interviewed, but always the costs were out of our budget's reach.

I am very pleased to announce that our situation has suddenly changed. Thanks to the City of Garland's generosity in awarding us a matching grant, we have a unique opportunity to gain \$3 for every \$1 we contribute toward neighborhood improvement. The total dollars of this grant represent nearly \$125,000. Our contribution is \$31,250, half of which can be in donated services, equipment, and labor. As part of our cash contribution, we will use what has been given to our Beautification Fund. Saving in anticipation of this need, the account now contains several thousand dollars.

We only have one year to complete our projects, therefore our portion of the grant will need to be gathered quickly to allow time for the contractor's work. We will be able to replace all mismatched streetlights and install professionally designed and updated entrances and perimeter landscaping, thus addressing

two issues of our community as well as our long-term goal of beautification and renovation.

Simple math would indicate that each of the 1,166 homes in Oakridge could donate \$26.80 to meet our obligation. In this scenario, we could have these projects wrapped up by summer. In reality, some homeowners may choose not to participate. I see the key to donating cash for this cause as the realization that our contribution: 1) is greatly multiplied, and 2) goes toward both our personal benefit and that of our community. I think it wise to invest in local neighborhood improvements now, so they can bring us good returns when the real estate market rebounds again.

I hope we can all wear our fundraising hats for this moment in time to take advantage of this unique opportunity. We live in a beautiful neighborhood. Shouldn't we now make it even better, and uplift our surroundings in the process?

*Thanks to the City of Garland's generosity in awarding us a matching grant, we have a unique opportunity to gain \$3 for every \$1 we contribute toward neighborhood improvement.*

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## Council Report

(Continued from Page 1)

tower would be even higher). The draft ordinance also calls for a specific use permit, installation under the seal of a professional engineer, notification of homeowner associations, etc. My initial reaction to all this? - No way! It has been pointed out by one council representative that there are new technologies in the developmental stage where some small device would sit unobtrusively on the apex of your roof line, and my thoughts about that are as soon as something aesthetically pleasing and practical becomes available, I'll be glad to consider it but in the mean time, I don't want windmills in Garland backyards.

I get the occasional complaint about a cable service provider in Garland, and below is a Q&A conversation I had with an assistant City attorney on this issue.

**Question:** A District 7 constituent is getting lousy Internet/cable service from his cable service provider. Doesn't the City have some authority to deal with this cable service provider?

**Answer:** Such problems can be Internet service related or cable service related, and there is a significant distinction between the two under the law. The City has no authority over Internet service and has little over cable service after Senate Bill 5 but, in both instances, albeit for different reasons, the City has no authority to impose or enforce customer service or quality of service standards on any cable operator in Garland. Cable franchises in Texas are no longer granted at the local level. In 2005, the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 5 (known as the "Telecom Bill") which granted exclusive authority to the Public Utility Commission of Texas to grant cable franchises. Time Warner provides cable services in Garland pursuant to a state-issued certificate of franchise authority issued to it by the PUC. The City has no say in the matter whatsoever, and has no cable franchise with Time Warner. In addition, the City has no authority under the provisions of Senate Bill 5 to impose or enforce customer service standards or quality of service standards against ca-

ble or Internet service providers operating in Garland. These are simply not matters of local control.

If someone is having difficulty resolving a Time Warner service question with the customer service representative, you may wish to contact the City's local

*A District 7 constituent is getting lousy Internet/cable service from his cable service provider. Doesn't the City have some authority to deal with this cable service provider?*

Time Warner contact, Mr. Clem Maddox, Director of Franchise & Government Affairs, 2951 Kinwest Parkway, Irving, Texas 75063. His telephone number is (972) 830-3879. He may be able to assist you in resolving your service issues if the matter cannot be resolved through Time Warner's customer service department. In the event you have a cable service complaint that cannot be resolved, you may wish to contact the Public Utility Commission for assistance.

**Follow-up question:** How does one distinguish a cable problem from an Internet problem since the Internet comes via cable?

**Answer:** They are distinguishable in that they are simply different animals under the law and are subject to different regulations – regardless of whether the same company provides both services. Cable companies, as well as telecommunications companies, are now allowed to offer a variety of services beyond what was once their traditional core business. Cable companies (like Time Warner) commonly offer telecommunications (telephone) and Internet service in addition to cable service. Similarly, telecommunications companies (such as Verizon) commonly offer cable television service and Internet service in addition to telephone service. There are separate and distinct bodies of law and regulations applicable to Cable Services and Telecommunications Services, regardless of the entity that offers them, and Internet service is considered an "information service" not subject to regulation as either one. Stated another way, the identity of the company that provides the service does not determine the nature of the service or the applicable regulations (e.g., Internet service is not a "cable

service" simply because it is provided by Time Warner).

In a recent conversation, I have learned that the new planned opening date for the Saigon Mall at Beltline and Jupiter is in April. I know several Oakridge residents are less than excited about that development, but I remain confident that it will be a real plus for the area and tax base. Driving through the parking lot recently, I noticed irrigation pipes in the little median areas where attractive plants will be grown, and if you have seen the PowerPoint presentation on the plans for the inside, this should be a first class development.

As always, if you have a question or concern, please email me at rick-willi@gmail.com.



**DAVE MORGAN, CPA**

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5%) is deducted from your rebate check. Caution for those "rookie" tax planners, we live in a community property state where income, deductions, and taxes paid generally get allocated 50/50 to those married but filing separately folks – so, no real tax planning can be had here.

To get the rebate, you MUST file a Form 1040, Form 1040-A, or Form 1040-EZ. You MUST file your 2007 return by April 15, 2008. If you do not normally file a return, you MUST file one to get the rebate. If you are one of the latter (probably because you only have Social Security or disability income) call me at 972-824-7499 and I'll get it done for you.

Additionally, small businesses can now first year deduct up to \$250,000 in new business equipment (known as Section 179), and also take 50% bonus first year depreciation on new equipment basis not otherwise expensed. These are the same major tax-based economic stimuli after September 11, 2001 that gener-

ated far more in additional taxes than the taxes lost from the deductions.

Some earmarks did make their way into the bill. Notably, the lobby of the National Association of Realtors got an increase (retroactively to July 31, 2007 and up through December 31, 2008) from \$417,000 to \$729,750 for the maximum loan size that the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) and Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac) could buy. This could open up that refinance market for those impacted as well. The maximum amount for home loans that the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) could insure was also increased to \$729,750 for expensive housing markets.

If you need clarification or help getting your return prepared and filed, I can be reached at 972-824-7499 or [DaveLMorgan@verizon.net](mailto:DaveLMorgan@verizon.net). My website is [www.DLMMortgage.com](http://www.DLMMortgage.com).

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# Oakridge News

Published by the Oakridge Neighborhood Association.

**February 2008 Vol.16, No. 01**

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ONA Board Meetings: First Thursday of each month.

ONA General Membership meetings (for 2008): March 13th and May 1st. Meetings are held at the Oakridge Country Club.

Social - 6:30, Meeting - 7:00.

*Oakridge News* is a publication of the  
Oakridge Neighborhood Association.

### ONA Officers

President.....Mike Dollar  
Vice President..... Keith Engler  
Secretary ..... Karen Engler  
Treasurer ..... Joann Williams

### District Directors

District No. 1 ..... Joe & Beth Fagan  
District No. 2 ..... Jim Norris  
District No. 3 ..... Sandra Stevens  
District No. 4 ..... Dan & Joan Nichols  
District No. 5 ..... Tony & Tillie Battaglia  
District No. 6 ..... Phil Hanas  
District No. 7 ..... David & Sharron Parrish

### Committees

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    Newsletter.....Heather Englebretson  
    Website..... Keith Engler  
Crime Prevention & Safety.....Eric Morris & Carol Garrison  
Environmental ..... Don Pattie  
Membership ..... Cecile LaBossiere  
Special Events ..... Sherri Franks  
Welcome Wagon..... Cecile LaBossiere