

6324 Prospect Avenue (in Lakewo Wednesday April 28th, 7–9 pm HNA Spring Meetin www.foresthillsdallas.org

The Reporter

MARCH - APRIL 2010 ISSUE

Eye on the Prize!



Egg Hunter — Jessica Moran
Daughter of Mark and Katrina Moran
Photo Credit: Proud Dad, Mark

Tips From a Neighbor



Leon Russell, FHNA President

Want your sprinkler system evaluated for free? Call the City of Dallas Water Conservation Department at 214-670-3155 to schedule an appointment with a trained representative from the Dallas Water Department who will come to your home and inspect your sprinkler system, check the timing settings, measure the amount of water it distributes, and then make recommendations regarding changes to the system, the timing settings, and duration of sprinkling based on the unique watering needs of your property. The representative will advise regarding the best types of sprinkler heads to use for different situations. If you have a valuable tip which you would like to share with your FHNA neighbors in future newsletters, please email Neoma Twining at <a href="mailto:ntmining-ntmin

FH Median Trees Get Emergency Maintenance

The winter and early springs storms proved menacing to trees of FH. Everyone who lives in FH knows when the wind storms come, it's time to take shelter and pray. Pray that the large live oak in your front yard doesn't end up on top of your house. We love our forest, but all of us know it can be perilous to drive down FH streets when the weather turns violent. Seems lately, even mild storms are creating problems. The reason is the age of the trees within our neighborhood.

One large concern, given their visibility and canopied coverage over our streets, are median trees. In 1992 the FHNA beautification team spent \$30,000.00 installing the crepe myrtle gardens on FH blvd and the entrance landscape on San Rafael. This year's winter storms combining heavy snowfall and wind damaged many trees in the medians. Steve Houser, of Arborilogical Associates, recently walked the medians one by one with two board members. Trees within the medians were assessed and given priority classification. Priority One — dangerous trees, that could fall on cars, or people. Priority Two — need care within two weeks or could lose tree. Priority Three — needs pruning or cutting to ensure healthy, stable growth. The FHNA board voted to spend approximately \$3,000.00 to get the medians cared for. You should notice the arborists crews working in our medians beginning this week. We adopted these medians from the city to ensure they are maintained. The city kicks in where they can, but their resources are limited. Therefore, the burden (and it's a good burden) falls on the FHNA to take care of these median trees.



TRASHING THE CITY OVER TRASH!



You read it right. Many confused and frustrated FH home owners are talking trash. Literally and figuratively. The city's recent launch of a "one day" program created all the angst. To date, confusion about where to put what still exists. Calls have been made to city hall "trash central" but inconsistencies in the details remain. How do you resolve problems like this? Whenever change happens, frustration usually follows until all the adjustments are made. Problem is FH as a neighborhood is unique. We have skinny alleyways and fat ones. The new garbage trucks the city is using are wider. The challenge is getting the darn things down the alleyways. Some neighbors are told to put one bin out front, while others, right across the street, are told to place bin in back. Who knew, or who knows for that matter? I know one thing for sure, FH is not the only neighborhood making noise about the smelly bins, Lakewood and Casa Linda residents are up in arms as well. City Hall is fielding an unprecedented number of calls. The solution to this problem can't come too soon. FH residents with questions should contact John Mitchell, FHNA Director of Planning and Zoning jmitchell@c3site.com. He is in tight with the city boys and helps FHNA get things done.

FHNA Board Meeting Recap



Steve Bakota FHNA Board Secretary

The April 12th FHNA board meeting was held at the home of Joan Shopoff at 7pm. New business concerns included using funds to pay for median maintenance and tree restoration after storms ravaged them. The crew contracted to perform median restoration is Aborilogical Services, headed by Arborist Steve Houser. Those present, a combination of board members and committee chairs voted unanimously to use beautification funds and FHNA funds to pay for trees designated dangerous or in peril.

Additionally, the idea of creating a neighborhood "direct call line" was discussed. Kind of like a hotline used by other neighborhood associations. The idea is to offer a phone number where residents can call if they have a need, such as questions or concerns. The group voted to create an exploratory committee to entertain this idea and consider it pros and cons. And costs.

Finally, the issue of dues collection remains a priority for the FHNA. The need for dues collection is great, given the status of operating funds available to the board. At this time,

approximately 168 households, out of a possible 600 plus had paid. This leaves a large gap of households who have yet to come forward and pay their part. The group discussed additional steps to take to encourage compliance and collect more dues. Neighbors will be notified of additional dues collection plans.

Block Captain Revival!

If you "host it" . . . they will come. And come they did. The block captains of FH recently convened in large numbers at the home of FH President Leon Russell. By the way, this was his idea. Initially, the thought was to somehow "honor" this illustrious group of volunteers by throwing a little party. Little party turned into big party and everybody had a ball. It seems Russell's idea was the right idea at the right time. The block captains are one of the unsung hero volunteer groups of FH. They don't have time to be President or hold a position on the board, so, they commit their time and energy by serving as block captains. Their role is to "tend to the block." They are usually in the know about FHNA happenings. They stay involved and alert. If you need help on your block, notify your block captain. If he/she does not have the answer, I'll bet they can find someone who does to help you. Don't know who your Block Captain is? Check the website, www.foresthillsdallas.org and find out. It's in your best interest to become acquainted! For more information on the BC's of FH, contact Judy Whalen, **Block** Captain Director iwreps@earthink.net.



Easter Celebration

This year's annual Easter celebration was held at the homes of The Goya's and Youngs on San Benito Way. The weather cooperated and children by the handfuls arrived primed and eager to tackle the grass and each other if necessary, to grab some eggs. The Easter celebration for the children is one of the four main traditional FHNA events your dues help support. Community activities like this promote togetherness and encourage involvement in the FHNA. Special thanks to the Youngs and Goyas for the yard loans. And extra thanks to Shelly Clem and Tamela Southan for planning and organizing this year's spring festivities.

Photo credits: Kara Name and Mark Moran

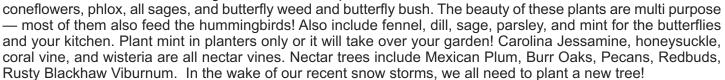


Help Save the Butterflies!

We are fortunate to be on the flight path of the Monarchs, who cross Texas twice a year, in their journey from Mexico. 1996 was the peak year for Monarch butterfly migration, with an estimated 300 million butterflies traveling through. Sadly, this year the numbers are expected to be over 50% less than the 300 million. Bad weather and shrinking habitat can be blamed, according to a recent article in the Dallas Morning News. However . . . YOU can be part of the solution to this unfortunate problem by planting a Butterfly Garden! It's easy and fun and the rewards are invaluable. You can make it simple by planting a variety of any of the plants below. To really increase the butterflies, several host plants, nectar plants, and a water source are essential.

Host plants provide a place for the butterfly eggs. They include Butterfly weed, flame acanthus, milkweed, rock rose, Rose of Sharon, and Cleyera. Host trees include Cedar Elm, mountain laurel, and Texas Whitebud. Hosts vines include all the Passion Vines, "Amethyst", "Blue Crown", and "Incense" etc. Watch these, they are invasive.

Nectar plants are the food source, so you want to see nibbled leaves. There are numerous nectar plants and they include lantana, Mx Mint Marigold, mistflowers, pentas, asters,



The last key ingredient for a Butterfly Garden is water and a rest stop. Butterflies love to bask in the sun, so put a few river rocks in your bird bath and keep it filled with clean water. You can also take a large plant saucer, fill it with sand up to 1" from the top, and add pebbles and water. Rock gardens and boulders are also good basking spots for the butterflies.

Please contact me by email at <u>dcullivan@sbcglobal.net</u> if you need help securing and planting any of the above, and thanks for taking action to save the butterflies! Check my website at <u>www.artisticgardenscapes.com</u> for landscape ideas.

To learn more about local butterflies, visit the Texas Discovery Gardens impressive new Rosine Smith Sammons Butterfly Garden and Insectarium in Fair Park. This is a magical place for a family outing. Check hours, etc on the website.





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The spring real estate market is proving to be a breath of fresh air for Realtors, Buyers and Sellers!

Real estate in East Dallas (MLS area 12) is showing improvement over the same time last year. The first quarter this year there were 368 homes sold in Area 12 as compared to 379 last year, but the good news is the prices are showing improvement. In the first quarter of 2009 the total was \$78,430,000. In the first quarter of 2010, with fewer homes sold, the volume was \$84,729,000. In almost every price category there are were fewer homes on the market for the first quarter, making selling a little easier on those listed, however the days on the market were showing to be about the same, and in some cases longer than the same time period in 2009.

Interest rates have started inching up. Last week the interest rates were 4.75%. By the end of the week they were 5%, and this week they are 5.25%. If you are considering buying or selling a house, the time is now. There is no way of knowing how much the interest rates

will go up until they are actually there, when of course it is too late.

Preparing (Or Staging) your home

Staging has never been more critical. Buyers today, regardless of price range, want to see a house that looks great. When a potential Buyer enters your home you only have 15 SECONDS to make a first impression. Here are the **TOP TEN TIPS** for preparing to sell your home. **1.** Remove clutter, sickly plants, overstuffed closets and personal keepsakes. Put away small appliances and other items that are sitting on countertops and tables. Remove photographs from tabletops. **2.** Break down rooms by keeping only essential furniture so each room appears larger. Buyers are looking at square footage, and should not be looking at furniture. **3.** Neutralize the house so prospective Buyers can envision themselves living in the house. **4.** Highlight any and all architectural details. **5.** Each room must be sparkling clean as if no one is living there. Remember to clean the oven and other major appliances. Skylights should be crystal clean too. **6.** Eliminate any offensive odors. They are the first thing Buyers notice, and are often a permanent turnoff. **7.** Appeal to a homebuyer's senses with flowers and or candles. **8.** Open drapes and blinds to let in light and showcase views. **9.** If your home is competing with other houses in the area, add touches of drama so your home will be remembered. **10.** Look for hotspots of negative reaction. These hotspots include: **a.** Offensive or strong colors **b.** strange odors **c.** Dark, cluttered or otherwise untidy rooms **d.** mildew in baths or kitchens **e.** religious or political elements.

Kids at Play in the Snow . . . Again!



February 2010 — Olivia Corker, Claire & Luke Eckhardt



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SECURITY PAGE



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SECURITY QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS: fhspenp@aol.com or 214 535-2077

If you are a current subscriber to the Forest Hills Security Program, you have the added benefit of a police officer checking your home when you are away for an extended time. A House Check Request Form can be found in the "Security" section of the Forest Hills Website, www.foresthillsdallas.org or by request.

Twenty Crime Watch Signs Installed in Forest Hills!



New Forest Hills Security crime watch signs have been provided by residents' donations for this purpose. The signs are just another layer of crime prevention with the message to criminals that Forest Hills is on guard! And when you see these signs, we hope it will be a reminder to be aware and to keep a watchful eye out for anything suspicious. If it doesn't seem right, do not hesitate to call 911 with details of incidents, descriptions of suspects, and if you can get it safely, license plate numbers of vehicles.



Springtime brings long daylight hours of beautiful weather. Our neighborhood becomes busier with more walkers, joggers, dogs on leashes, babies in strollers, skateboarders, cyclists and children at play. When driving on our streets and alleys, be conscious of all this activity and your speed. Especially watch for children coming out from between parked vehicles. Happy Safe Spring and Summer!







PAWS PAGE







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Bark Less



Wag More



Maeleska Fletes — Manager of Little Forest Hills Animal Alert!

Championing Pet Rescue

Meet the most dedicated pet rescue volunteer of East Dallas. Her name is Maeleska Fletes. There isn't a pet she doesn't like and there isn't a pet she won't go the distance for. Rescue might as well be her middle name. The business of pet rescue is not for the light-hearted. It takes hours of time and patience, let alone money. Maeleska doesn't mind the constraints of her endeavor. For the last several years, she has single handedly cared for large numbers of dogs and other strays at her home in Little Forest Hills. There are a surprising number of lost/found pets on any given week. When the economy turned south, the numbers increased possibly due to folks inability to care for and fund their pet. This type of dedication is not common. Not many people would voluntarily give up some home space to accommodate a pooch. I am not sure what makes Maeleska tick. I have to believe it is just in her nurturing nature to take on such a monumental task.

A special thanks from FHNA goes out to Maeleska who absorbs our neighborhood lost and founds with Little Forest Hills pets. The Animal Alert! program, created by Andie Comini in FH, is a sister program to the one in LFH. You can help. Please be a part of the Animal Alert! solution. Remember, this program is a **NON-PROFIT** so making a donation today can serve as a write off for you.

FH ANIMAL ALERT! PROGRAM

To report a Lost or Found Animal 214-930-5910

Animal Control Call 311

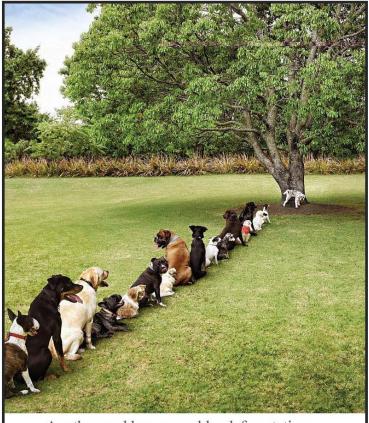
Animal Alert! Contributions in FH

Your contribution helps us, helps pets!

If you want to help provide linens, bowls, leashes, food, etc. for lost/found pets waiting to go home, mail your contribution to:

FHNA - Animal Alert! c/o Margaret Smith - Treasurer P.O. Box 180189 Dallas, Texas 75218

Make check payable to: FHNA - Animal Alert! Your dollars count when we're protecting pets.



Another problem caused by deforestation

The Night Heron Visitors

by Sharon Shero



Mated pair of Crested Herons

Springtime has not quite been the same since the Yellow-crested Night Herons flew low over our yard 3 seasons ago. Silent, graceful shadows swooped under the treetops, seeming to engulf the filtered sunlight. The wing span felt monumental, eerie, and beckoned us outdoors to investigate. Amateur bird watchers, my husband and I were thrilled to have these visitors in our neighborhood, and I was moved beyond distraction when a mating couple began courting in our neighbor's yard. Daily (I admit, sometimes with a frequency of 3, 4, or more times a day), I was their eye-witness with zoom lens, ladder, tripod, all the equipment I could brandish to document these regal creatures and their soon-to-be offspring.

There's much to be said about wildlife encroachment. Although Highland Road and the Forest Hills neighborhood have existed for well over 50 years, the wildlife in our area were the original settlers and have adjusted very nicely, thank you, to sidling up next to civilization. We soon affirmed during the first heron spring that wildlife has absolutely no penchant to honor our "enlightened" ways.

As a Herculean nest was being constructed 50 feet in the air, our neighbor was experiencing something less than the ecstasy with which we were consumed. As nest builders, the herons littered her yard with fallen twigs,

leaves, and sundry other dead things; as hunters, they skewed her patio with dropped crustacean parts and other unidentifiable delicacies; and, as arboreal residents, her backyard became awash with excessive quantities of smelly, dirty guano. A daily hosing and sweeping of the patio barely kept up with the muck and stench.

I am perplexed by their name, NIGHT heron. Indeed, these creatures do forage for food at night, but they just never seem to sleep. Throughout the day they either swoop from tree to tree gathering nesting materials, stand vigilantly at their aeries, and at dusk, screech gratingly to one another (could that be a mating call?) throughout the neighborhood.

In the interim, chicks were hatched and tumbled about the soughing branches and, what seemed like days later, flapped gawkily about the neighborhood, often visiting our yard and fountain bird bath (a spa of choice of many avians). Not to be daunted by their tawdry habits, and, not unlike a newborn's mother, more photographic journalism was the order of the days that languished into the warming summer. Recalling Hans Christian Anderson's ugly duckling story, we were amazed that such ungainly, prehistoric creatures could evolve into graceful herons; the story book chick had nothing on these hatchlings! As the chicks became independent of their parents, the nesting pair abandoned our neighbor's yard in peace, albeit resembling the aftermath of a war zone.



Taking the plunge at the neighborhood spa



Heron chick as a hood ornament

What we did not anticipate however, was the herons' return the following spring, nor did we realize what creatures of habit they were until they landed practically on the same limb as before, ready to set up housekeeping. Understandably, our neighbor was not amused, and

swiftly acted to urge the birds away from her patio. They left quite reluctantly, presumably to another yard deeper in the neighborhood, but we periodically caught glimpses of them, and their chicks once again rummaged about our yard, and yes, more photographic documentation was under way.

Undeterred, the herons (we assume the same pair) returned again this spring. Same yard, same branch, same mess. To date, the birds have been nudged away twice, which in this neighborhood of old growth trees is not an easy feat. Hired hands have scaled the trees, shimmying along questionably sturdy limbs to get close enough to give the pair a poke with a pole in an attempt to disrupt the spooning pair (we called the Rogers Wildlife Rehabilitation organization for advice and this method, along with spraying with a hose, was their rudimentary response). And despite this prodding, they still have come back!

Not to be miscast, our neighbor truly loves animals (as demonstrated by her adopting stray cats, feeding the local duck, and befriending our bigger-than-life dogs). She is sensitive to these creatures and their habitat, but having a backyard uninhabitable during the spring and majority of the summer is understandably untenable. And so the skirmish of wildlife vs.

civilization ensues.

Along with the original pair returning this year, ostensibly, so have their offspring. One of which has successfully wooed a mate, perhaps selling her not simply on its own physical attractiveness, but the neighborhood, the stately trees, nearby water sources, the advantage of being close to its parents (I imagine mom and dad tending the nest while the new lovers enjoy a night out scavenging together).

News Flash: I interrupt this pastoral scene with the realization that the newly mated herons have deigned to nest in our front yard. Well, we'll see how it goes this season. Their location will not interrupt a barbecue, but be cautious where you park your car if you come by to visit. And yes, they are oh so much closer for those photo opportunities!



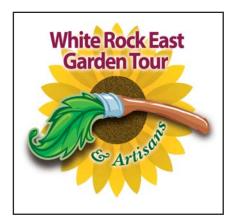
Taking a break from nest building on Highland Rd.

Garden Club News

SAVE THE DATE!!!

The 9th Annual White Rock East Garden and Artisans Tour will be held this year on Sunday May 23rd from 11 - 5. The proceeds from this tour benefit our beautification efforts here in Forest Hills. We partner with Little Forest Hills and Casa Linda Estates and feature nine gardens, three from each neighborhood. In addition all of the artists who participate are from the three neighborhoods. While this is a fundraiser for us it is more importantly a great way to meet our East Dallas neighbors and support our local artists!

There are many volunteer opportunities available. Call Barb Michaels 214-327-3817 (bmjtd@tx.rr.com) or Lottie Minnick 214-320-3868 (lottiek@sbcglobal.net) for more information. We need volunteers to sell raffle tickets, greet visitors, work the plant sale and monitor the gardens. Shifts are only two hours long this year and you get a free tee shirt!



LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Neoma TwiningNewsletter Editor

Editor: the city has nice signs placed around White Rock Lake perimeter telling folks that if their pet defecates on city property, it's against an ordinance and there is a fine. Could we establish something like this in Forest Hills?

Response:

Honestly, I have been most impressed by the numbers of neighbors who I witness, walking their pet, complete with baggie in hand ready to scoop up any unfavorable "remnants" left behind by pooch. The request we made to FH residents, approximately two years ago seems to have made a difference. There aren't as many incidents or complaints about neighbors stepping into messes left behind by pets in their yards, or roadways.

To answer your question entirely, I contacted the City of Dallas Parks Department and asked how such a ordinance may be enforced inside a neighborhood like Forest Hills. Their answer: FH has a sign ordinance in place to ensure we don't get "sign happy." Too many signs begins

to look unattractive. Their recommendation is to keep neighbors informed and encourage compliance. If there were to be an ongoing issue with this type of problem, then signs might be a last resort.

Sanger News



Sanger Stampede Spring Carnival and 1K & 5K Fun Run Saturday, May 1, 2010

Alex Sanger Elementary School • 8410 San Leandro Fun Run starts at 9:00 a.m. • Carnival starts at 10:00 a.m.

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Eddie Harbour 1700 block Corday

Antonio Swad 8000 block Garland

Lindsay Venable 8500 block Groveland

Steve Cleary 8500 block Groveland

Garrett & Valerie Adams 8100 block San Benito

Price Johnson 8400 block of Santa Clara

We apologize if we have overlooked anyone.

Newcomers can be missed when move-in is delayed for remodeling or when a home is purchased directly from builder or previous owner. Our info comes from MLS

Real Estate listings. For any oversights, please contact Judy Whalen 214 535-2077

jwreps@earthlink.net with addresses and/or names so we can give our new neighbors a Woodsy Welcome and a Guide Book to Forest Hills!

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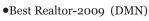
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Kim Fowler
BUYER SPECIALIST
Direct: 214.455.7148
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Too often, homeowners assume that as long as their roofs look okay then all is well. However, the trained eye can catch hidden defects which, when left unattended, can become a problem. Extreme Texas weather, wind and hail, small animals, trees and even other contractors working on a home will cause damage.

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