

# Northwood Hills

NHHA NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2005

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**Sign, sign, everywhere a sign** tells everything you need to know – we hope! (page 5)

**BULK TRASH  
PICK-UP DATES**  
WEEKS BEGINNING  
WITH:

**APRIL 11**

**MAY 9**

**JUNE 13**

**JULY 11**

**AUGUST 8**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*By Gene Saunders*

The longer I live in Northwood Hills, the more I understand what makes this a great community in which to live. The fact that so many of us are looking out for our neighbors (hopefully without becoming a pest!) gives us a real sense of community that doesn't always happen in a big city.

One of the things we can do is to **keep Northwood Hills "West Nile Virus Free"**; you can do your part by removing ALL standing water from your property – which is where mosquitoes breed. This includes your gutters, birdbaths, even flower pots. Mosquitoes don't like moving water, so swimming pools and birdbaths-with-pumps are fine.

The Alley Sign Promotion that we announced at the January Annual Meeting is proceeding nicely. There's an article inside which has the details, but you'll have to hurry if you want to take advantage of this Once In A Lifetime (!) offer.

Time flies when we're having fun! Can you believe that this will be the **12<sup>th</sup> Year** of Northwood Hills' **Independence Day Parade**? Each year, it's great to see the hundreds of neighbors who gather on the Northwood Hills Elementary School grounds to have fun, grab a hog dog and lemonade, dunk a school principal (!) and see how creative your neighbors can be (before I moved here, I didn't know it was even **possible** to **decorate your dog in red, white and blue!**).

Time to get serious for a moment; there are two articles inside which deal with the issue of Teardowns – homes which disappear one day, and are replaced nine months later with something very unlike what was there before. Northwood Hills remains a great place to live partly because the way our homes Fit The Lot; in the past several months, I've heard horror stories about how other Dallas neighborhoods changed when homeowners became inattentive to what was happening around them.

Most folks I talk to say they don't want Northwood Hills to look like Preston Hollow North (bless their souls), where nearly every home has been replaced with a wall-to-wall house with twice the square footage of the old one. Developers seem happy to remove our 40 year old trees and replace them with a 2-story monolith that looks absolutely nothing like the rest of the neighborhood.

Your Northwood Hills Homeowners Association is a member of both the North Dallas Neighborhood Alliance and the Dallas Homeowners League, both of which are very concerned about the uncontrolled bulldozing taking place throughout the city. Then again, you may enjoy living in a construction zone; it's just not my personal cup of tea!

**Free Gift for Annual Dues!**

**SIGN PROMOTION**

All NHHA members who are paid in full for the entire 2005 calendar year **before June 30**, are eligible for a free gift from the Association! We are presenting **one free alley sign per home**, and we will install it for you! These signs are sturdy aluminum, 6x12 inches with white lettering on a blue background, including your street address and our attractive Northwood Hills logo.

This is a valuable gift. It identifies your property for police and fire personnel, day or night. It also shows your involvement in neighborhood Crime Watch, improving identification for our Expanded Neighborhood Patrol [ENP] and serving as an effective warning to criminals. If you live on a creek and your property does not have an alley, you may wish to place this sign elsewhere on your property.

Are you paying on a quarterly basis? Now is the time to write one more check for the year and request your free alley sign before this promotion ends!



Several dozen of these have already been ordered and installed in The Alleys of Northwood Hills (a small sample is shown above).

To request your free sign, please complete the form on [www.northwoodhills.org](http://www.northwoodhills.org) or call the NHHA Hotline. All requests are subject to verification of annual dues. Additional signs are available for \$12 payable to the NHHA.

**Real Estate Update...**

**FIRST QUARTER '05**

*by Lynn Carlton, Realtor*

Northwood Hills home sales got off to a slow start for 2005. Only 11 homes sold in the first quarter of 2005, compared to 17 homes sold for the same period in 2004.

The good news is, while activity was down, the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2005 average sales price increased by approximately 7.5% and the average price per square foot increased by approximately 8% over the same period in 2004. This is great news for Northwood Hills homeowners.

The following information was taken from the MetroTex Association of Realtors MLS and is for general information purposes only:

	Q1 2005		
	SALES PRICE	\$/SQ FT	DAYS ON MKT
HIGH	\$ 1,050,000	\$ 197.67	242
LOW	265,000	77.06	14
AVG	478,100	134.45	107

	Q1 2004		
	SALES PRICE	\$/SQ FT	DAYS ON MKT
HIGH	\$ 950,000	\$ 199.37	428
LOW	292,500	84.33	1
AVG	443,471	124.40	100

	HOMES SOLD BY PRICE RANGE	
	Q1'05	Q1'04
\$ 200,000	2	2
\$ 300,000	3	7
\$ 400,000	2	4
\$ 500,000	0	2
\$ 600,000	1	1
\$ 700,000	1	0
\$ 900,000	0	1
\$1,000,000	1	0

**Pruning Reminder**

**VALENTINE'S DAY THROUGH MEMORIAL DAY**

Here's our annual reminder not to prune your oak trees until after Memorial Day. The oak wilt fungus moves from tree to tree either underground (through the roots) or overland by the Nitidulid (picnic) beetle.

**Crime Watch**

**PATROL UPDATE**

*by Robert Stangl*

Thanks for the kind words following last quarter's update about what's happening with our ENP (Expanded Neighborhood Patrol). We plan on making this a regular feature in *NHHA News*.

The officer in charge of our ENP, Sgt. Frank Rivera, had a close call a few weeks ago when he was chasing a suspect and felt chest pains. Long story short, he had open heart surgery and is expected to make a full recovery. We don't recommend that you chase down the bad guys, either. When you spot something suspicious, call our ENP (we provide that number to our NHHA Members only) **after calling 911**.

Make a habit of describing people, so that it becomes second nature. What's their height, facial features, hair color, clothing ... even their shoes?

I'd like to suggest adding your garage door to your home alarm system, as one of the security zones Nationwide, 60% of home burglaries come via the open garage door – don't add to that statistic! Finally, door-to-door solicitation is allowed between 9am and 30 minutes after sunset, Monday-Saturday.

**Help us keep you informed...**

**NEW LISTSERV**

A listserv is a way to manage a large email list such as the one we use to communicate with you, rapidly. We changed to a new one in January. We've sent a few messages each week since January 1. Sadly, **about 20% of you stopped getting these messages** -- because you didn't confirm the email we sent.

To sign up, send a blank email from the address you want to receive, to:  
[members-subscribe@northwoodhills.org](mailto:members-subscribe@northwoodhills.org)

**CHANGED EMAIL ADDRESS?**

Please tell us when you change your e-mail address. Email your old and new address (we'll purge the old one!) to  
[update@northwoodhills.org](mailto:update@northwoodhills.org)

**Feedback always welcome**

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

While we regularly receive letters, telephone calls and personal visits from residents who are pleased with this newsletter, there's always room for improvement! *NHHA News* is intended to provide a forum for comment and views on issues of importance and interest to residents of Northwood Hills.

Readers are encouraged to comment on subjects published in the newsletter by writing to the editor. Please send letters with **address, telephone number and personal signature** to: Editor, NHHA News, PO Box 800874, Dallas TX 75380

Shorter letters (200 words or less) are more likely to be considered. *NHHA News* reserves the right to edit letters for reasons of grammar, clarity and space.

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**YES! I WANT TO JOIN NHHA**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make check payable and mail to:*  
**Northwood Hills Homeowners Association**  
**P.O. Box 800874, Dallas TX 75380-0874**  
*Dues are \$240 annually, or \$60 per quarter.*

*NEW: we accept online payments!*

**Teardowns**

**ETERNAL VIGILANCE**

by Peter D'Apice

A common concern of our area is the teardown and construction of new homes. There are many issues related to that, but we would like to focus on just one here. As you all know, one of the most appealing aspects of our neighborhood is our large **setbacks** - the distance between the curb and the house. This gives our neighborhood the spacious, sweeping front lawns that add elegance and stature to our homes.

Generally, new construction and remodeling must comply with these setback requirements. Someone building a new home or remodeling an existing home might request from the city a variance to the platted setback, so that the house or some part of it may be built closer to the street or closer to the property line of the adjoining house. Although such a variance allows that builder to build a larger home or have more space in the back yard, or both, it will also destroy that spacious quality that the rest of us enjoy and leave the neighborhood with an unsightly sawtooth pattern of houses.

**If you receive notice from the city of any requested variance of any kind, please alert NHHA immediately** and we can take it from there. If you have any concerns at all about a neighbor's new construction or remodeling, please NHHA know immediately. If anything can be done to address your concerns, the earlier we address it in the construction process, the better. Your vigilance is essential for us to preserve the quality of our neighborhood and the value of our homes.

**FINANCIALS**

	Actual (3 months)	Budget (6 months)
Total Income	\$43,225	\$60,894
Beautification	\$8,217	\$10,800
Patrol	\$22,173	\$45,998
Total Expenses	\$33,445	\$63,055
	Apr 2005	Apr 2004
Total Assets	\$72,095	\$73,160
Total Liability/Equity	\$72,095	\$73,160

Detailed financials are available upon request.

**Neighborhood Stability**

**CITY-WIDE CONCERN**

by Gene Saunders

Imagine waking up to find a fence around The House Next Door, with a Building Permit sign attached. Ten days later, bulldozers arrive and remove first the tall trees, then the existing home. A few days later, a new slab is poured which appears to cover 45% of the lot. In place of the old house, a new 8500 square foot **McMansion** is erected which is 35 feet tall, and casts shade over a large chunk of your property, dooming your grass and flowers, not to mention your view. Does this sound far-fetched? It's not; this is happening all over Dallas, including Northwood Hills.

On behalf of the NHHA, I attended (on April 4<sup>th</sup>) a meeting of Dallas citizens who are increasingly concerned with these teardowns happening across the Metroplex. People are increasingly disturbed by **incompatible development**: two story houses where the neighborhood is mostly single-story; street-facing garages when there are only side- or alley-facing ones; and of course, the "McMansion" (incompatibly large, often cheaply-made houses in an otherwise nice neighborhood).

The City created a Single Family Housing Taskforce, which came up with a **Neighborhood Stability Overlay Tool** – basically a one-year **petition** to keep new development compatible with existing homes. This is expected to be bitterly opposed by builders and developers, who want no restrictions on what or where they can build.

In order for this to work, we must act quickly (the state requires a 10-day minimum between the time a building permit is posted and construction may begin). The Task Force recommends that by gathering **more than half the signatures of the homeowners on a given side of a street** (aka "block face"), the builder can be required to get the neighbor's approval before proceeding with any variances. That restriction will last for one year.

As of this writing, this tactic is not cast in stone, but appears to be the best hope we have for a short-term solution to the wholesale "SUVification" of our neighborhood. When you learn of a house demolition in your area, please call us (our numbers are on the website) and we'll help you understand what can be done.

**Everywhere a sign**

**SIGNS, SIGNS, SIGNS**

by Gene Saunders

Frequently, I'm asked questions about signs – all kinds of signs. I decided to throw caution to the wind and write an article for our newsletter.

**Northwood Hills Deed Restrictions:** "No signs of any kind shall be displayed to the public view on a lot except one professional sign of not more than twenty-five (25) square feet, advertising the property for sale or signs used by a builder to advertise the property during the construction and sale period."

**Sign Regulations**

Dallas Code Section Volume II Chapter 42  
[www.amlegal.com/dallas\\_tx](http://www.amlegal.com/dallas_tx)

**Monument Signs** (maximum 40 square feet)

Dallas Code § 43-115(a)(7)  
Dallas Code § 43-115.1(b)(3)

This governs the permanent signs marking the boundaries of a neighborhood (like the 4 we currently have erected which say "Northwood Hills"). As of 24 March 2004, the City is demanding a \$1,000 fee for each new one!

**Temporary Political Campaign Signs**

Dallas Code § 15A-12

too soon : 60 days before an election

too late : 10 days after an election

permit needed if more than 20 sq ft, or 8 ft high (SEC. 15A-13)

also see Texas Election Code § 255.001  
[www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/el.toc.htm](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/el.toc.htm)

also see Texas Statutes : Transportation Code § 392.032 and § 393.002  
[www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/tn.toc.htm](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/tn.toc.htm)

A person may not place or maintain a sign on a state highway right-of-way unless authorized by state law.

Except as provided by Section 393.0025, a person may not place a sign on the right-of-way of a public road unless the placement is authorized by state law.

**Garage Sale Signs**

maximum 3 consecutive days, twice/year;  
maximum 2 sq ft; must include street address and date(s); only on property; sale restricted to inside garage + adjoining patio

**General**

Dallas Code § 51A-7.203(b)  
prohibits signs in Public Right of Way

Dallas Code § 7A-16(a)  
prohibits signs on utility poles or other public property

Dallas Code § 51A-1.106  
Notification signs (zoning change, etc.) are okay

Miscellaneous signs on private property generally allowed (realtor; alarm company; Falcon Pride, etc.)

**"NO SOLICITING" signs**

Dallas Code § 42-18  
prohibits door-to-door sales before 9am or after 30 minutes following sunset of any day, Monday through Saturday; or at any time on a Sunday, New Year's Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, or Christmas Day.

Dallas Code § 42-21

A person, desiring that no merchant or other person engage in a home solicitation at his residence, shall exhibit in a conspicuous place upon or near the main entrance to the residence, a weatherproof card, *not less than three inches by four inches* in size, containing the words, "NO SOLICITORS." The letters shall be not less than two-thirds of an inch in height.

Dallas Code § 42-22

A person holding a charitable solicitation permit .... shall be exempted

**Who to call about Dallas Code Violations**

311 – Dallas City Hall  
or go online 24x7: [311.DallasCityHall.com](http://311.DallasCityHall.com)

if the above fails, call Dallas Code Enforcement (Premise Abatement Team) : 214-671-9572

Okay, that's all of the information I have. I'm hoping this will make it easier to understand what signs are allowed, and when.

The "NO SOLICITING" signs should keep most door-to-door salespeople away, unless they represent a charity, in which case they're exempt. If they come more than 30 minutes after sunset or anytime on Sunday, they're in violation. The statute numbers should help you quote "chapter and verse".

Does this mean that "lost pet" signs are prohibited? Technically, yes .. but that's seldom enforced. To be safe: ask your veterinarian to implant a microchip in your pet; it only takes a few seconds!