

Northwood Hills

NHHA NEWSLETTER – JULY 2005

WHAT'S INSIDE

THIS ISSUE OF NHHA NEWS

There's a new officer on the beat: big changes have happened with our Security Patrol (page 2)

Rod Serling would be proud: teardowns are just beginning (page 2)

Crossing Guards at the Elementary School: who needs 'em? (page 3)

Architectural Survey completed south of Spring Valley (page 3)

NHHA Financials – half year (page 3)

What the heck is a HELOC? (page 4)

Real Estate Update: average selling price per square foot near \$130 (page 4)

Sample of NHHA Email Alerts: what have you been missing? (page 5)

**BULK TRASH
PICK-UP DATES**
MONDAY-TUESDAY
BEGINNING WITH:

**AUGUST 8
SEPTEMBER 12
OCTOBER 10
NOVEMBER 14
DECEMBER 12**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Gene Saunders

Our **12th Annual Independence Day Parade** was actually *pleasant* (for July in Dallas), starting off with a brief shower. The crowd seemed a little lighter than past years. Was it because the 4th fell on a Monday (the end of a 3-day weekend)?

Our **new, improved security patrol** began service on Friday, July 1st and they're off to a good start, having scouted the neighborhood for the best way to patrol our 21 miles of streets (and another 9 miles of alleyways). Your NHHA Board has chosen **Southwest Group Protective Services** for this task. A big advantage is that we'll have two officers whose **fulltime job** (not overtime) is watching out for our safety. Please take a moment to introduce yourselves when you see them drive/walk/bicycle by your home. We're hoping to arrange a **Crime Watch meeting at Northwood Hills Elementary in September**: watch our website and/or your email for information.

We live in a friendly neighborhood, right? A newcomer asked this, in all seriousness, and it *got me to thinkin'*; although I often speak to/wave at my neighbors (and get waved *back at*), that may not be the case for everyone. In the next few days (Tuesday, August 2nd), we're asking you to gather your neighbors and participate in **NNO – Neighborhood Night Out (www.nno.org)** .. this is a chance to meet and greet folks who live nearby; hopefully you've already heard from your Block Captain about the logistics (if not, call me). Also, as your NHHA President, I have *volunteered* to taste-test any and all **homemade ice cream** produced that night (hey, someone has to do the hard work!).

About 10% of us have a creek in our backyard, but the rest took great advantage of the 2005 Membership Promotion, which ended in June (we announced it at the January Annual Meeting). I counted **296 homeowners getting a Free Customized Alley Sign!** Not only does this help our security patrol (they patrol our alleys as well as the streets), but your contractors (pool service, cable/satellite TV, etc.) can more easily locate you. It also helps our volunteers -- they process 75% fewer checks when you pay annually. In 2004 only 40% of us paid annually; in 2005 this increased to 65%! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

In the next few weeks, watch for Dallas City work crews to begin installing "NORTHWOOD HILLS" signs atop our street intersection signs – those signs are "at the printer" as of this writing.

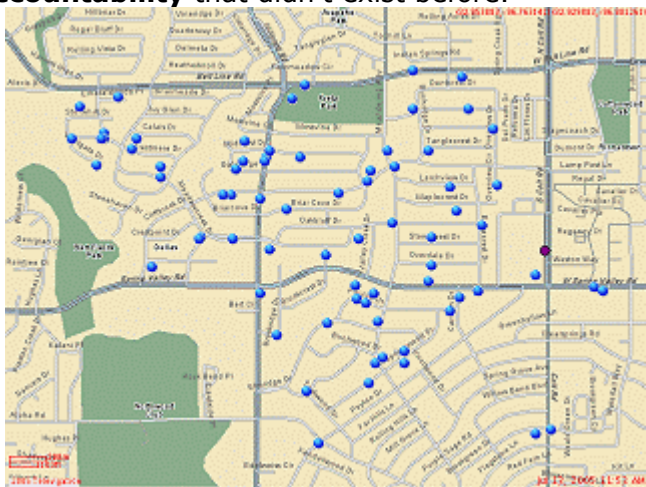
Finally, **let's keep Northwood Hills "West Nile Virus Free"**: please clean your pool (don't let it turn a lovely shade of "*algae green*"); remove ALL standing water - that's where mosquitoes breed (don't forget to clean your rain gutters, birdbaths, and flower pots. Mosquitoes don't like moving water, so swimming pools-with-skimmers and birdbaths-with-pumps shouldn't be a problem.

Crime Watch

PATROL UPDATE

Beginning July 1st, we switched to a private security firm (Southwest Group Protective Services) and so far, we're getting nothing but **positive feedback** from residents. I suspect everyone (especially your NHHA Board!) was a bit nervous about this at first, since we've been using off-duty Dallas Police Officers for the past 15 years. We're all resistant to change.

The first thing that's different is that they're more visible: the car is clearly marked "Northwood Hills" and has a yellow light bar on top (and a Texas logo on the side). The Volunteer Crimewatch in Valley View (with whom we overlap, south of Spring Valley Road) says he's seen our patrol more in 3 days than in the prior 30 years! These extra sets of eyes and ears are very welcome to us all. The new service allows us to monitor them with a GPS (Global Positioning System), and then map their location every 3 minutes; this leads to an **accountability** that didn't exist before.



I think you'll find the **Out-of-Town Service** especially valuable; our patrol will physically inspect our NHHA Member's property several times a day when you're away. One difference from before is that **they will come to your home** and not only ask detailed questions about who is allowed access to your property (pet sitters, yard crew, brother in law, etc.) but ask for an **emergency contact number** if something needs immediate attention. When they meet you at home, you can ask about what steps may be taken to better secure your home (do you have a monitored alarm system? enough exterior lighting?) Also, don't be afraid to call them even if all you need is a battery jumpstart: they have the tools!

THE TWILIGHT ZONE

"One day I awoke to find myself in a new neighborhood. But I didn't move!" (heard at one of the Teardowns Meetings)

The very thing that made Northwood Hills attractive to me, as a buyer, is what will lead to its eventual destruction at the hands of builders, who (like the rest of us) are here to make as large a profit as possible. To see **the future of Northwood Hills**, take a "Sunday drive" through Preston Hollow North (borders: Walnut Hill, Royal, Preston, Hillcrest). See the giant homes built close to each other, with far fewer trees than we have? Northwood Hills is attractive to real estate agents and builders because our large lots with deep setbacks allow two-story homes of 7500 square feet and up.

Some real estate agents say that our Northwood Hills homes are *unrealistic* in today's market: "everyone wants a McMansion; bigger homes mean more property taxes for the City, it's a good thing for us all!"

Northwood Hills
NHHA NEWSLETTER
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Northwood Hills Homeowners Association
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Web site: www.northwoodhills.org
Homeowner's Hotline: 972-480-5249

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
PO Box 800874, Dallas TX 75380-0874
Dues are \$240 annually, or \$60 quarterly.

Mayor Laura Miller says: "If you're having trouble paying your mortgage, please call 1-888-995-4673 to receive free foreclosure prevention counseling."

WHY DOESN'T NHE HAVE CROSSING GUARDS?

Some homeowners have asked why we don't have crossing guards stationed around Northwood Hills Elementary (NHE) when school gets out at 3pm. We went straight to the source and talked to Northwood Hills Elementary School Principal Kyle Stuard:

NHHA: How do we get a crossing guard stationed at Meandering Way and Cliffbrook at 3pm?

Mr. Stuard: Crossing guard patrol is the responsibility of the Dallas Police Department. I had them come out twice during the 2004/2005 school year to evaluate the need for a crossing guard at the intersection of Meandering Way and Cliffbrook. The officer reported that our numbers were not near the minimum required for a crossing patrol. The officer counted 4 children in the crosswalks on the first visit and 8 on the second visit.

NHHA: What about the 6th graders that help with security in the morning? Is this something they could assist with?

Mr. Stuard: I don't want to station any of our kids on a busy intersection.

NHHA: What about volunteer citizens that sometimes serve as crossing guards?

Mr. Stuard: We would be very open to that idea. I would be happy to talk to anyone that wants to volunteer in this way.

To volunteer to serve as an NHE crossing guard for the 2005/2006 school year, please contact NHE Principal Kyle Stuard [kyle.stuard@risd.org] or NHHA's Linda West [972-605-6395].

SIX-MONTH FINANCIALS

	Actual	Budget
Total Income	\$64,985	\$60,894
Beautification	\$18,243	\$10,800
Security Patrol	\$46,118	\$45,998
Total Expenses	\$66,130	\$63,055
	June 2005	June 2004
Total Liability/Equity	\$75,383	\$73,160

Detailed financials are available upon request.

ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

In June, several of us fanned out in the original part of Northwood Hills (the 225+ homes in the triangle south of Spring Valley Road) to perform an architectural survey. This section dates back to 1958! There are two parts to the survey: some **field work** (walking the streets) to note the unique architecture of each house; and a **research component** at the (downtown) Central Library where we document the home's owners since it was built.

The research component had us thumbing through the old City Directories (both paper and microfilm) on the 7th Floor; it was interesting to see that there were no entries in 1957, and then entire streets became populated in the following years. We found original Northwood Hills homeowners who've lived in **the same home more than 40 years!**

The field component was also fun, **especially if you have an interest in architecture**. Several of us learned more about roof designs ("gable or gambel? What's a dormer?"); window styles; building materials; etc. than we ever dreamed possible. We also saw some vacant lots, where homes used to be, until a few months ago.

We completed the survey of the original section of Northwood Hills, but there are **no plans to survey north of Spring Valley Road**, due to funding. The *DiscoverDallas!* Project (214-821-3290) will accept more research, but it'll have to be done ad-hoc by individual neighbors.

In a way, **I feel like we've really accomplished something**: documenting our neighborhood before the inevitable bulldozers arrive to destroy our trees and homes, one by one, to be replaced by McMansions.

Change is inevitable. If you think about it, before 1958, Northwood Hills was probably a cotton field. Long before that, native Americans lived here – I've no clue if there were buffalo, but you get the idea. Neighborhoods aren't defined so much as a collection of buildings; rather, they're how the residents interact.

In the old days, we'd often renovate our homes or make additions (up to the 45% lot coverage allowed by Dallas Code). Now, we're being conditioned to sell our homes to make way for something **the size of a small department store**. Pity the remaining neighbors, whose shade is now provided by the castle next door, rather than stately oak trees. Eventually, this will give way to 3-story homes, and taller .. you get the idea. Let's enjoy it while we can.

What's a HELOC?

FINANCIAL TIDBIT

It's got a funny name, but it's a wise financial vehicle. A Home Equity Line of Credit [HELOC] is a more flexible version of its cousin, the Home Equity Loan. Both loans rely on the equity you've built up in your home, but there are important differences between them.

Home Equity Loans are closed-end, which means they are for a specific amount of money with a set interest rate and have standard monthly payments leading to payoff over a specified amount of time. Home Equity Loans are often taken out for a one-time event or purchase, such as debt consolidation or remodeling.

On the other hand, a Home Equity Line of Credit is a revolving account, with some features like a credit card or standard line of credit. Homeowners can draw on the line of credit only when they need it. Monthly payments will vary, according to how much the homeowner has withdrawn, and the interest rate is variable. HELOCs can be used for whatever purpose the homeowner desires. Often, they are used for the same purposes as the home equity loan—to consolidate debt and for home improvements. The beauty of a HELOC is that there is no limit to what the homeowner can use the cash for.

A HELOC is a great tool for homeowners who want to withdraw smaller amounts of cash over a period of time, such as to pay for college tuition one semester at a time, pay for work on the house as it is accomplished or to serve as a reserve pool of emergency funds. Often, a HELOC interest rate is so low, it's a better option than the loan created specifically for the purpose, such as a student or automobile loan.

You don't make any payments until you tap the account. The payment will vary, according to your balance. A HELOC will not replace your other revolving lines of credit, such as credit cards. Texas law sets the minimum withdrawal at \$4,000 and prevents lenders from issuing a credit card on a HELOC account.

Both HELOCs and Home Equity loans may have tax advantages for account holders. Often, the interest paid on a HELOC or Home Equity loan is tax deductible. You'll have to talk to your accountant to be certain.

Real Estate Update...

SECOND QUARTER '05

by Lynn Carlton, Realtor

Home sales in Northwood Hills for the first six months of 2005 continued the steady increase in average sales price and price per square foot over the same period for 2004. Both benchmarks averaged a 4% increase. While the average length of time to sell a home remains at approximately three months continued low interest rates provide a positive outlook for our neighborhood and home sales.

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

	Q2 2005		
	SALES PRICE	\$/SQ FT	DAYS ON MKT
HIGH	\$ 1,050,000	\$ 197.67	409
LOW	229,990	87.16	3
AVG	453,114	127.28	93

	Q2 2004		
	SALES PRICE	\$/SQ FT	DAYS ON MKT
HIGH	\$ 950,000	\$ 199.37	428
LOW	292,500	84.33	1
AVG	435,969	121.95	85

HOMES SOLD BY PRICE RANGE		
	Q2'05	Q2'04
\$ 200,000	4	2
\$ 300,000	9	13
\$ 400,000	5	10
\$ 500,000	3	4
\$ 600,000	2	2
\$ 700,000	2	0
\$ 900,000	0	1
\$1,000,000	1	0

STAY INFORMED!

To sign up for our email alerts, NHHA Members (only!) should send a blank email *from the address you want to receive*, to:
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

NHHA EMAIL ALERTS

Why do some of your neighbors always seem better informed about what's happening than you? Maybe it's because they belong to the Homeowner's Association, and subscribe to the Email Alerts? Here is a sample of the 50 emails sent since January 2005:

Comprehensive Plan Open House: 31 January @ 5:30pm
20 Jan 2005 17:47:08
UPDATE: alley signs - not a scam!
23 Jan 2005 01:34:22
REMINDER: Annual Meeting Wednesday night, 7pm
25 Jan 2005 12:59:00
NEARBY: attempted carjacking (ALSO: fake police car)
7 Feb 2005 15:55:11
Crime prevented due to "Nosey Neighbor"
15 Feb 2005 15:42:20
UPDATE: late night magazine sales
15 Feb 2005 21:31:22
Crime stats / crime alert sign scam / anti-graffiti
18 Mar 2005 18:48:29
Crime Report / Scam Jam / PTA Auction
24 Mar 2005 23:38:03
City Council candidates : 4/5 @ 7pm - Parkhill Jr High
29 Mar 2005 19:02:50
Finkelman vs Blackwood : Strong Mayor Debate
2 Apr 2005 01:20:37
District 11 council candidates: 4/6 @ 7pm (Fretz Library)
4 Apr 2005 16:19:19
Northwood Hills Elementary PTA Auction+Dinner : Friday (4/8)
4 Apr 2005 20:54:41
March 2005 crime update - Northwood Hills (including Sex Offenders)
11 Apr 2005 19:07:23
Northwood Hills Elementary: Vandalism / Kindergarten Round-Up
13 Apr 2005 14:38:45
Scam warning: mortgage fraud
5 May 2005 16:21:40
ALERT: red SUV trying to apprehend school children?
5 May 2005 20:51:32
5/12/05: Spring Cleanup; Recycling for Home Chemical Products & Electronics
11 May 2005 17:17:15
UPDATE: fake SBC repairman - NOT!
11 May 2005 22:06:27
early June: volunteers needed for architectural/historical survey
24 May 2005 17:48:02
NHHA Patrol - changes coming 7/1
6 Jun 2005 17:21:28
ALERT: "fresh vegetable scam"
7 Jun 2005 01:01:38
SUV - stripped!
14 Jun 2005 15:25:20
12th Annual NHHA Independence Day Parade
28 Jun 2005 14:49:58
FINAL REMINDER: Alley Sign Promo
28 Jun 2005 14:40:06