

Northwood Hills

NHHA NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2007

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

**JANUARY 8
FEBRUARY 12
MARCH 12
APRIL 9
MAY 14**

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

By Gene Saunders

Time flies when you're having fun. A friend of mine likes to reply, "yeah, and fruit flies like a banana." (Dave always was a little strange.) Still, it's hard to believe that it's time for our annual meeting. This year, we'd like to channel our "meet your neighbors" time to the half hour before the meeting begins – promptly at 7pm:

NHHA Annual Meeting
Monday, January 22
7pm at Northwood Hills Elementary
(corner of Cliffbrook/Meandering Way)
"social hour" begins at 6:30

As far as the NHHA goes, we had a great year – **not spectacular, just great.** For the first time **ever**, we've surpassed 50% of the homeowners – as of early December we have 584 members (we typically use 1150 as the total number of homes in Northwood Hills – which includes the (often rental) duplexes on Dentcrest and Village Trail.

After a few weeks when vehicle burglaries were on the rise (within 5 or 6 homes of Meandering Way) they suddenly stopped. Did "the perp" find NHHA Security too constraining, or did he wind up back in jail for another crime? It's hard to tell. There continue to be a few shed burglaries, but one or two a month can't be considered a crime spree (unless it's **your** shed or garage that's burgled).

I continue to hope we can increase membership so that we can add a 3rd patrol shift, but **there are still a lot of homeowners here who haven't joined NHHA.** Maybe it's just because no one every asked? Please make it a point of continuing to **Talk It Up!** such that we can continue our efforts in making this one of the best neighborhoods in Dallas in which to live, play and work. There's a handy membership coupon inside every issue of NHHA News. Thanks, everyone.

Finally, the NHHA Board received the question as to whether the entire neighborhood would be interested in supporting a beautification project specifically aimed at the surrounding walls and entrances of the neighborhood. We have no concrete facts of costs or the areas that would be affected. We're now gathering costs and details.

Here's the question: Would you support a beautification project, knowing that the one-time donation would ONLY go to the improvement of surrounding walls and entrances of Northwood Hills? Please send only a Yes or No response to:

nhhawallsurvey@aol.com

NHHA Members who replied to this survey in October should NOT reply again. Then, the response was: 87 yes; 26 no; 10 want more information before answering.

IT PAYS TO HAVE PALS ON PATROL!

One year ago a thoughtful couple on Mossvine Circle penned this letter and distributed it to their neighbors. We asked them for permission to make it public in our newsletter and they heartily agreed. Here we share it with you in its entirety:

"TO OUR FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS ON MOSSVINE CIRCLE:

Thursday January 12, 2006 was a beautiful unseasonably warm winter afternoon that was shattered by a very unfortunate and troubling event. One of your neighbor's homes was broken into on Mossvine Circle. The burglary occurred between 2:30 and 2:50 in the afternoon by some very bold and brazen individuals. Our house has a monitored alarm system (which was armed) and we have two very large dogs neither of which deterred the burglar(s). We sustained a great deal of damage to the house and contents and a few items were taken.

Fortunately for us, we had re-joined the Northwood Hills Homeowners Association in December and they came to our assistance. When the alarm went off at the house we were notified & in turn notified the NHHA security & they immediately responded. In fact, they responded before the Dallas Police Department. I was contacted by our alarm company and drove from my job (near the Galleria) and arrived before the police & was pleased and relieved to find NHHA security at my home waiting for the police to arrive. We were not sure if the burglar(s) were still in the house so we continued to wait for the police. The police finally arrived, took the report and left us waiting for the crime scene investigators.

The NHHA security continued to stay in touch with me throughout the evening until the crime scene investigators arrived at approximately 8.00pm. They probably contacted many of you to see if any suspicious characters or vehicles were noticed during the day. They were able to find one individual that had noticed our garage door open and had likely walked past our house while the burglary was taking place. When the crime scene investigators arrived, they told us that they had a rash of these burglaries (6-8) within a 2.5-mile radius on Thursday afternoon.

I am sending you this note for three reasons. The first is to encourage you to join the NHHA so that

we can expand the security patrol, which will serve as a deterrent to those individuals with criminal intent. And secondly, to thank those of you who stay so vigilant in our neighborhood. And finally the third reason is to warn each of you to keep your garage doors down and all the exterior doors & windows locked, keep your alarm systems on & secure your valuables in unusual places or in safety security boxes & PLEASE report any suspicious behavior to NHHA Security."

PLANNING FOR SPRING AT FRETZ RECREATION CENTER

New Years resolutions, getting fit, spring planting all have something in common ... you have to be committed to do something active (physical movement) in order to complete the tasks. We at Fretz Park can help you with these plans. Want to get fit, lose some weight, feel better about yourself? Then come join an exercise class designed just for you. Is it too cold outside? Come walk for fitness in our gym. Spring planting – well, we can always use extra flowers in our flower beds with a kind donation!

The Fretz Park staff is working on several spring and summer events: Spring Break Camp in March, Spring Garage Sale in April and Kids Day in May in the middle of May. We look forward to hosting the Dallas Symphony on May 16. We also are getting ready for our Summer Camps for children and youth for Summer 2007. We look forward to having the following camps: indoor and outdoor soccer, volleyball, musiccamp, cheerleading, stay-n-play all day camp, discovery all day camp, golf, martial arts camp, basketball camp, junior players theatre camp and much more. Go to www.fretzpark.net or www.dallasparcs.org to view and register for 2007 camps.

Remember, if you or someone you know is looking for a small or large room or gym to host a birthday party, class reunion, or church dinner celebration, please do not hesitate to call us. We have rooms available for a small fee.

We hope that you will come by our office to say hello and enjoy the many leisure services that Fretz Park offers your neighborhood.

Robert Harder
Community Program Manger
Fretz Recreation Center
214-670-6203

LIFE HAPPENS?

Exploring Short Sale as an alternative to Foreclosure

Over the last several months, foreclosure postings in Dallas and surrounding areas have jumped to 1980s levels. Postings have reached a total of nearly 4000 homes in Dallas, Tarrant, Collin and Denton counties monthly. By the end of 2006, almost 50,000 homeowners in the Metroplex found themselves behind in their mortgage payments.

Aggressive lending practices, among other things, have contributed to people finding themselves upside down, or owing more than their property was worth. In many instances, homeowners initially borrowed 100% - 106% of value.

Then, without warning, *life happened!*

A Short Sale occurs when a homeowner owes more on their property than the property is actually worth, but their bank agrees to accept less than what is owed as "payment in full", in an effort to avoid the foreclosure process. Banks are willing to cooperate with mortgagees for many reasons. First of all, they are not in the business to take REO (real estate owned) properties back. It is very expensive to manage, maintain and ultimately market these properties. Also, banks are penalized by the FED for taking properties back. However, the state of Texas has the most aggressive foreclosure process in the United States. So, it remains in the best interest of all the parties to try to do a Short Sale.

To qualify for a Short Sale, the seller must be able to substantiate a "hardship situation" and must be approved into the lender's Pre-Foreclosure Program. If the seller meets these two qualifications, the lender may agree to "write-off" the portion of a mortgage that is higher than the value of the home.

Are you or anyone you know experiencing a divorce, disease or death in the immediate family? **The three D's** as we know them, can have a severe impact on the family finances.

If you or anyone you know is having a tough time making ends meet, www.dfw-mortgage-relief.com might be able to help. This company was established to help a homeowner through the process known as Short Sale. If you are behind in your mortgage payments, **DFW Mortgage Relief** can contact your lender and put a work out plan in place. The lender basically agrees to take less for the home than the note value, in lieu of foreclosing and ending up with more REO (Real Estate Owned)

property. The value to the homeowner is that his/her credit remains more intact than it would through the foreclosure process. It is a WIN-WIN!

Judy Switzer (article author) is a Broker Associate with Keller Williams Realty.

SCOUTING FOR FOOD

A Northwood Hills Scouting Tradition Continues

Very soon those first yellow signs of early February will be popping up in our neighborhood... yes, it's Scouting For Food time again!

Through this annual service project, Boy Scout Troop 444 of Arapaho United Methodist Church and Cub Scout Pack 585 of Northwood Hills Elementary School team up with Northwood Hills residents to restock the food pantries of Network of Community Ministries.

On the first Saturday in February, older scouts will be paired with younger scouts to canvas the neighborhood from Coit to Hillcrest and Belt Line to Spring Valley, leaving plastic bags on each doorstep to be filled with non-perishable donations for Network of Community Ministries. The scouts will return the following Saturday (February 10th) to retrieve the filled bags.

NETWORK distributes over 40,000 pounds of food each month to those in need. Their food pantries are often severely depleted over the holiday season. Scouting For Food not only helps feed the hungry but also helps young scouts experience the positive feeling of performing a "Good Turn."

This is an opportunity for all of us to share our blessings with those in need. The scouts and Northwood Hills have been serving Network of Community Ministries in this capacity for the past 10+ years.

Want to fill the food pantry's greatest needs? Consider purchasing canned meats, chili, beef stew, soup, canned fruit, powdered milk, macaroni & cheese, flour, sugar, Jello, baby food, Similac formula with and without iron, diapers, laundry detergent, hand soap, toothpaste, deodorant, toilet tissue, shampoo, disposable razors, shaving cream, feminine hygiene products, paper towels, and Kleenex. (No glass or fragile packaging, please!)

Whether it turns out to be a hot-chocolate-scarf-and-hat day or a T-shirt-and-jeans day, the scouts will be out in force. Be prepared with your non-perishable items. Thanks for supporting NETWORK!

NHHA "HOTLINE": 972-480-5249

There's been a wee bit of confusion about two of the telephone numbers used to contact us at the NHHA. One number is for our private patrol and the other is what we've historically called The Hotline.

If we had it to do over again, we might choose a different name than **The Hotline** since it implies immediate gratification. In actuality, we check it about once a week (and that's indicated when you call it). Some of the calls we get:

1. **lost dog (old Corgi, no collar) in backyard**
2. **trash people at 11:30am were rifling paperwork / license plate is (deleted)**
3. deteriorating house @ (deleted) / fence falling down
4. **4x4 political signs placed on Hillcrest @ Midcrest - visibility concern**
5. **two men seen carrying a ladder toward apartments on Cliffbrook**
6. didn't get my NO SOLICITOR sign

Some of those (the ones in **BOLD**) – anything that involves a potential crime in progress, or something that can't wait a week – should be directed to NHHA Security instead.

The phone number for NHHA Security **is a private number and should be used by dues-paying NHHA members only**. We've had very few instances of non-members trying to use the service, so it doesn't appear to be a problem. Note that it can take 20 minutes or more for the Dallas Police to respond to a 9-1-1 call -- we're often much faster, but -- **if you're a non-member -- don't wait until a crime is in progress to think you can call NHHA Security!**

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 _____

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 payable annually, or \$60 per quarter. To maximize the time our volunteers spend with their families, and not bookkeeping, we humbly request that you pay annual dues, if your finances allow it!

TALKING TRASH: BIG BLUE HAS ARRIVED!



As part of the "Too Good to Throw Away" program, residents can place all their recyclables into their new **Big Blue** 96-gallon cart.

Cart delivery began in November 2006; residents continued using the plastic blue bag method and followed their regular recycling schedule until the service began on January 2. Also starting January 2, the City began **twice-monthly pickup** of recyclables in carts and/or bags.

"Residents can continue to recycle with blue or clear bags," said Mary Nix, Director of Sanitation Services." The City will continue to offer blue bags to its residents free of charge at all Dallas recreation centers and libraries. Residents participating in the Residential Recycling Demonstration Program or who receive manual bag service will have no changes in their weekly recycling service. Residents with "manual service" are those whose garbage is collected in bags instead of carts.

For more information about "Too Good to Throw Away," the city's recycling program, call 3-1-1 or visit www.dallascityhall.com.

SO YOU WANNA BUILD A FENCE?

More than a few of us have wooden “privacy fences” in our backyard. The good news is that they often last for twenty years or more. Eventually either a windstorm will blow it down, or the wood will begin to rot, and it's time for a new fence.

Most of us will use a fence contractor. In my own experience, they'll either want to replace your entire fence, or nothing at all. Few of them will be interested in repairing a section – there's where a good handyman is .. well, handy. Talk to your neighbors (or go online to Northwood Hills Chat) and find out which contractors did a good job – or which ones did not.

Putting untreated wood near the ground is a bad idea. Fence posts are available from many retail outlets, and either square or round debarked posts may be purchased in different sizes. Most of the posts available in Texas will probably be pine (white or yellow), although cedar is another choice. Cedar has natural oils and acids in the wood that make it undesirable to most insects. This allows the wood to be installed in its unfinished form and last for many years; cedar also warps less than whitewood or pine fences.

Preservative treated fence posts will have enough chemical retention for ground-contact exposure (example: 0.4 pounds per cubic foot for the preservative chemical CCA). Untreated posts or posts that have only received a dip treatment are unsuitable for long-term use; they will first rot at the ground line where there is the best combination of water and air for fungi to grow, and they will also be susceptible to termite attack. If properly treated and installed, pine fence posts can last for 20–35 years; untreated pine posts might only last 3–7 years.

It is common practice to slant the cut on the top end so that posts will shed water, and posts are usually painted according to the homeowner's preferences. Both of these practices are well-intentioned, but there are two things that must be done properly, or the fence installation will suffer from rotting posts despite the preservative:

1) In many fence installations, it's normal to trim the end of the post; this makes sense for an untreated post (wood has to be damp for decay to begin), but by removing some of the treated wood from the end an installer will likely expose some untreated wood.

Homeowners have become conscious about protecting their fence and deck investments by staining and sealing the wood. New fences and decks that are untreated leave this valuable wood exposed to the elements. Within a few months of construction the untreated wood begins to turn gray and unsightly and the consumer watches their investment deteriorate right in front of their eyes.

2) Fencing should be allowed to dry in the air for a few months after installation before it is painted. The water in the posts would be trapped beneath a layer of paint, inhibiting its evaporation.

CHANGES AHEAD FOR FRETZ LIBRARY

Good news! The Fretz Park Library was awarded funds for renovation and expansion in the last bond program! Within the next few years, the branch will be enlarged by 10,000 square feet, including a Black Box theater and two classrooms. We will get more computer workstations and funds to increase the size of our collection. We will also receive a new interior design, which will hopefully make the building look more modern. Naturally, it will be hard for all of us to say goodbye to that ripped orange carpet, but we hope to persevere!

In the meantime, you might enjoy reading a little more about some of the services the Fretz Park Library offers. For instance, we have a small selection of used books, DVDs, videos, music CDs, and audio tapes in our lobby that are offered to the public in exchange for a small monetary donation. There are often great treasures to be found here, like autographed copies of books. These materials have been donated to the library by people just like you who needed a little more space in their home (who doesn't?). All proceeds from this sale are used to buy new materials for the library, so everyone wins!

If you'd like to browse the sale or donate items currently gathering dust in your house, come by the Fretz Park Library at 6990 Beltline Road, or call us for more information: 214-670-6420.

DID YOU KNOW ...?

- ✓ A great website to find a free Wi-Fi hotspot is www.wififreespot.com/tex.html. Many “public” WiFi locations (including Starbucks) are currently accessible only after you pay a fee (by the hour, day, week).

THINK NHE AT THE THINK TANK

Northwood Hills Elementary has many programs that enrich students' educational experiences and address a variety of learning styles. This article highlights the Math and Science Think Tank.

The Think Tank is an active learning laboratory where all students go to work with hands-on math activities and science experiments. The emphasis is on developing higher level thinking skills and broadening the scope of learning for all students in grades Kindergarten through 6th.



Developing more positive attitudes about Science and Math, learning to work independently, and having students experience high levels of success are all goals that we accomplish in the Think Tank.

Depending on grade level and curriculum, students get to spend up to an hour per week in the Think Tank and they love it! Our wonderful Think Tank teacher, Ms. Derrington, also provides advanced lessons for students in Math and Science. The lab also offers an opportunity for parents to get involved in their children's education, as teacher assistants are vital to this enrichment program.

The idea for the Think Tank (formerly known as the NEST) was developed in 1990 by a committee of parents and teachers. Our PTA's continued dedication and commitment contribute to the lab's success.

Stop by for a visit and see the exciting things that are happening at your neighborhood school!

*Mackie Kazdoy, Principal
Northwood Hills Elementary School
469-593-4300*

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

NHHA: TALK IT UP!!

It is a joy to welcome these new families and households who have joined the NHHA in the past few months:

*Brookcrest: Dunn;
Cliffbrook: Thompson;
Crestmere: Stein;
Dartbrook: Fleming;
Dentcrest: Wendorf;
Elmridge: Dunklin;
Gateridge: Prendergast; Webster & Webb;
Glenhurst: Armstrong;
Ivyglen: Shuey;
Mossvine Drive: VanVolkenburgh;
Oakbluff: Mayes; Starks;
Spring Valley: Adams;
Sprucewood: Buttline*

Great members make great associations. That is a thought your board directors have whenever we have the pleasure of hearing from you. Whether its positive feedback or constructive criticism, we thank you for your support. Members have repeatedly expressed to us the sense of pride they feel in belonging to a homeowner's association that provides such valuable benefits as the Northwood Hills HOA.

ABBREVIATED FINANCIALS

	Actual	Budget
Membership Dues	\$128,348	\$119,040
Advertising	\$7,050	\$6,250
Total Income	\$139,939	\$125,550
Beautification	\$15,613	\$20,050
Patrol	\$84,580	\$95,290
Total Expenses	\$110,521	\$125,550
	<u>11/30/2006</u>	<u>11/30/2005</u>
Total Assets	\$54,567	\$29,615
Retained Earnings	\$22,352	\$39,206

Details are always available upon request to any NHHA Member.

DID YOU KNOW ...?

Texas restricts driving privileges for teenagers; in the 6 months after the issuance of a **provisional drivers license**, they may not operate a vehicle: 1) with more than one non-family member under 21; 2) between midnight-5am unless going to work, school or a medical emergency; or 3) while using a cellphone.