

ALL RESIDENTS WELCOME

Coming to the monthly meetings gives you an opportunity to find out what's going on and helps us to know your problems and concerns. Many of our regulars have a wide range of experience in dealing with the same sort of problem you may be experiencing and can usually help you find a way to resolve the issue. Join us on the second Monday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at Candlelight Park, 1520 Candlelight Boulevard, at the intersection of Oak Forest and Candlelight, and find out what's going on. If you have not already paid your voluntary dues for 2003, please send your check for \$20 to: OFHA INC., P.O. Box 920561, Houston, TX 77292-0561.

Name: _____

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Additional donation enclosed for: Tree Fund Esplanade Improvements Citizens on Patrol

OAK FOREST HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.
P. O. BOX 920561
HOUSTON TX 77292-0561

HELP WANTED

Join the Oak Forest Homeowners Association!

It's the beginning of a new year and it's time to join the OFHA or renew your membership. Memberships are only \$20 per year. OFHA is dedicated to making our neighborhood a better place to live and work. Become a part of this effort by joining today.

OAK FOREST

HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2004

OAK FOREST IS DEED RESTRICTED

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

from Lindsey Lee

This is my last President's Message to you. My term is complete and it is time for new blood to take over. We have elected a good group to lead the Oak Forest Homeowners Association (OFHA) for the next year. I ask each of you to support the new officers in their efforts to improve our "Urban Woods".

I have enjoyed my term as President of the Oak Forest Homeowners Association. My service has provided me a chance to meet many fine people who live here. I found the overwhelming majority of Oak Forest residents to be friendly and helpful. Everyone I met was passionate about keeping Oak Forest a livable and friendly neighborhood.

One thing I learned as President is the importance of our deed restrictions. I found that deed restrictions are an essential element to maintaining our quality of life in Oak Forest. Many other neighborhoods near Oak Forest have found their deed restrictions have expired or are unenforceable. The result has been lots being subdivided and filled with new construction of townhomes and patio homes. The character of these areas is changing, losing the yards which made these neighborhoods appealing.

Like the neighborhoods described above, Oak Forest is experiencing new construction. The Architectural Control Committee led by Richard Rabe has worked diligently to insure that any new construction conforms with the appropriate section's deed restrictions. These efforts have insured Oak Forest maintains its "Urban Forest" character. I know Richard can use some help. If you are interested in helping enforce our deed restrictions, contact Richard or attend a monthly meeting.

Before signing off, I want to thank all the officers and volunteers who helped this year. Special thanks to Ruth Metzger for her hard work with the Beautification Committee. Her knowledge of Oak Forest's history is an invaluable resource. Also, I want to express my appreciation to Richard Rabe for his diligence with enforcing our deed restrictions. Others who have contributed to the year include Jan Garver, Secretary, and Rob Quarles, Treasurer. Others who have helped tremendously include Isabel Nart and Marietta Hetmaniak. And special recognition to Bob and Liz Faught, Clem and Peggy Mundy, Bob Walker, Bob Pennison and Mary Bailey, who attend every meeting of the OFHA.

Visit us online at

www.ofha.org

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Oak Forest Homeowners Association invites you to join or renew your membership. Membership is only \$20 per year and is a way to become involved in the revitalization of your community. OFHA is the only organization dedicated to making our neighborhood a better place to live and work. Become a part of this effort by joining today.

Remember that membership in OFHA is voluntary. Your voluntary dues help to sponsor many projects: esplanade beautification, Oak Forest marquees, the quarterly newsletter, the www.ofha.org website and Citizens On Patrol (COP). Join your neighbors in helping Oak Forest live up to the name, "the beautiful urban woods."

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Meetings of the Oak Forest Homeowners Association are held at the Candlelight Park clubhouse in Candlelight Park located at 1520 Candlelight Blvd.

Dates of upcoming meetings are:

- **January 12**
- **February 9**
- **March 8**

If you would like to speak at an upcoming meeting or would like to request a speaker, contact us at 713-688-6342 or by email at hotline@ofha.org.

NEW OFFICERS FOR 2004

OFHA's officers for 2004 were elected at the meeting on Monday, December 8, 2003. The new officers are:

President	Greg Ryden
Vice President	Wes Jones
2nd Vice President	Belinda Olson
Treasurer	Zack Derryberry
Parliamentarian	Ruth Metzger
Sergeant at Arms	Richard Rabe

Committee Chairmen are:

Beautification	Wes Jones
Deed Restriction	Richard Rabe
Architectural Control	Richard Rabe

Special thanks to Robert Quarles and Jan Garver for their service last year.

2003 RUNOFF ELECTION RESULTS

by Isabel Nart

Houston voters went to the polls Saturday, December 6, 2003, to elect new city leaders for the next two years. They will take office on January 2, 2004.

Bill White was selected as mayor over Orlando Sanchez. Mayor-Elect White received 62.5 percent of the vote. Annise Parker won the controller race with 62.1 percent of the vote. Her opponent was Bruce Tatro.

In the at large council races, Dr. Shelley Sekula Gibbs defeated challenger Peter Brown. Bert Keller was defeated by Ronald Green. A number of district council races were also on the ballot. Council District F was won by M. J. Khan. Pam Holm won the District G position. The winner of the Council District H was Adrian Garcia.

The District A council seat, which includes Oak Forest, was decided on November 4, when Toni Lawrence won in a multi-candidate race without a runoff. She received 50.11 percent of the vote.

For a more detailed look at the 2003 election results, visit www.houstonchronicle.com/elections.

WILD WEST DINNER AND AUCTION

St. Rose of Lima Catholic Community will host its Wild West Dinner and Auction at 5 p.m. on Saturday, January 24, 2004 to support the educational needs of the community.

At the live and silent auction visitors can bid on items ranging from restaurant meals and theater tickets to a handmade afghan or a guided canoe trip for ten down the Colorado River.

The dinner will include generous portions of barbecue brisket and sausage. Drinks and desserts also will be available. There is ample space in the parish hall for dining in, and "to go" plates will also be available. Dinner tickets are \$7 if purchased in advance and \$8 at the door the night of the event. Advance tickets may be purchased from the parish office at 713-692-9123.

St. Rose of Lima is located at 3600 Brinkman in the Garden Oaks area, just northwest of the intersection of North Shepherd Dr. and West 34th Street.

YAHOO NEWSGROUP

The Oak Forest Yahoo newsgroup is the fastest, most efficient method to get information on activities in the Oak Forest community. The group provides notices to residents of upcoming events and provides a place to ask questions or raise issues of interest to the Oak Forest community. Membership is restricted to residents and property owners only, and the group is moderated.

To subscribe send an email to OFHA-subscribe@yahoo.com or email us a hotline@ofha.org

HOME OWNERSHIP — A GOOD INVESTMENT

by Angelica Wurth

In today's challenging economy, it is difficult and often risky to invest your hard earned money in the stock market. Investing in owning your home can give you far better returns.

Paying rent for an apartment does provide you with a roof over your head, but you're really just throwing money out the window. At the end of your lease, you have nothing to show for all of the monthly rental fees you have paid. However, when you make a mortgage payment you are actually building a nest egg that can yield high returns.

For example, my sister, Lillian, purchased a home last year for \$170,000. This year her house has a market value of approximately \$265,000. If she were to sell today, she would walk away with about \$75,000.

Buying a house is a type of forced savings or forced investment since you can get more money than you have originally put in. Just five years ago houses were selling in Oak Forest for about \$55,000 (1,200 sq. ft. avg). Today those same houses are selling for over \$100,000. Yes folks, home values have doubled! I don't think any stock has given that kind of five-year returns.

And just one last example to prove my point. My husband purchased our home in Oak Forest in 1993 for \$50,000. On the conservative side, our house now appraises for about \$130,000.

I encourage you to take a second look at your home and take pride in your purchase. Someday, you may want to cash in on that great investment!

CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING

The City of Houston is encouraging residents to recycle Christmas trees and give them a new lease on life. The Solid Waste Management Department is requesting that residents remove tinsel, lights, plastic tree stands and plastic water bowls from the trees. The recycled trees will be converted into mulch, which will in turn help save landfill space and help preserve the environment.

Flocked trees will not be accepted for recycling; they will be picked up on the neighborhood's scheduled heavy trash day. Commercial vendor trees will not be accepted.

For more information on the City's tree recycling program, contact City of Houston information by dialing 3-1-1 or visit www.ofha.org.

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WINTER GARDENING FOR SPRING

by Jan Garver

Now that winter is upon us, with its grays and blacks, thinking of the colors of Spring can lighten our outlook and give us something to look forward to in our gardens. Since we have such a long growing season here in Houston, we can begin to prepare and plant for Spring much earlier than the folks "up north".

In fact, January is the time to remove the thatch from the lawn, aerate it and feed it with a low nitrogen mixture. It's also time to build and prepare the beds for the coming season. Add gypsum to heavy soils, repeat in 3 weeks. Add granite dust, rock phosphate and organic matter into the soil to allow time for it to settle before planting. It's always a good idea to do some research on the plants you want to put in. It helps them all if they are grouped by need (e.g. type of fertilizer, watering needs, soil type).

You can fertilize your daylilies, pansies and irises. Don't forget to build up your flower and vegetable beds, too. There are a number of plants that can be put into the ground now, including Cornflowers, Shasta Daisies, Petunias and Stocks. Among the bulbs that can be planted are Amaryllis, Calla, Crocus, Freesia and Tulip. If you have to move a Camillia, this is the time.

February 10th is the average date of the last freeze. With that, comes more planting options. Many cool-weather vegetables can now be set out. Summer flowering bulbs should be planted and it's the last chance to prune fruit trees and shrubs for summer blooms.

Two of my favorite places to get plants, and plant help, are Buchanan's and Another Place in Time. They are both on 11th St. in the Heights, and carry a wonderful selection of plants, including many Texas natives, which assists in their survival down here.

It also helps to have great references. The source for the above information was "A Garden Book for Houston", River Oaks Garden Club. I would also recommend "The Texas Flowerscaper" by Kathy Huber. Happy gardening!

BY STATE LAW, RESIDENTS ARE ALLOWED NO MORE THAN TWO GARAGE/YARD SALES PER YEAR.

BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

The Beautification Committee has planted several trees on 43rd St. We are also getting ready to place over a dozen trees on the northern end of Antoine near Acorn St. This is part of what the Beautification Committee hopes to be an annual event to fill our esplanades with trees and enjoy their natural beauty.

To donate money to our Tree Fund, please send your check or money order to OFHA Inc., P.O. Box 920561, Houston TX 77292-0561. Please be sure to note that the donation is meant for the Tree Fund.

To get involved with the Beautification Committee, contact Wes Jones at wes@ofha.org. Remember, we are a volunteer group and only function because of your help.

THE KATY CORRIDOR COALITION

by Wes Jones

The Katy Corridor Coalition (KCC) is a group of residents and concerned citizens who have come together in order to stop the implementation of the current plan to expand the Katy Freeway from Loop 610 to Katy. The KCC does not oppose the expansion of the Katy Freeway, however wants the Texas Department of Transportation (TX DOT) to rethink and consider alternatives to their current plan. The mission of the Katy Corridor Coalition is to replace the proposed Katy Freeway expansion plan with one that is less harmful and contains improved mobility alternatives that are socially, economically, and environmentally beneficial for the entire community.

The KCC plan, which includes two possible options, would basically depress many of the lanes 20 feet below grade, passing under major cross streets and offering unrestricted views of the traffic ahead. There would be two HOV/toll lanes in each direction. The design would enable local traffic to avoid stop lights at cross streets without actually having to mingle with the thru traffic on the freeway. The depression would reduce noise and pollution affecting neighborhood residences and schools, with the trees mitigating the gray look of bare concrete and helping to trap particulates and sound.

The TX-DOT's plan calls for 18 lanes built at grade level, which would pass over major cross streets. Some argue that this plan would encroach on residential areas and create a series of elevated sections, reducing the vision of traffic congestion or accidents ahead.

The KCC alternative has growing citizen and political support, locally and at the state Capitol. The Spring Valley City Council recently voted 4-0 to endorse KCC, saying, "The City Council shares the KCC's goal of implementing a Katy Freeway mobility solution that includes mass transit, mitigated pollution and flooding impact, and first-class aesthetics for impacted neighborhood."

This situation is significant to Oak Forest residents not only because of the expansion of nearby I-10, but also because of future plans to expand Hwy. 290 which runs through Oak Forest. The possible expansion plan of the Hwy. 290 may mirror those currently adopted by TX-DOT for I-10. One possible expansion TX-DOT plan for Hwy. 290 involves removing several dozen homes in Oak Forest along Hwy. 290.

To find out more about the Katy Corridor Coalition and their proposed plans, visit their website at www.katycorridor.org. Their site provides a comparative look at both plans and an online petition visitors can sign.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING WITH THE OAK FOREST HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION?

It's a great way to inform the community. We reach over 5,000 homes with our quarterly newsletter and our website, www.ofha.org. For more information, contact Wes Jones at wes@ofha.org. All proceeds support the OFHA.