
Laurel Oaks Neighborhood Association

Newsletter - May 1996

To My Neighbors:

Some said that we could not find volunteers in the neighborhood. Some said people don't have time to get involved. They were wrong!

Since our last newsletter, we've had two events in which the turn-out was fantastic. The First Annual Laurel Oaks Neighborhood Association Easter Egg Hunt was a tremendous success -- not only was it great fun, but it gave us all a chance to get to know each other a bit better. Let's continue to build that feeling of community.

We also had great participation at the April 2nd Committee Formation Meeting at the Spicewood Springs Library. In this newsletter, you will find listings of the different neighborhood committees that have formed, what their focus and goals are so far and who to contact for more information. It's definitely not too late to get involved!

The first Laurel Oaks Neighborhood Association Elections will be held in September. We desperately need volunteers to work on the Nomination and Election Committees. The current board is in place to get things going, but we hope to see involvement from throughout the neighborhood. Think of it as another great way to meet your neighbors!

As always, we appreciate any contributions you can make to support this association. The costs of maintaining the association's mailbox, printing newsletters, posting effective signs and putting on special events add up quickly. Until our Bylaws Committee establishes a dues structure, we're dependent on your donations. We greatly appreciate those of you who have already made contributions.

Many thanks also to the businesses that purchased advertising space in this issue of the newsletter. We couldn't have done it without you! We're off to a great start!

David Ronquillo
Interim Board President

Residents Asked to Watch School Grounds Vandalism a Problem at North Oaks Elementary By Cheryl Frink

North Oaks Elementary Principal Kathy Caraway is asking neighborhood residents to help combat a serious problem with vandalism at the school. During April, vandals tagged (wrote

graffiti on) portable classrooms, a storage building and three new picnic tables, causing at least \$250 in damage.

The vandals also broke into the physical education storage building and took sacks of footballs, soccer balls, and utility balls totaling at least \$500.

In a second incident the following week, the PE storage building was ransacked and more equipment was stolen.

"In the 18 years that North Oaks has been operating, we have never had the vandalism problems that we have faced this year," Mrs. Caraway said after the incidents. "I am angry and frustrated that our school is becoming the target of vandals. If all of us work together, hopefully, we can catch the culprits and put a stop to the destruction of property."

Mrs. Caraway is asking neighbors to help by:

- Monitoring the school grounds as you drive by, especially during after-school hours and during the summer.
- Calling police if you see acts of destruction occurring.
- Getting involved in the Neighborhood Watch Program.

Calendar

June 1	Transportation Survey must be received
June 10	Transportation Committee Meeting
July 4	July 4th Parade
August 6	National Night Out
August 9	Deadline for articles and classified ads for Laurel Oaks late summer issue
September	Laurel Oaks Elections

Easter Egg Hunt a Huge Success By Cheryl Frink

With 100 neighborhood children tracking down some 1,000 Easter eggs, the first annual Laurel Oaks Neighborhood Association Easter Egg Hunt was a successful spring fling for area neighbors.

The hunt, held March 31 at Oakview Park, started shortly after 3 p.m. Interim Laurel Oaks President Dave Ronquillo welcomed participants -- including Gabi and Alexander Polcher from Koblenz, Germany -- and thanked the many volunteers who made the Easter Egg Hunt possible.

Children were divided into three age groups, with youngsters 2 and under hunting near the playscape, children 3-5 hunting around the big swing set, and children 6 and older looking for eggs in a field near the covered picnic area.

After the egg hunt, families gathered around the covered picnic tables for lemonade and cookies, which were donated by various neighbors as well as the North Oaks Elementary PTA.

Eggs for the Easter Egg Hunt were donated by participating families who left them at the homes of volunteers Pam Watts and Cheryl Frink. In addition, many neighbors donated eggs and candy even if their children were too old to participate.

The Easter Egg Hunt was a true neighborhood effort, but special thanks go to Realtor Mary "B" Battaglia, who sent a mail-out reminding area residents about the festivities. In addition, Mary B donated \$25 to help pay for eggs, candy, lemonade, ice and cookies. Other volunteers who also made the Easter Egg hunt not only possible, but also lots of fun for all our children include Pam Watts, Marian Shagman, Vincent Hostak, Cindy Fisher, Betsy Parshall (thanks for printing the fliers!), Tammy Porter, Peggy Schott, Jeanine Lehman, David and Jack Frink, David Jaquess, Vic Hariton, Dave Ronquillo, Sue Beck and Margaret Harrist.

Also, the Laurel Oaks Neighborhood Association thanks Kathy Caraway for allowing us to put information on neighborhood events in the students' folders at North Oaks Elementary.

1996 Laurel Oaks Interim Officers

Feel free to contact the Laurel Oaks Interim Board about issues that are important to you. Laurel Oaks will hold its first officer elections this September.

Title	Name	Email
President	David Ronquillo	husky76@ix.netcom.com
1st Vice President	Vic Hariton	vhariton@onr.com
2nd Vice President	Jeff Walsh	jwalsh@summagraphics.com
3rd Vice President	Sue Beck	suebeck@concentric.net
Treasurer	Ralph Bonnell	bonnell@austin.ibm.com
Secretary	Margaret Harrist	harrist@onr.com

Fourth of July Parade Coming Your Way

By Cheryl Frink

It's almost time to dress up those bikes, strollers, wagons -- or perhaps the family dog -- in red, white and blue as the Laurel Oaks Neighborhood Association teams up with the Sierra Vista Neighborhood for a Fourth of July parade.

The parade, in its seventh year, begins at 9 a.m. on the Fourth at the intersection of Sierra Colorado and Sierra Nevada. It then heads toward Colina on Sierra Nevada and finishes at the dead-end near the intersection of the two streets. As usual, a fire engine from Fire Station 33 will lead the parade. At the end of the parade, participants will be offered beverages and frozen treats, which, in the past, have been almost as popular with the crowd as the annual tradition of opening a fire hydrant to cool everybody down.

Volunteers from the Laurel Oaks Neighborhood Association will assist Ann Worthington and Charlotte Hair -- who started and continue to organize the annual parade in the Sierra Vista area -- with setting up for the parade and serving refreshments.

Children of all ages -- and grown-ups, too -- are encouraged to decorate their bikes or wagons (Cub Scouts -- how about getting out your pushcarts?) for the parade. Parents can push younger children in strollers, and families are welcome to dress up friendly (and leashed) pets in patriotic attire for the parade.

We'll be asking for the following as time for the parade approaches: posters to publicize the parade, ice, large insulated coolers for beverages, card tables, and freezer space the week before the parade.

Treasurer's Report

By Ralph Bonnell

Since we voted to form the Laurel Oaks Neighborhood Association at our February meeting, our community has been very generous in supporting our new association. When we formed the association, we had high hopes that we could operate the organization on donations alone. Our members are making this hope a reality.

To date, our donations will pay for our mailbox, our past newsletter and this current edition, the Easter Egg Hunt and set up a basis of support for our July 4th get-together.

Thanks to all the generous supporters for their donations of both time and money. I am very thankful to live in a neighborhood which shows such community support!

The Laurel Oaks Neighborhood Association needs your contribution! Please donate what you can!

Last Updated August 23, 1996

Get Involved in Laurel Oaks Committees

Bylaws/Deed Restrictions

The Bylaws Committee has been working to come up with a master draft of the bylaws using drafts from other Neighborhood Associations and a Texas State government agency for a template.

The goal of the Bylaws Committee will be to have a foundation document completed for the elected officers to use as a guide this fall.

The master draft will be circulated for comments and policy discussion to the board and various committee members prior to finalization. Several key issues, such as membership requirements, dues, etc. need to be resolved and reflected in the Bylaws so that the organization will have a guiding document going forward. The Bylaws Committee intends to make this process as participative as time will permit.

Communications

A neighborhood association is only as effective as its communication with area residents. The Communications Committee produces the quarterly newsletter and is also working on developing a consistent way of publicizing association meetings through effective signage and creating a homepage. We need your creative ideas and talent!

Community Activities

Want to establish more of a feeling of community in our area? The Community Activities Committee coordinates events for the neighborhood that helps us get to know each other -- and have a lot of fun. Their first event was the Easter Egg Hunt, and the group is now planning a Fourth of July Parade. Many more activities are sure to come -- have any ideas?

Elections

Our fall elections are just around the corner, and the elections committee will make sure everything goes smoothly. This is another vital committee, and it's important that residents throughout the area participate. It won't take a large time commitment, but your effort will have a lasting effect on this association!

Membership

After the Bylaws Committee completes its work, it will be time to conduct the Laurel Oaks Neighborhood Association's first membership drive. The Membership Committee will need your creative, innovative ideas for making that effort a rousing success!

Neighborhood Watch

A number of blocks in our neighborhood are still without block captains. If your street doesn't have a Neighborhood Watch sign, your block probably hasn't been organized for this important crime prevention program.

The next large-scale training for this area's Neighborhood Watch program will be this fall, but the police will be happy to offer the training at other times as well.

Nominations

The foundation of our neighborhood association is the army of enthusiastic volunteers and supporters who live here. Want to get to know a group of fantastic people? Join the Nominations Committee and have a hand in proposing this group's next slate of officers.

This is a very important committee, and we need more participation!

Parks/Environment

The goals of the Parks and Environment Committee are to preserve and enhance the natural resources in and around our neighborhood and to provide community awareness of this effort.

At its formation meeting on April 2, the group discussed the following issues:

- Helping protect and enhance neighborhood creeks
- Enhancing/maintaining Oak View Park trails
- Cleaning up graffiti and trash in Oak View Park
- Planting trees on Spicewood Springs Road after construction ends
- Searching for nearby sites for an open field for softball and soccer
- Mulching program for grass clippings, leaves and small branches
- Guest speakers from the Austin Parks Planning Department, the City Planning Department and the Bull Creek Foundation.

Obviously, a lot of territory will be covered in this committee.

Transportation/Safety

The Transportation/Safety Committee is already hard at work researching a variety of areas that affect our neighborhood. If you have an interest in any of the following areas, please get involved in this committee:

- Sidewalks Committee
- Stop signs, Children at Play signs, Deer Crossing signs, Rough Roads, Painted Divider Lines and Crosswalks
- Traffic lights at Spicewood Springs Library
- Reforestation of Spicewood Springs Road
- Speed humps
- Traffic load on various streets and development's effects
- Attending city meetings pertaining to the above issues
- Working with police on the above issues

The next meeting of the Transportation/Safety Committee is Monday, June 10th at 7 p.m. at Spicewood Springs Library. Your input is very important! Last Updated August 23, 1996

National Night Out

Throw a block party on National Night Out - August 6.

Meet your neighbors and local police. For more information, contact Linda Cruikshanks.

Neighborhood Tidbits

- A large group of pre-teens was seen riding their bikes by the park at about 1 a.m. on a recent Saturday morning. Do you know where your children are?
- Car burglaries and vandalism are a problem in the area. The incidents typically happen very early in the morning. The best defenses are to lock your car doors and activate your alarms if you have them. If you're out at those hours, watch for suspicious activity and report it immediately!
- Speeding vehicles continue to be a threat. If you are concerned about speeding on your street, call the Austin Police Department at 480-5363 and request a patrol. If enough neighbors complain, a patrol will be sent. And, if you see a company vehicle that is obviously speeding through our streets, call the company and complain.
- The fastest we should drive in a residential area is 30 m.p.h. Why? Hundreds of children live here. Going faster won't save you but a few seconds -- literally. Is it worth the risk -- and the discourtesy to your neighbors?
- North Oaks Elementary is changing the traffic patterns at morning drop-off to alleviate congestion. Please bear with the changes, and remember that the safety of the children is the utmost concern.
A reminder: Parents are asked to drop off their children on the Oakview side of the school.

- In a nearby neighborhood, elderly people are being attacked while working in their yards. They have been forced inside their homes and robbed. We need to stay alert and watch out for each other -- don't let it happen here!
 - The Austin Police are developing a Neighborhood Watch program specifically designed for the elderly. Interested? Contact Linda Cruikshanks.
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Advertise in this Newsletter

Advertise in the Laurel Oaks Neighborhood Association newsletter. Reach more than 2,000 area homeowners.

Deadline for the late summer issue is August 9.

Classified Advertisements

The Laurel Oaks Neighborhood Association will begin running classified advertisements in the next issue.

Have something to sell? Looking for something to buy? It's a great way to get the word out!

Mark your calendar -- the deadline is August 9.

Transportation Committee Needs Your Input

Speed Humps and Other Traffic-Slowing Measures

The Laurel Oaks Neighborhood Association's Transportation Committee is in the process of developing a comprehensive traffic-calming plan for the neighborhood and wants input from residents throughout the neighborhood.

Fireoak Drive (from Oak Knoll to Oak View) and Dundee Drive are currently on the city's priority list to have speed humps installed. These streets are on that list because:

- At least two-thirds of residents on those streets signed a petition requesting speed humps
- The city conducted a study of traffic on those streets, focusing on average speed, sidewalks, the street's proximity to parks and schools, and the number of accidents.

Based on these studies, Fireoak was ranked 11th in priority of all streets in the city requesting speed humps and Dundee was ranked 85th. These streets must have the approval of the neighborhood association to have speed humps installed.

The City Transportation Department did a study on Fireoak Drive on November 6 and 7, 1995. Although the posted speed limit is 30 m.p.h., the study showed the average speed to

be in excess of 30 m.p.h. Of the 2,447 vehicles clocked during this period, 1,621 (or 66 percent) exceeded the speed limit. More than 100 vehicles exceeded 40 m.p.h., with some clocked at 70 m.p.h.

According to the City of Austin, "Statistics from cities that have installed speed humps in residential areas show that the humps are successful in reducing speed." Speed humps also divert some traffic to other streets and slow EMS response time by up to 10 seconds per hump.

Several streets in the Laurel Oaks Neighborhood Association area already have speed humps, including Broad Oaks, Queens Way and Shakespearean.

PLEASE OFFER YOUR IDEAS ON THIS ISSUE through one or both of the following:

- Attend the next Transportation Committee Meeting on June 10th at 7 pm at Spicewood Springs Library.
- Fill out the survey below and mail to:
Laurel Oaks, Suite 423, PO Box 10998, Austin, Tx 78766-1998

ALL SURVEYS MUST BE RECEIVED BY SATURDAY, JUNE 1

Traffic Plan Survey

1. To help the Transportation Committee develop a comprehensive traffic plan, please complete the following statement:

I would like a traffic-calming measure on _____ Drive/Lane such as:

- Stop Sign
- Traffic Island
- Red Flags on Speed Signs
- Speed Humps
- Rough Roads

2. Please indicate which of the following statements reflect your opinion:

- I am NOT opposed to speed humps on Fireoak Drive.
- I am opposed to speed humps on Fireoak Drive.
- I am NOT opposed to speed humps on Dundee Drive.
- I am opposed to speed humps on Dundee Drive.

Your Name
Your Address
Your Phone #

Only ballots with names and addresses will be tabulated in the survey results.

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