



Oakridge News

<http://www.oakridgena.com>



Vol. 16, No. 02

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President's Letter

By Mike Dollar, ONA President

I've tried to imagine what the future has in store for our neighborhood. I sometimes wonder: Will we make the right choices? What are the consequences? Can we work together for a common cause? I realize that ultimately the future depends on the residents, but if I were to look into the future, what would the newspaper headlines say about Oakridge? (Caution: The following may be considered by some as an over-dramatization.)

On the front page of a leading newspaper, the headline reads, "Oakridge Neighborhood, an Oasis on Garland's West-Side". The article goes on to describe the revitalization occurring with the help of grass-roots organizations and individuals within the community.

Beautiful and professionally designed entrances enhance the

neighborhood's style. Classic traditional street lights hark back to a time when community and friends were central to lifestyle. Neighbors reach out to support the renovation efforts. By working together for a common goal, they have become more aware of their neighbors and surroundings. Crime plummets as that unfamiliar face or automobile stands out in stark contrast to a backdrop of activities that reflect a peaceful atmosphere and homeowner pride. Curiosity has now enveloped the frequent passerby who previously had not given the neighborhood a second glance. Seeing the renovation taking place has inspired them to make improvements within their own neighborhoods.

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Council Report

By Rick Williams, District 7 City Councilman

They always say that before you retire, have a plan. With that in mind, I went to night school at Richland College for 4 ½ years and received my Associate Degree in Ornamental Horticulture in May last year. My original plans were to do something in the horticulture field when I retired in January 2007, but I decided to run for Council instead, and that has limited my horticulture endeavors. However, I do volunteer for a 5-hour shift at the Dallas Arboretum <http://www.dallasarboretum.org/> usually once a week where I give walking tours or drive a tram (i.e. 4 seat golf cart) to give riding tours. For a person who loves trees, shrubs, and flowers as much as I do, working at the Arboretum is a labor of love. Each year, the Arboretum has its "Dallas Blooms" festival where you

can see over 400,000 bulbs in bloom (e.g. tulips, daffodils, etc.). This year the dates are between March 8 and April 13. I encourage you to come out and visit this wonderful park.

The last time I addressed the Oakridge Neighborhood Association, I was asked about the problems associated with parking on the street. Often in local neighborhoods, if cars park on both sides of the street, it's very difficult for cars to pass and almost impossible for fire trucks to get through. The age old problem is finding a remedy. Some have suggested restricting parking to one side of the street only. This suggestion never goes over well for those individuals who have homes on the side where cars can park. The City has come up with a novel idea that is being

piloted, and it is somewhat akin to how the City handles speed hump requests. Basically, under the street parking pilot, 80% of the residents on a particular block will have to agree to a no parking rule on that block. Then, no parking signs will be erected. Will this work? I don't know. It may be hard to find 80% who agree, but it's the first idea I've heard that might work. I actually volunteered Oakridge to pilot this idea, but the City already had a pilot area selected.

Right now the Council is working on the Capital Improvement Program for 2008. Last year, it was anticipated that we would fund about \$259 million in capital improvements, but last year at this time,

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Check out these Oakridge Services!

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Oakridge Daytimers Tea

By Dianne Winter

On February 12th, at 2 pm, the Oakridge Daytimers served their annual Afternoon Tea at the home of Suzanne Snow. The food hostesses, Sharon Carlton, Jo Dietz, Shirley Larson, Pat Tharp and Dianne Winter had prepared an assortment of savory items that included traditional finger sandwiches, tea cookies and bars, red velvet cupcakes and fruit flavored sweet breads and hot tea.

The table was decorated with the special linens, china, crystal and silver serving pieces for serving the tea and accompaniments. To complete the theme – Tea pots, Flowers and Purses - Suzanne displayed the collection of day and evening bags that she has gathered since she was in high school. The collection included beaded, enameled, embroidered, hammered metal, and other various sizes and shapes.

Suzanne's favorites were two enameled purses from her mother-in-law who received them as presents when she graduated from high school in 1927.

Other bags and compacts were displayed by Jo Dietz, Sharon Carlton, Becky Parks, Audrey King, Mary Pattie, Clara Mae Mueller, and Jo Ann Wil-

liams, as well as others who also narrated the history of their purses.

Before the ladies gathered for tea, there was a brief business meeting. Cecile LaBossiere, president, made announcements concerning ONA and upcoming activities.

Audrey King announced birthdays, and several members expressed concerns for members and family that were experiencing health problems. Ruby Nell Ormon thanked those who had sent cards to her husband, Harry. The advantages of procuring the lock box provided by the Police and Fire Department were discussed. A new member, Peggy Crenshaw, was introduced and welcomed.

Norene Murphy shared two stories that brought big smiles from the attendees. Norene unknowingly set off her Alert health alarm while she was on her way home from church. She arrived at her home as the phone was ringing and she was able to explain the situation and avert a visit from the fire department EMTs. Norene's second event was caused by the wind. As she was getting her mail from the mailbox the wind blew her walker down the sidewalk to a

neighbor's home. Since Norene can't chance walking alone, she was forced to hang onto the mailbox until a neighbor heard her and came to help. Oakridge is full of helpful neighbors!

To commemorate the 2008 Tea, the ladies were presented with a CD of Songs From the Heart that had been compiled and produced by Suzanne and Paul Snow, Jo and Art Dietz and Dianne and David Winter.

Ruby Nell Ormon won the door prize. Be sure to attend the next meeting on March 11th.

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

In the picture (left to right): Sharon Carlton, Suzanne Snow, Jo Ann Williams, Jo Dietz, Pat Tharp, Shirley Larson, Dianne Winter



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Things Financial and Personal

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

THE ENVIRONMENTAL CORNER

There are several places that will take that old, worthless computers, printers, and other peripherals. While some office supply stores will actually charge you \$10 per piece to essentially throw away your equipment, there are sources that will actually take old equipment for free, and they will erase your hard drive and then get the equipment to someone who can use it in some manner. Contact me if you need one of those resources.

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plate are at least 3 inches long so they go well into the door frame. Install window thumb locks to prevent unlocked or forced windows from being moved for entry. Also, install a jam pin lock into sliding glass door frames.

PROTECTING YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

With crime being an everyday part of our lives, there are a few simple things you can do in an attempt to protect yourself and those dear to you.

1. Keep your doors and windows locked at all times, and keep your garage doors down. Don't open your door to a stranger – you have my permission not to feel obligated to be friendly and you can blame me if being "rude" by not opening the door makes you feel uneasy. Pay attention to your surroundings and those of your neighbors. When outside, move with a sense of purpose and keep your head up in a searching manner. If something or someone is not right, call 911 and then a trusted friend - in that order.

2. If you feel or know that someone is following you in your car, call 911 on your cell phone and then seek out a policeman on patrol or drive to the nearest police station. Do not drive home and try to rush into your home where you will be alone to fend for yourself. Drive to a place where there are lots of good people who can fend off a predator.

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.

3. Do not "advertise" your new purchases to cruising criminals by putting the boxes for, say, that new plasma TV, on the curb for the trash folks to pick up. Putting that old computer on the curb also tells a criminal you probably just got a new computer system or super laptop. Tear down the box and place it in those wonderful green portable dumpsters we

have available. Recycle those computers as discussed in the environmental section.

4. If you have a dog, have it trained to protect you when appropriate. If you don't want a dog, get a recording of a barking dog that is activated by a motion detector.

5. Have a monitored alarm system installed.

6. Install lights that that are motion detector activated.

7. Install deadbolt locks that require a key to open both the exterior and interior locks, and keep the key removed from the door and near to you. Make sure that the screws on the strike

8. Have the telephone numbers at hand for your neighbors as a supplement to 911. We are fortunate enough to have the Citizens on Patrol group of caring neighbors plus police officers that live in our neighborhood – keep their numbers handy as well.

9. Keep your cell phone charged, and keep it handy in case your telephone lines go down.

10. When it comes to letting someone into your home to do repairs, remodeling, and such, only deal with service companies that come to you through family and neighbor referrals



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 Find out more...
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Handi  Gals

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NO JOB IS TOO SMALL

Daytimers Book Club

By Dianne Winter

The Daytimers Book Club met at the home of Jo Ann Williams on Friday, January 18th, to discuss the reading selection of the month, *The Thirteenth Tale*, by Diane Setterfield in addition to enjoying refreshments provided by the hostess. The group was happy to welcome Audrey Golden who had been ill and Ruby Nell Ormon who was able to attend. Other members that attended were Nell Burt, Betty Prickett, Jo Dietz, Suzanne Snow, Sharon Carlton, Kathy Arden, Mary Jensen and Dianne Winter.

This Gothic mystery supplied a wealth of issues for discussion. Book Club leader, Betty Thomas, greeted the group and defined the category, Gothic, as it applies to books. The discussion leader, Jo Ann Williams, described the author as a former academic who resides in Yorkshire, England.

Approximately a dozen book club members attended and all were eager to either enter the discussion or listen to the comments. The characters include a reclusive author, Vida Winters, and a young writer, Margaret Lea, who escort the readers through a gothic mystery featuring the Angelfield family and estate, a ghost, a governess, a topiary garden, and a devastating fire.

Two of the characters, Angeline and Emmeline, were twins and their antics produced anecdotes and comments about twins that members had known. There were many intricacies

to the story and the members commented that they generally liked a book that left them with some unsolved questions.

The next Book Club will meet on February 15th, at 10 am, at the home of Jo Dietz to discuss the book, *The Coal Tattoo*, by Silas House.



**Support the
ONA Vitality Grant!**
<http://www.OakridgeNA.com>



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

Council Report

(Continued from Page 1)

it was projected that we would have about a 3% growth in the tax rate for each year for the next 5 years (i.e., 18% growth over this 5-year period). With the problems created by sub-prime mortgages, \$100 per barrel oil, etc., the new 5-year growth estimate in the tax base is now projected to be zero!!! Since many of the capital projects are funded by property taxes, this zero growth means Garland is going to have to reduce capital spending. Right now, we are looking at a \$197 million proposal presented by the City Manager which is \$62 million dollars less than we had expected funding this time last year. This proposed budget if adopted would result in a 1 ½ cent increase on your property taxes from the City. Remember that the City's portion of your total property tax bill is about 30%. Funding the CIP is always a balancing act. From one perspective, I get emails and complaints about alleys where the City has identified \$20 million dollars of alleys that need to be reconstructed, but we only have about \$1.5 million over the next 3 years to reconstruct damaged alleys...and that's why most alley pot holes are just patched with asphalt. On the other hand, I know residents are concerned about taxes. Anyway, always remembers that I am your representative on the Council, and I very much value your input on taxes, where capital improvement dollars should be spent, etc.

You may have noticed ground being turned near the nursing home on N. Garland Road near Apollo. That will be a very nice assisted living/memory care facility to compliment the attractive nursing home which is currently in operation. I'm very excited about a potential tenant for the old empty Min-yards Store at Arapaho and Jupiter. I won't mention the name (bad luck), but that center is in need of help.

As always, if you have questions (including horticulture questions) or concerns, please email me at rickwilli@gmail.com.

Oakridge Welcome!

Our community is honored to have a native of Eritrea, East Africa. Her name is Saba. Saba spent her early childhood in Eritrea- an Italian Colony. She has been in the United States for 15 years, and an American citizen for the past ten years. Saba, her son Jonathan and husband, Michael-Asghedom, have been residents of Oakridge for three years. Oakridge was her choice because she felt safe in this community.

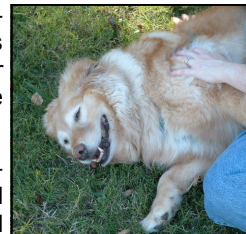
The one talent that illuminates Saba is her fluency with different languages. She has been working for Western Union as a Multilingual Customer Service Representative for twelve years. The languages she has mastered are Amharc, French, Italian, English and Tigryna-the language of Eritrea. She and her mother moved to Italy for her schooling-both for Saba's high school and her college. It was in Italy that she met and married her husband. When she is not working or managing a household, she is continuing her education at Richland College. One of her goals is to master the Spanish language. Go figure!

Adventures in Pet Sitting

By Sherri Rutherford

This will likely be the title of the book Sue Hageland' writes about her pet sitting adventures when she retires from a second career.

Sue began her business 11 ½ years ago after she took early retirement from AT&T. With the catchy name "Let Sue Do It" her goal was to offer services she could have used while employed outside the home. Today, pet sitting is the largest part of her business. Her only form of advertisement is the Oakridge Newsletter.



Not many of Sue's clients would suspect that this Chicago native turned Texan was terrified of animals until she was 20 years old. She overcame this fear while living with her in-laws who had a dog. She realized it was either learn to like the dog or stand on the furniture for the next 3 months. It's pretty obvious the choice she made.

Sue tries to keep most of her business exclusive to Oakridge which allows her to give time to a pet's particular likes and habits. For example, some dogs like to stay outside for a while. Sue can tend to another pet in the area while allowing the pet that prefers the outdoors a little longer time to stretch their legs. Most of Sue's clients are dogs and cats but she also has birds, fish, rabbits, hamsters and even a snake. At home Sue has had Malteses for many years.

As we all know, an Oakridge pet is special and Sue gives her clients – human and animal – that catered-to feeling. Some of the unusual requests Sue has encountered has been to pray with a dog; cook eggs and cereal for breakfast for another and some dogs just like their ears to flap in the wind during a nice car ride.

Sue's rewards come from the many nice notes she gets from her human clients telling her they couldn't have taken a vacation if she couldn't watch their animals or the pets that residents are able to keep longer because Sue can check in on them when they are sick.

Sue has had many adventures in pet sitting but you will just have to wait for her book when she retires. When "Let Sue Do It" doesn't do it anymore.

PS: I would like to personally thank Sue for helping me try to reconnect lost pets with their owners.

~ Sherri Rutherford

Newsletter Design and Layout

by Heather Englebretson

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

The reporter sums up the article by saying,

The turning-point to the success of this neighborhood was the fact that many residents who had never become involved, began to participate. It was like turning on a light-bulb. They suddenly realized they were the vital missing link needed for the neighborhood to move forward.

I like the preceding article, but what if our residents make poor choices? What then could be the outcome?

On the back page of a small circulation newspaper the byline reads, "Oakridge Neighborhood, a Failing Community, Abandoned". The article describes the residents as "self-absorbed" and "ignoring all communal responsibilities." One quote comes from a homeowner, "I used to try to keep this neighborhood beautiful. I tried to do my part and what good did it do? Nobody else ever does anything around here. I keep my own yard and house up, that's enough. Others can work on neighborhood improvement things if they want to, not me. It never makes any difference anyway. I just don't like to get involved in things like that."

The article goes on to describe how the neighborhood association was abandoned and entrances began to deteriorate.

At first, a few courageous residents tried to mow the entrances nearest to their homes, but eventually it became too much work every week. As a result, the grass began to grow, shrubs and trees withered, plastic grocery bags and trash clung to the overgrown misshapen plants. City code compliance began to pass out citations to property owners at the entrances and around the perimeter wall. Residents must either pay landscapers, or mow the areas themselves. After receiving multiple citations and fines, those who live around the perimeter push lawnmowers once a week down their alleys, out the entrances, and up the sidewalks to mow the grass on the other side of the brick wall behind their homes. The Oakridge Neighborhood Association used to take care of these things. This association was a small group of residents who were willing to pay \$60 a year and volunteer their time. But eventually, due to a lack of participation by a majority of the residents, it was abandoned.

I don't like anything about this second story, and I believe we can prevent it from ever happening. In reality, the City of Garland has generously offered to help us through a Neighborhood Vitality Matching Grant. This Vitality Grant will allow us to make some much needed improvements with landscaping and street-lights. My hope is that every resident will do their fair share and more. Please support this Beautification and Renovation goal by helping us raise our neighborhood's portion of this matching grant. Once our share of the cost is collected, the landscape contractor tells me it will take him about one month to complete the entire landscaping project. All Oakridge residents should be aware of this opportunity (see details at www.oakridgena.com). Send all donations to our P.O. Box 450145, Garland, TX 75045-0145, make checks payable to: ONA Vitality Grant. Please allow me to say "THANK YOU" in advance, and feel free to direct any questions to onapresident@aol.com.

Philip Hanas
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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

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