

Merry Oaks

Neighborhood Newsletter

Merry Oaks Neighborhood Association • P.O. Box 18131 • Charlotte, NC • 28218-0131

Volume IX Number 1 February 2007

WINTER/SPRING NEWSLETTER

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Renew your membership for 2007!

Membership form on back
\$10 per household, \$5 if on a fixed income.



Bulky Trash pickup: 311

Dates To Remember

February 22, Thursday. 7-9 PM

Merry Oaks Neighborhood Association General Meeting.

Merry Oaks School Media Center (enter off Draper)

Watch the web site and google group for the complete agenda.

<http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/charlotte/merryoaks/>

Agenda so far:

Update from Tuscan development on Renfrow Property plans,

Police report, Urban Cost Share

February 25, Sunday. 5-7ish

CHILI NIGHT in honor of new neighbors.

Cate's house, 2301 Arnold Drive.

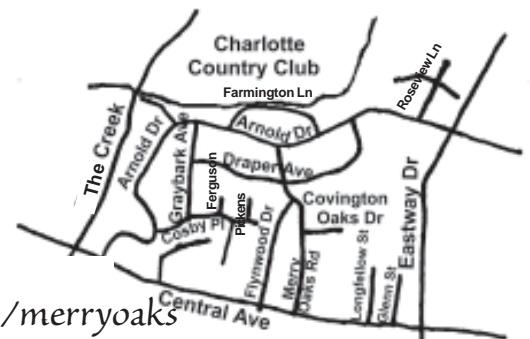
For new and old neighbors (everyone, that is!) Stop by for a bowl of chili (veggie too). No need to bring anything.

Donate to Merry Oaks School

If your child has outgrown their books, the school library does accept good, used books suitable for grades K-5. Just drop them off at the school library or office. Items can be brought to our neighborhood meeting Feb. 25.

A Central City Neighborhood

The purpose of the Merry Oaks Neighborhood Association is to preserve and improve the quality of life and property values in our residential neighborhood and to enhance the economic vitality of our business corridor.



Visit us at: <http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/charlotte/merryoaks>

President's Message - State of the Neighborhood 2007

Every January the President of the United States addresses Congress and outlines the State of the Union, reflects on the successes and setbacks of the previous year, and lays out goals and challenges for the year just begun. Since this is the first neighborhood newsletter of the new year, it seems appropriate to look back at 2006 and the events that affected Merry Oaks for good and for ill, and look forward at what is upcoming in 2007.

Certainly one of our greatest achievements last year (in coordination with adjoining neighborhoods) was the defeat of the proposed Aldi development on the Plummer property at the corner of Central Avenue & Briar Creek Road. As presented, the suburban-style development would have locked in poorly-conceived retail options while the Central Avenue corridor rapidly redeveloped, and a coalition of neighbors and civic leaders presented a united front in opposition. The plan was withdrawn in late January 2006; both the Plummer property and the Renfrow property across Central Avenue remain undeveloped. The owners of the Renfrow property will be presenting new plans at our February meeting. The Plummer property hasn't sold yet (it's under contract) but we may get to hear from the new owner at the June meeting.

Another success story last year was Merry Oaks' autumn campaign to band trees against the canker worm moth. Last April saw the worst outbreak of the dreaded little green caterpillars in memory, and many trees in the neighborhood (and throughout the city) were stripped of young leaves. Spearheaded by Merry Oaks Board member Ayesha Omer, the neighborhood took advantage of a Charlotte matching grant to band hundreds of trees. In a few short weeks we'll see how effective all our efforts were!

Also in 2006 the first phase of the Briar Creek Greenway officially opened, with the installation of the walkways and pedestrian/bicycle bridge across the creek. The connectivity with Plaza-Midwood has been a big benefit and I see people using the greenway every time I bike down there.

Real estate values continued to climb in 2006, with house prices breaking the \$200,000 barrier for the first time that I can recall. This reflects the increasing premium being placed on central residential areas as well as the quality of life Merry Oaks offers!

Unfortunately all the news wasn't good. The CATS Center City Streetcar project was deferred for a decade or more, leaving a great many people on the east side of Charlotte disappointed. Viewed as a catalyst for development along the Central Avenue corridor, the long delay leaves many wondering about the city's commitment to mid-scale transit projects and to the east side as a whole. Overall perception of east Charlotte remains largely negative in the media, and Merry Oaks sometimes gets lumped in with troubled areas like Eastland Mall even though our neighborhood suffers few of the problems other parts of the city think about when the words "east Charlotte" are mentioned.

The Merry Oaks Elementary campus park, developed by Mecklenburg County Parks & Recreation, fell further behind as planning and funding issues continued to plague the project. Merry Oaks Elementary also lost its stellar principal, Stanley Frazier, when he was promoted to run Waddell High School. Principal Frazier was CMS' 2006 Principal of the Year, and Merry Oaks will miss him!

Looking into 2007, the biggest challenges we face remain development and community leadership. Plans for the Central at Briar Creek intersection will become clearer this year, and we will have to work hard to make sure that developments there are as good as they can be. Will the loss of the streetcar cause development along the Central corridor to slow? That remains to be seen but the streetcar was almost always mentioned as a positive factor when developers discussed their plans so its loss has to be a negative factor. Recent news reports indicate an overall slowing of the North Carolina residential real estate market, so that could be another factor.

As Merry Oaks evolves as a neighborhood, we continue to seek out new residents eager to get involved in neighborhood leadership and advocacy. There is always room for new voices and ideas and MONA has a standing invitation to any resident to get involved, including attending our Board meetings and becoming a Board member. 2006 was a good year for this, and I hope 2007 continues that trend!

Overall, Merry Oaks is a better neighborhood now than it ever has been. 2007 will present challenges and successes, but our neighborhood remains one of the best-kept secrets in Charlotte, although every year more people recognize the name "Merry Oaks", and that's a great thing!

Tom Poston

People in the Neighborhood

Geoff Bragg

Merry Oaks resident Geoff Bragg is new head chef at Pewter Rose Bistro in South End. Geoff, a Johnson & Wales University graduate and 19-year veteran of the restaurant industry, has garnered a loyal following in Charlotte through his past restaurant affiliations and through his local cable television show, "Cooking with Chef Geoff." Previously Geoff worked at Pewter Rose as sous chef, as head chef at Peaceful Dragon in southwest Charlotte, and at Lulu in the Plaza/Midwood neighborhood.

Geoff, his wife Sara and their three cats live on Draper Avenue near the Arnold intersection. Sara is a jewelry and floral artist and also works at the popular Plaza Midwood restaurant Dish. Sara already had the Draper house when they met and, Geoff says, he “fell in love with both her and the neighborhood”. He has lived there two years. “I love it,” he says. “Sara and I ride our bikes around and sometimes I practice tai chi or kung fu in my back yard. I love the huge lots in this neighborhood. The houses are cute and lend themselves to expansion. All of the people are friendly and it seems like everyone has lived in Charlotte for a long time, and I like that.”

Pewter Rose, 1820 South Boulevard, is an eclectic fine dining bistro and metropolitan night club offering internationally-American food and an extensive wine list. It's menu draws on the diverse, ethnic and cultural heritage of the United States - relating it to the palate of the region. Local produce, fresh seafood, poultry, beef, pork, game meats, and vegetarian items are all interpreted in unique yet "comfortable" ways.



When you are finished with your newsletter please place it at restaurants, dentists offices and so on to help spread the word about Merry Oaks!

Nancy Pierce Shaver

Merry Oaks Neighborhood Association cofounder and first President Nancy Pierce Shaver's photographs are part of the Levine Museum of the New South exhibit "Families of Abraham" which will be on display through July 2007. The exhibit explores similarities and differences among the three Abrahamic faiths, Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Several photographers spent a year photographing 11 families representing the three faiths. For more information call the Levine Museum at 704 333 1887 or visit www.museumofthenewsouth.org.

Nancy has worked as a photographer in Charlotte since 1979 when she moved to Charlotte from Minnesota to work as a Charlotte Observer staff photographer. Since 1981 she has had her own business (as Nancy Pierce www.nancypiercephoto.com) doing assignments for editorial, corporate and nonprofit organizations. She lives with her husband and two sons on Flynnwood Drive.



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Neighborhood News & Updates

Tree banding

Thank you to the Merry Oaks neighbors for banding together to keep our trees healthy and beautiful for many years to come. Most of the trees were banded by late November and the city banded right-of-ways in early December. Also, the City awarded Merry Oaks \$3000 towards the tree banding initiative. With the grant money, the association banded trees in the school area, the greenway, and Woodmere condominiums. We also partially reimbursed homeowners with hardships and those who had spent more than \$150.

In return for the grant money, the city requires that we turn in a monthly progress report to show how the money was spent and if our traps are working. I've received a few reports from neighbors that moths have already been caught in the traps. By late March, if we don't see many worms coming off tree tops, our effort was a success.

To ensure that your band is working properly, please monitor your bands. Squirrels love the cottony material under the bands. If too much has been removed by squirrels, contact the company or individual that banded your trees. They will rewrap your trees if necessary.

The city has asked us to keep our tree bands on our trees until early April and then remove them or the company/individual you used will remove them at that time. After the banding is removed and all reports have been received, the city will determine if they will continue this program next years. Again, thanks for banding together!

Here again are the phone numbers for the two main tree banders for Merry Oaks:

Clark's Tree Care 704-737-8129

Joe Howarth 877-6646

*Ayesha Omer, MONA Board member
and tree banding organizer*

Plummer property at Briar Creek-Central

No movement here. Tim Crawford of Citiline Resortline Companies says they have a contract on the 4-5 acre property and they hope to close in the spring. They plan up to 99 for-sale residential condos.

Renfrow property at Briar Creek-Central

Tuscan Development has been surveying. A representative will attend the February 22 general meeting to update us on their plans.

New people to serve us

Officer **Craig Varnum** is the new Eastway Division Community Coordinator and can be reached at 704-336-8535 or cvarnum@cmpd.org.

Merry Oaks Elementary School

Merry Oaks Elementary has a new principal, **Mr. Philip Steffies**. Former Merry Oaks Principal and CMS 2006 Principal of the Year **Stan Frazier** is the new principal at Waddell High School. We expect to meet Mr. Steffies at the February 22 general meeting.

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Deirdra V. Spivey
Financial Service Manager
Eastway Drive Office

3050 Eastway Drive
Charlotte, NC 28205
704/338-4370
Fax 704/568-3950
deirdra.spivey@firstcitizens.com

AUSTIN SEAGRAVE REALTY



704-840-6562
Austin Seagrave

1909 Arnold Drive
Charlotte, NC 28205

Fax: 866-876-1155
Austin@AustinSeagrave.com
AustinSeagrave.com

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Park and Recreation Director

James R. (Jim) Garges will begin as Park and Recreation Director on February 1. He arrives from Cincinnati where he held a similar position. The new local manager for Central Park District II (our district) is **Patricia Poteat**, Contact her at 704-336-3367 or Patricia.Poteat@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov

Merry Oaks Campus Park

The long awaited walking trail and cut through from Merry Oaks Road to Merry Oaks elementary school has been scheduled! Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department Park Planner Brian Conroy said recently that a contractor has been selected, various county signatures are being collected, and the clearing process should begin this month, with estimated completion in three months. Included are a drinking fountain, walking trail, and native plant garden area. The garden will need to be planted by the community, so save any excess native plants you have for this purpose.

Briar Creek Greenway

The trail will be realigned at the end of Masonic to meet the Masonic-to-Logie ped/bike path. After this is complete, the greenway will be landscaped. The County is also working on a signage package for all greenways, including Briar Creek.

Central Avenue Streetcar

CATS planned Center City Streetcar, which would run from Beatties Ford Road through uptown to Plaza Midwood and along Central Avenue to Eastland Mall, was not funded by the Metropolitan Transit Authority

when they met in November. This means that there are no plans for construction of the streetcar until at least 2019 (a delay of ten years) and the second phase which would have serviced Central Avenue, will not be completed before 2023. This is an extremely disappointing result for those of us who have advocated for the streetcar as not only a catalyst for development along the Central Avenue corridor, but as a cost-effective means of boosting capacity on a bus route that is one of the two busiest in Charlotte. Delaying the streetcar by a decade and more means that high-density development in the central city area may also be delayed or cancelled, as developers see those opportunities shift to the more suburban environment of north Mecklenburg. While the possibility remains that development and intergovernmental bodies may return to the streetcar plan earlier if other transit options are not funded, no firm options for that are on the table at this time.

*Tom Poston, President
Merry Oaks Neighborhood Association
Central Avenue Streetcar Advisory Board member*

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Neighbors' Corner

Charlotte Tailgate Market

We'll open in mid-April (weather and growing season willing) and will operate through the summer on Saturday mornings at 2007 Commonwealth Ave. beside the Common Market. If you are a grower or a buyer, come visit. People will pay good money for produce that is locally and organically grown.

Think about it. Get a little closer to your mother. And call me now if you want to participate.

Lynn Caldwell – 704-335-0777 or
lynn@charlottetailgatemarket.com.

Trading post

Aloe Plant: low care windowsill plant, said to be cure-all for burns, blisters. Grows best when ignored. *Free*. 704-567-0709, leave name and number.

Fern: Rabbits' foot. Bring inside below 25 degrees. Interesting fuzzy "rabbits foot" roots crawl over sides of your hanging basket. Slow grower 6-8". *Free*. 704-567-0709.

Meet your neighbors on-line

Click on <http://merryview.blogspot.com> to see photos of MONA interest. If you have a photo to contribute, send it in .jpg form to nkrewson@earthlink.net. Web site coordinators reserve the right to edit.

Set Up Your Own Web page from our Web site. Click on "Meet Your Neighbors" from our MONA

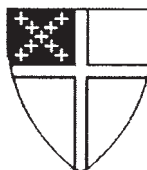


web site to set up your own page which can include a photo of your home, pets, or interests. You can also link to a page you already have. It's free, it's easy and can be deleted if you wish.

To see the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police most wanted list, go to <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/CMPD/Most+Wanted/Home.htm>

Bird watcher

We continue to have sightings of blue birds, both at the school and on Briar Creek greenway. Their favorite habitat is dead trees and there are less of these than in previous years. If you are interested in building a birdhouse, contact nkrewson@earthlink.net, 704-567-0709 for an easy set of plans.



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
3601 Central Avenue
Charlotte, NC 28205
704-537-0370

Sunday Worship:

8:00 AM No music, short encouraging guilt-free sermon and Holy Communion

9:30 AM Sunday School

10:30 AM: Music, another incredibly dynamic guilt-free sermon followed by Holy Communion.

Visitors/Seekers Classes: Help folks on their journey. Not to get you into the Church. We have Membership Classes for folks joining the Church.

Youth Group: Ages 11 and older meets 5-7 PM Sunday

To witness compassion is to see God. To be compassionate is to be a child of God: *The Rev. Will Hinson*

Office Hours: Tues., Wed., Thurs., from 9:00-5:00

E-mail: info@standrewscharlottenc.org

Web-site: www.standrewscharlottenc.org

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install best management practices for soil/water conservation on your property. Examples are: rain gardens, compost bins, riparian buffers, invasive plant removal, pet waste receptacles, impervious surface replacement and native plant materials for critical area planting. Many Merry Oaks neighbors have taken advantage of this program which is available only to neighbors in the Briar Creek or Irwin Creek watersheds. APPLY by contacting Katie Mann at 336-2455. Check it out at www.mecklenburgconservation.com under Urban Cost Share Program.

Problems or questions about the street trees?

Call City Landscape Management – 704 336 4262

Feral cats on your property?

Friends of Feral Felines will help you capture, spay/neuter and immunize feral cats so that you can become their caretakers at a minimum cost to you. Neighbor Meredith McBride (Briar Creek Road 531 1837 meremc@hotmail.com) writes that her cost was about \$50 per cat and the group reimbursed her \$20 per cat. The cost subsidies vary a bit depending on the vet and the gender of the cat, and the process requires a few days of indoor recovery after which they can be released outside again. This is a humane way to limit feral cat population. Their web site is www.friendsofferalfelines.org. Their hotline number is: 704-348-1578. This is run completely by volunteers, so they may take up to a week to respond.

Unused/rotten utility poles? Dangling cable?

Get the address for the pole. Put yellow tape around it. Look for the tag (either DPCO or SBT&T) to see who owns the pole. Go to Duke Energy or Bellsouth web site and request pole removal. If you can't find the tag just report it to either site and they will check it out.

<https://mdenote1.duke-energy.com/custweb/customerservice.nsf/LP?OpenForm>

or call Duke at 1-800-777-9898 Keep selecting option 4 to get a real person

<http://www.bellsouth.com/contactus/ContactUsRepairForm.html?sfid=repf>
1-888-757-6500

Contributed by Carolyn Drive neighbor and fireman Robert Riggsbee 704-537-5871

Make your Hardwood Floors Shine

Living in the older established Charlotte neighborhoods has several distinct advantages. Among such is the quality of the materials with which our homes were built, the like of which would be cost-prohibitive in new construction. One example is the hardwoods that grace the floors of these older homes. However, their beauty and luster has often faded with age, or worse yet, has been covered with wall-to-wall carpet. To realize the value of hardwood floors often requires restoration, and this is costly, time-consuming and disruptive. No wonder so many people put it off until they are ready to sell!

But why not enjoy the beauty of your hardwood floors while you live there? If you don't want to incur the cost or dusty disruption, there is an alternative method that, while not as comprehensive as full restoration, produces stunning results for a fraction of the cost. It involves an intensive cleaning, scrubbing and polish. There is no dust, and most restorations can be done in a single day with minimum disruption.

Enjoy your house more or sell it faster with beautiful wood floors. It's easier than you think.

Phillip Eddins, from the Coventry Woods neighborhood in East Charlotte. See his ad on page 6 in this issue for Diamond Care Services if you want to inquire about having your floors done.

Ongoing Internet Cable problems? Bothered by dangling cable?

Call Time Warner for outages 704 377 9600.

For ongoing problems call Doris Boris. She is in charge of the government cable franchise. 704 336 3064 or the City of Charlotte's cable hotline 704-336-2288, email a complaint to catv@ci.charlotte.nc.us

OR go to <http://cabletv.charmeck.org> and click on "Cable Hotline" on the left.



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How You Can Help

Learn about neighborhood leadership

Consider attending the 12th Annual Neighborhood Symposium - Saturday, March 31 - 8 to 4 PM
Charlotte Convention Center

Neighborhoods in Action: Mobilizing, Organizing and Sustaining Success

Networking, workshops, exhibits, speaker, neighborhood presentations, youth track. Call 704 336-2061 to inquire or enroll, then let MONA President Tom Poston know you plan to attend (his contact info on back of this newsletter).

Give advice to CMS leaders

CMS Community Forum .March 12 6:30 – 8 PM
Eastway Middle School. 1501 Norland Road. All community members are encouraged to attend
Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Community Forums to address Strategic Plan 2010, Facilities and Parent Issues. School Board and CMS executive staff will

attend to receive input. For more information contact Samantha Evans 980-343-0954

Clean up Merry Oaks School

A representative from the school will attend the February 15 MONA board meeting to discuss possibilities of another school cleanup day in the spring. The date will be late March or early April. Watch the web site and Google group for more information. .

Give your input and learn about your Police

Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department Eastway Division invites neighbors to attend a meeting at Eastland Mall Community Room on Tuesday, March 6 from 6:30-8:30 to help the Division set goals, priorities and objectives. The police will also explain the Weed and seed program, which is designed to prevent gang activity along the Central Avenue corridor.



**James
Young**
CPA, PLLC

2600-F
Central Avenue
(at the corner of
Morningside)

704.370.2780
(office)

704.370.0531
(fax)

jamesyoungcpa@
msn.com

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Merry Oaks Real Estate Update

Merry Oaks Neighborhood Active Sales and SOLDS for 2006 as listed in Mecklenburg Multiple Listing Service.
This publicly available data was compiled by Robin Lincoln, Dwellings Realty

<u>Status</u>	<u>Street</u>	<u>Sq Ft</u>	<u>Bed/Bath</u>	<u>Yr Blt</u>	<u>Net Price*</u>
1 Active	Longfellow	1582	3 2/0	1953	\$174,900
2 Active	Arnold	1434	3 1/0	1947	\$215,000
3 Active	Arnold	1281	3 1/0	1950	\$229,000
4 Sold	Draper	848	2 1/0	1947	\$105,000
5 Sold	Draper	1125	2 1/0	1947	\$100,200
6 Sold	Arnold	1024	3 1/0	1955	\$97,000
7 Sold	Draper	933	3 1/0	1960	\$118,000
8 Sold	Covington	1297	3 2/0	1996	\$137,000
9 Sold	Pickens	1158	3 1/1	1960	\$139,000
10 Sold	Arnold	1091	3 1/0	1951	\$154,950
11 Sold	Ferguson	1094	3 1/1	1960	\$145,000
12 Sold	Draper	1204	3 2/0	1947	\$156,500
13 Sold	Farmington	1345	3 2/0	1951	\$148,000
14 Sold	Draper	1055	3 1/0	1951	\$153,000
15 Sold	Covington	1250	3 2/0	1995	\$162,000
16 Sold	Arnold	1548	3 2/0	1954	\$163,500
17 Sold	Arnold	1152	2 1/0	1950	\$166,000
18 Sold	Graybark	1204	2 2/0	1950	\$172,000
19 Sold	Arnold	1060	3 2/0	1949	\$185,000
20 Sold	Arnold	1820	3 2/0	1951	\$215,000
21 Sold	Flynnwood	1825	3 2/0	1954	\$219,000

*Net Price means Sales Price minus Seller paid Closing Costs

Merry Oaks Neighborhood Association Financial Statement			
through Feb. 11, 2007			
Income		Expenses	
Newsletter Advertising	6,697.50	Office supplies	459.21
1999 Membership dues	445.00	Postage and Delivery	298.39
2000 Membership dues	275.00	Printing/reproduction	6,853.40
2001 Membership dues	240.00	Supplies	297.13
2002 Membership dues	245.00	Program expense	234.00
2003 Membership dues	175.00	Contributions	61.45
2004 Membership Dues	300.00	Dues & Subscriptions	75.00
2005 Membership Dues	484.00	Bank Fees	70.00
2006 Membership Dues	467.00	Bank Service Charges	66.00
2006 Membership Dues	40.00	Neighborhood Improvement Proj.	842.50
Contributions Income		Total Expense	9,257.08
Restricted	515.00		
Unrestricted	1,160.00		
Total Income	11,931.00	NET INCOME	\$2,673.82
(does not include current newsletter or expenses)			

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SHOP!

Merchandise changes daily at our 2 Charlotte area locations, so come early and come often!

DONATE!

Donations can be dropped off at either location. Pickup is available for large items – call 704.392.4495

VOLUNTEER!

Help Habitat build houses without a hammer. Volunteer help is always needed in the showroom with donation processing.

WHAT'S THERE?

Furniture, Building Materials, Functioning Appliances, Flooring, Doors, Windows, Cabinets, Sinks, Lighting, Home Furnishings, Just for starters!



www.CharlotteRestore.org

WHERE?

2 Convenient Charlotte Locations:

3326 Wilkinson Blvd.
704.295.4495

1133 N. Wendover Rd.
704.716.7044

MONA Board & Volunteers

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704-567-1207
bhalrawi@aol.com

Marcus Williams

Board Member
704-953-9003
marcus_williams@ml.com

Join the Merry Oaks Neighborhood Association

Name(s):

Address:

Phone: E-mail address:

Area of interest/concern:



Dues are \$10 per household per year. Make checks payable to MONA.

MAIL WITH YOUR CHECK TO:

Donna Howard-Peters

P.O. Box 18131

Charlotte, NC 28218-0131

Please send in your dues! We need \$\$\$ to continue our work on your behalf.