

# Northwood Hills

NHHA NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2004

## WHAT'S INSIDE

THIS ISSUE OF NHHA NEWS

**Your lawn sprinkler will need a new rain & freeze sensor soon.**

For what's required and how to get it see page 2.

**Councilmember Lois Finkelman explains the city's new recycling program,** about to be tested in four areas.

**Don't put that can of old housepaint in your garbage or bulk trash-- it's against the law.**

How and where to get rid of hazardous waste is told on page 2.

**Mailbox theft is threat to your bank account.**

Tips on how to avoid this crime are on page 3.

**Second Qtr 2004 real estate report of home sales** looks good vs. '03. Comparisons on page 4.

### **BULK TRASH PICK-UP DATES**

WEEKS BEGINNING WITH:

**OCT. 11  
NOV. 8  
DEC. 13  
JAN. 10  
FEB. 14  
MARCH 14**

## *PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE*

*By Gene Saunders*

Summer 2004 was officially the wettest in Dallas history, so says the National Weather Service. At the DFW rain gauge 18.89 inches of rain fell in June, July and August breaking the 1928 record. Wow! I feel privileged to have witnessed such an event. Seriously, we take clean water for granted; just turn on the tap and it's there. I've heard it said that water, not oil, will become the basis of future wars. We may not see it in our lifetimes, but that doesn't mean we should do nothing to head it off.

More than 100,000 people move into the Metroplex each year. Dallas Water Utilities has to plan decades into the future to secure sufficient water sources, then invest heavily to provide the infrastructure needed to deliver it to our homes. If we homeowners develop good conservation habits, we can reduce the investment, the cost to us, and the worry about future supply. The good folks of San Antonio are said to have cut their water use by 30% using simple conservation methods; we could learn from them. Dallas Water has been waging a PR campaign this year (thanks to some grant money) but I fear the record rainfall may have reduced its impact. Let's listen up, please.

To those who took our advice about eliminating standing water from your property, we say thank you. It's the least disruptive way to keep the mosquito population down and avoid West Nile Virus and other problems. If you favor spraying, try not to harm the good insects too.

Coming in the not-too-distant future are changes to the city's recycling program. An embarrassingly low percentage of Dallas homes currently take part in this voluntary program. In order to encourage broader participation, the city will begin testing a new method of collection. Councilmember Lois Finkelman's article on the subject is inside this newsletter. Personally, I'll be sorry when term limits force her from office next May. Lois has been a real joy to work with. May her successor be also.

*On lawn sprinkler systems...*

***NEW LAW REQUIRES  
RAIN/FREEZE SENSORS  
BEFORE JAN.1, 2005.***

A new irrigation ordinance requires Dallas homeowners with lawn sprinkler systems to install rain and freeze sensors by the end of this year. Dallas Water Utilities is offering two ways to help you save money and comply with the ordinance: a \$50 Rebate Option or a Free Sensor Option.

To get a \$50 rebate check (even if your “sprinkler guy” does the installation) you must complete a two-page application and mail it to City Hall along with your receipts. To get the free sensor, you must pre-register and attend one of the City’s 20-minute workshops (there are several in north Dallas in September and October).

We have posted details of the new sensor requirements and options on our Web site [www.northwoodhills.org](http://www.northwoodhills.org).

Meanwhile, don’t forget you can be fined for operating your sprinkler system between 10 AM and 6 PM through the end of September, or during any precipitation or freezing weather. It’s the law.

*12-month pilot program...*

***ONCE-A-WEEK GARBAGE  
& RECYCLING PICKUP  
TO BE TESTED BY CITY.***

*By Councilmember Lois Finkelman*

A new, simpler and easier way to recycle will be tested this fall in four Dallas neighborhoods. It may give us a glimpse of the future that will improve our residential quality of life. It promises to make less of a chore the vital act of recycling glass, plastic

and metal items, which now requires homeowners to use the “blue bag” method.

The pilot program will involve an additional roll cart for all recyclable items. This method eliminates bags, separating paper items from glass, plastic and metal, and also expands the items to be collected.

All non-recyclable garbage will go into the gray cart most Dallas residents already use. Among the four neighborhoods chosen for the test, one is in our Council District 11 -- the Citadel area south of LBJ between Hillcrest and Preston Road.

Stay tuned for progress reports as this important test goes forward.

*It’s closer than you think...*

***NEARBY SITE FOR  
HAZARDOUS WASTE  
IS EASY TO USE.***

*By Gene Saunders*

Disposal of old paint, used motor oil, household cleaners, yard chemicals, aerosol cans, batteries, pesticides and fluorescent light tubes is not permitted in our regular, neighborhood garbage pick-up. There are sites in various parts of the city especially designated for collection of these hazardous and unhealthy materials.

Fortunately, one collection site is just a few miles from Northwood Hills at 11234 Plano Road. A few weeks ago, a friend and I decided to go there. Workers asked me to complete a brief form and show proof that I was a Dallas resident (my water bill). Then they took what we had and we were on our way in minutes. The site is open Tuesday through Thursday, plus two Saturdays per month. But it pays to make sure by calling 214-553-1765 before you go.

*A threat to your cash and credit...*

## ***YOUR MAILBOX IS A PRIME TARGET FOR IDENTITY THEFT.***

*By Gene Saunders & Mike Hord*

Among the fastest growing crimes in America is what is known as identity theft. The thieves are after your bank checking account and credit card accounts. And among the most common methods they use to get at your cash and credit is to rob your curbside mailbox.

In the past three years, nearly a dozen incidents of mailbox theft have been reported in Northwood Hills. Thieves will take mail you've put out to be picked up by the postman. They'll take mail that has just been delivered to your address. Either way, they can steal valuable documents that give them access to your accounts.

Here are some mail theft prevention tips from the U.S. Postal Service:

- Remove mail from mailbox as soon as possible after delivery.
- Never leave mail in mailbox overnight. The Postal Service will hold mail for you free if you're away.
- Deposit outgoing mail only in blue Postal Service collection boxes or at your local post office. Do not place outgoing mail (especially checks) in your personal mailbox.
- Have boxes of new bank checks mailed to your branch bank for pick-up.
- If you do not receive an expected check, credit card bill, or financial statement, report it promptly to the issuer.
- If your mail is stolen, report it to your nearest Postal Inspection Service. In Dallas 214-760-4450.

Here in Northwood Hills, neighbor Mark Hord recommends you install a locking mailbox. He has shopped Home Depot and other retailers and has found an attractive "Mailsafe" locking box for about \$70, which he has used for more than a year. It is slightly wider than the usual box, made from black metal, and can only be opened from the front with a key. The mailman must use a 2"x 12" slot to insert mail. In those rare instances when an envelope or package is too large to fit, the carrier will usually leave it at your door.

Stealing mail is a federal crime, as is vandalizing a mailbox and defacing or destroying any mail deposited in it. Both acts are punishable by fines and jail sentences. The only people authorized to access mailboxes are postal employees and resident-owners. Technically the interior of the box is federal property. Flyers, notes, or anything else left in it without postage may be charged to addressee for postage due, although that's rarely enforced.

How you use your mailbox, and the kind of mailbox you use, can be your first line of defense against identity theft. Those who have suffered from this crime will tell you it's a devastating experience and any defensive measure is worth it.

### *Northwood Hills*

#### **NHHA NEWSLETTER**

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Think like a burglar...

**WITHOUT LIGHTS  
YOUR HOUSE INVITES  
BAD COMPANY.**

When coming home at night, it's sometimes useful to put yourself in the mind of a burglar. Given a block of houses, which one would you target? You would probably choose the darkest, quietest house where you could work unseen. That's especially true if there are newspapers on the lawn and handbills wedged in the doorframe. Add unlocked gates to the backyard and it's a burglar's dream -- your nightmare.

You may have an alarm system sign, even a barking dog. But if you don't use the power of light, you may be inviting trouble. Lights on from dusk to dawn -- inside, outside, by the front door, garage door, wherever there is access to your house -- can help you avoid bad company.

Neighborhood activity center...

**FRETZ PARK TURNS 40,  
WAS NAMED FOR  
CITY LEADER OF 1920s.**

A splendid center for education as well as recreation, Fretz Park opened in 1964. It was named for Emil Fretz, of the Dallas Parks System, about whom it was written, "The individual who provided the greatest leadership, both in terms of time served and the intensity of his activities, undoubtedly was Emil Fretz who served on the (Parks System) board...as its vice president and the dynamic force in the board's programs of the 1920s." We are indeed fortunate to have the library, rec center, tennis courts, pool and athletic fields of Fretz Park.

Real Estate Update...

**SECOND QUARTER '04  
LOOKS GOOD VERSUS  
SAME QTR LAST YEAR.**

*By Lynn Carlton, Realtor*

Sixteen homes in Northwood Hills were sold during second quarter 2004. This is the same number sold in second quarter '03, but with an increase in average sales price and a decrease in days on market.

The following statistics were taken from the GDAR multiple listing service and are intended for information purposes only.

**SECOND QTR 2004**

	<u>SALES PRICE</u>	<u>\$/SQ FT</u>	<u>DAYS ON MKT</u>
HIGH	\$600,000	\$150.63	100
LOW	305,000	88.69	2
AVG	425,688	118.88	28

**SECOND QTR 2003**

	<u>SALES PRICE</u>	<u>\$/SQ FT</u>	<u>DAYS ON MKT</u>
HIGH	\$1,150,000	\$186.14	377
LOW	190,000	55.80	4
AVG	409,363	108.45	78

**HOMES SOLD BY \$\$ RANGE**

	<u>Q2'04</u>	<u>Q2'03</u>
\$100-200,000	0	1
\$200-300,000	0	3
\$300-400,000	7	6
\$400-500,000	6	4
\$500-600,000	2	1
\$600-700,000	1	0
\$1,000,000+	0	1

In uncertain economic times, the data above speak well for our neighborhood. When you welcome new neighbors moving in, remember to invite them to join NHHA.

**BE A LITTER-GITTER.  
ADOPT YOUR BLOCK  
AND KEEP IT LITTER-FREE.**

Can you name them???

## **THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS NOW SERVE NORTHWOOD HILLS.**

Sometimes we think there is only one elementary school for our neighborhood. Indeed, only one bears the Northwood Hills name. But in fact there are three, two of them in the Richardson school district and one in Dallas. When the first school opened in 1960, Northwood Hills consisted only of streets south of Spring Valley Rd. The second came along four years later, and the third just opened its doors in 1997.

The original school serving residents of Northwood Hills was Spring Valley Elementary south of Peyton. Classes began there in the fall of 1960. Then in 1964 Northwood Hills Elementary opened its doors to serve residents north of Spring Valley. The most recent school to welcome our youngsters is Anne Frank Elementary just west of Montfort Rd. The area served by this DISD school includes only a few streets in the western edge of Northwood Hills Estates.

Trivia: RISD Academy, across Coit Road south of Spring Valley, was Northwood Junior High prior to 1986. That year it was converted to a school for grades two through six. As such it no longer serves students living in Northwood Hills.

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## **HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS?**

Members say they like neighborhood news and special NHHA alerts via e-mail, so be sure we have your current address. Register it online at [www.northwoodhills.org](http://www.northwoodhills.org).

At NH Elementary...

## **OFFERS AND EVENTS RAISE \$\$ FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR.**

*By Lynn Sullivan*

There are a bunch of worthwhile and worthy fundraising projects in the works for the new school year at Northwood Hills Elementary. Proceeds are used for student activities both academic and recreational, including computer supplies, teachers' aids, playground equipment, etc.

**Beginning September 21** the PTA will once again sell Sally Foster Giftwrap and Chocolate. Products are the highest quality, best value and greatest selection. Ask to see a catalog and place an order. 50% of profits go to NHE.

**The Family Fall Carnival** will be held at NHE October 23 from 2:00 to 5:00 PM. There will be a variety of games, food and events, such as Buried Treasure, Speed Pitch, Pie Throw, and Hula Hoop contest. Rounding out the fun will be Face Painting, The Button Guy, an Obstacle Course and Bounce House. Tickets can be purchased the day of the event.

Ongoing fundraising programs include **General Mills Box Tops for Education**. Clip the coupons from cereal boxes, Betty Crocker, and Pillsbury products for the PTA to collect and redeem for cash. See a complete list of products at [www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com). Plus you can earn a percentage of what you spend at **Tom Thumb** or **Albertsons** for NHE by going to the Customer Service counter and registering your store discount card.

If you have any questions, please contact Lynn Sullivan at 972-774-1342.