



Merry Oaks

Neighborhood Newsletter

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

Volume X Number 2 June 2008

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

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Renew your membership for 2008!

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



Bulky Trash pickup: 311

NO SUMMER MEETING!

But save this date for MONA's 10th birthday party:

Saturday evening, OCTOBER 18.

Details will be available by Google Group and in the October newsletter - see page 9 for more details

Dates to remember

June 24, Tuesday, 6-7:30 PM:

Important public meeting on Independence Area Plan

@ The Park (formerly Merchandise Mart) 2500 Independence Blvd.

The City of Charlotte will hold a public meeting to begin developing a new area plan for the area around Independence Boulevard from Briar Creek Road outbound to Sam Newel Road. This will include properties on the Independence side of Commonwealth Avenue. The purpose of the Plan will be to recommend land use strategies which will encourage economic growth and stable, livable neighborhoods. This is NOT to reevaluate transit or highway improvements.

Tidbits

Some of you sent dues checks in to the MONA post office box recently and the checks were returned to you as undeliverable. This was a snafu and it has been remedied! Sorry about the inconvenience. You can now mail dues \$10 per household or \$5 if you are on a fixed income to:

MONA PO Box 18131 Charlotte, NC 28218-0131



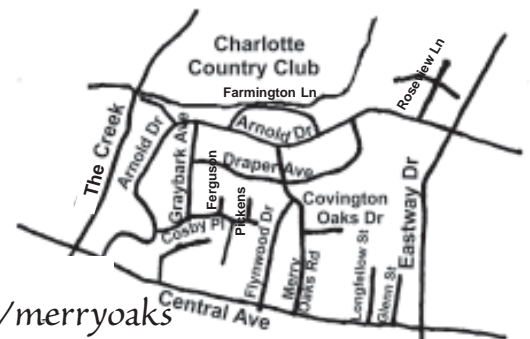
A Central City Neighborhood

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.

Stay in touch! Join the Merry Oaks Google Group!

<http://groups.google.com/group/merry-oaks>

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



Neighborhood News

Letter from Captain Smathers, Eastway Division

We all know that Property Crimes have been a major focus for everyone in Charlotte lately. As the Captain for the Eastway Division I want to give you an update on this topic.

In 2008 the officers of the Eastway Division have arrested thirty-three people for Burglary. Twenty four more people have been arrested for various stolen property offenses that are predominantly burglary driven.

I want to profile two offenders who were recently arrested in Eastway:

On May 16, 2008 Bruce Edward Butler broke into a residence on Biscayne Drive and was placing jewelry onto a bed to steal. An alert neighbor had noticed Butler in the area and summoned police who arrested him inside this residence. Butler had been arrested on April 1, 2008 for breaking into a residence in this same complex but was out on bond. Butler has been arrested eight (8) times since 1996 and all are for burglary or burglary related offenses.

On May 18, 2008 Gerald Eugene Jackson was arrested after attempting to force open the rear door of a home while the victim was still inside. She quickly called police and he was arrested nearby attempting to hide from officers. Jackson has 18 arrests from 1985 to 2008 and 9 of those are for burglary or related offenses.

The arrest of Butler was a direct result of a good neighbor noticing something "just wasn't right"

and contacting police immediately. I cannot stress how important it is for everyone to become engaged in this effort and to please call 911 when you see ANYTHING you feel is suspicious.

I have created a team of seven officers who are specifically focusing on property crimes and property crime offenders. This dedicated group is using a wide range of tactics and responses solely to interdict and prevent property crime offenders from committing these crimes. Bikes, Segways, and motorcycles are also being utilized to assist in this effort. Please be assured the men and women of the Eastway division are dedicated to addressing these problems. We are trying to have persons charged with burglary placed on electronic monitoring if they are released on bond since they tend to be chronic offenders and will continue to break into houses.

I hope you find this information useful and my goal is to provide regular updates to you in the days ahead.

Regards,

Captain Mike Smathers

continued on pg. 3

Fifteen Ten

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Tom McCall, R.PH.

continued from pg. 2

Former Renfrow property

now owned by Tuscan Development

Several members of the MONA Board met with Tuscan development in mid-May. They are still trying to get the City to delete the requirement to extend Briar Creek Road through to the back of the property for eventual connection to Cosby. The City's reasoning is that if/when the property bordering Cosby sells for development (zoned single family), this would give Merry Oaks neighbors a signalized entry onto Central Avenue. It would also provide a signalized cut-through to Central Avenue from Eastway Drive. MONA protested this idea saying that the Cosby/Ferguson/Perkins Court area would be devastated by the traffic given that it is a dead-end and two cul-de-sacs. Tuscan had previously proposed duplexes on the property with greater-than-required tree save. Now they are doing a market study to see what will most likely to be successful. They are currently proposing rental apartments, possibly with some for-sale duplexes in the interior.

Briar Creek Greenway – PLEASE DUMP WATER ON THE CREPE MYRTLES!

Landscaping is in progress. In late May, a burgundy-colored redbud variety tree was planted in the circle by the benches. It will grow to 15-20 feet and cascade over the circle, creating some shade. Neighbors planted perennials, which remain. Multicolored crepe myrtles were planted at each greenway entrance, on Arnold and on Masonic. Bare spots will be planted with fescue.

The County acknowledges that the trees at the Arnold Drive and Masonic entrances were planted a bit late in the season. They have them on a once-weekly watering schedule, but if they begin to look a bit droopy, we can all help by dumping a bucket of clean water at the base of each tree.

The greenway rules of behavior have been posted by the new split rail fences. A picnic table will be placed near the circle. On a regular maintenance schedule, the trash will be emptied and the grass will be cut with a required 20-30 foot buffer of undisturbed vegetation remaining at the water's edge for water quality. Soon, "Briar Creek Greenway" signage will be installed at each entrance.

The Charlotte Country Club is responsible for realigning the trail so it does not jog across Masonic; this will occur when the Club gates the end of Masonic. The City Department of Transportation has

given the Club permission to close Masonic and prohibit public access past the trail.

Central Avenue Bridge Art

Installation of the sculpture for the Briar Creek bridge @ Central Avenue was delayed in order to create a handrail which will look good with the art.

The sidewalk was widened on both sides of Central in order to create safer pedestrian crossing and better sight lines for vehicular exits off Masonic Drive.

The handrail is under construction and should be installed in a couple months, after which the artwork by Greensboro artist Jim Gallucci will be installed. The artwork, which was created with neighborhood input, will sit about 5-6 feet above ground level and will allow pedestrians on the bridge to look through it to the creek itself. It will be a flat metal greenery-pattern sculpture on both sides of Central Avenue.

As part of this project, CDOT is cleaning up the creek banks on both sides of Central Avenue and will be putting rocks on the banks to inhibit erosion.

The CDOT manager in charge of the project wants the neighbors to be aware that the Central Avenue bridge is more than adequate to handle flood conditions. Flooding on Masonic Drive is due to logjams at the Independence bridge (a NCDOT facility), not the Central Avenue bridge.

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"The prices are reasonable, they are very reliable and did a great job"
Carolyn Drive Resident

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Woodland Drive Resident

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Neighbors' Corner

Saving Gas Money

1. Unless you have a high performance vehicle, you don't need high-octane fuel. Check your owner's manual.
2. Keep your tires inflated to the proper levels.
3. Keep it in top condition as dirty filters/oil can affect performance.
4. Driving 62 mph instead of 75 mph can reduce fuel consumption by as much as 15%. Coast up to red lights and stop signs. Stick to speed limits.
5. Steady speeds use less fuel than constant up/down speeds.
6. Clean out the junk in the trunk to reduce weight.
7. Operating with air conditioning on uses about 20% more fuel.
8. Try not to idle the engine for more than a minute.
9. Consolidate shopping trips.
10. Take CATS when you can.

Dogs and Cats

Raccoons and opossums are on the move throughout the neighborhood. Do not leave any cat or dog food outside at night, cap your chimney and secure under house access.



The Cat Who Prefers Merry Oaks to Midwood

A Farmington family moved to Daniel Street in early May and took their cat, Gus, with them. The blond Gus was known up and down Arnold as greeting every passerby and escorting residents on walks to the Greenway. After about 2 weeks, a thin Gus appeared back in Merry Oaks, hanging out at his old house. Fortunately, the owners eventually passed through putting up lost cat flyers and spotted Gus, who is now back with their 2 very happy little girls. We kept the owners telephone number, which was a good thing as Gus has been back twice since then.

Service To The Neighborhood

This issues "service to the neighborhood" award goes to Rebecca Jones and Cate Martin for patient efforts to remove the stray german shepherds from Briar Creek Greenway.

continued on pg. 5



Lexie Longstreet

Broker. Realtor

704.560.4604

LexieLongstreet.com

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2006 & 2007

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continued from pg. 4

Caring for Mama Dog by Cate Martin

Two feral German Shepherd dogs have been living in our Briar Creek Greenway woods for close to 3 years. Animal Control has not been able to catch them. It took 8 months for our neighbors Rebecca Jones and Cate Martin to catch the Mama. They are still working on catching her one-year-old pup. Please contact Cate and help with the financial burden of caring for our homeless canine neighbor.

We have had a tough go with Mama Dog. As you can image, she is an extremely feral dog considering that for most, if not all of her life, she has been living off the land.

First let me say that she is not an aggressive dog at all. She has never barked or growled at us. She has never attacked her pen. She would love to climb out and hit the road though. She is unbelievably scared. She cowers in the corner and tries to hide from us. We have not been able to touch her yet. She does like to hang out with other dogs.

For the first 4 days after her rescue, Mama wasn't eating or drinking. Rebecca and I were very concerned with her health.

Since Mama Dog is such an extreme and difficult case. (Neither the Humane Society nor the 2 German

Shepherd Rescues would take her) Rebecca and I decided to hire someone who will come out and work with her for a period of time. She has experience with dogs like this and we both have a very good feeling about her.

Kayla, the woman who is helping us with Mama, is fantastic. We now have Mama walking on the lease and she is eating without any problems. She is still extremely timid but has made considerable progress.

Our next goal is to rid Mama of her heart worm. The cost is \$610.00. Rebecca and I are making this a priority despite the high cost. Mama has come such a long way and we really want to give her a chance at a good life. We are accepting donations. After she is healthy and with a little more work, we plan to look for an appropriate home for her. Thanks to all who are pulling for Mama Dog!

Feel free to contact me with questions and donations! cate1868@yahoo.com or 705-488-4559

Remove cankerwork bands

Please remove the cankerworm bands from your trees or ask the company who installed them to do so. Keeping the bands on during the summer can cause damage to the trees.

Good Stuff, Good Price, GREAT CAUSE.

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!

 **Habitat for Humanity®**

ReStore

www.CharlotteRestore.org

WHERE?

2 Convenient Charlotte Locations:

3326 Wilkinson Blvd.
704.295.4495

1133 N. Wendover Rd.
704.716.7044

Weathering Market Changes

by Marcus Williams

MONA newsletter welcomes helpful hints from neighbors with expertise in areas of interest to everyone.

Many people ask what steps they can take to help safeguard their financial well-being through good and bad times. There are 4 basic steps you can take.

- 1. Plan.** You have to know first where you're going. You need to determine when you want to retire, how much you will need to live on, how much time you're investments have to grow, and how much you can afford to save each year. Once you've answered these questions, You can develop the investment strategy that will help take you where you want to go .Your plan should include investments, savings, insurance, and estate planning.
- 2. Prepare.** Make sure that all your emergency needs are covered-including adequate life insurance and saving enough in a rainy day fund to tide you over during an unexpected run of bad luck. Once your emergency needs are covered, you can begin putting your savings to work in a long-term investment strategy.
- 3. Diversify.** It's never a good idea to put all your eggs in one basket. Have a variety of investments-some fixed income securities along with a diversified stock portfolio that includes small and large cap, growth and value sectors. Spread your bets among

different types of stocks. Having a piece of many types of securities makes it more likely that you will pick some winners. Your asset allocation will depend on your age, investment goals, tolerance for risk, tax bracket, and other variables.

- 4. Re-evaluate.** Life circumstances change: children and grandchildren are born and grow up; your earning power increases; you get closer to retirement; you inherit money, and so forth. As your life changes, you'll need to re-evaluate your financial plan to make sure it still meets your situation and goals. You also need to periodically rebalance your portfolio. As the market goes up and down, your portfolio's allocation will change. When you rebalance, you sell some of your winning sectors and buy more of the sectors that have not yet performed as well- thus conforming to the classic investment advice of "buy low, sell high."

Safeguarding your portfolio should be no different than safeguarding your car. Scheduling an annual meeting with your financial professional should be as routine as taking in your car for an inspection. By taking precautions beforehand, you will be in a better position to weather the good times and the bad times.



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WALTER O'LEARY ALSTON III - PROPRIETOR

Real Estate - Central Briar Creek Update

Local investor believes in this area

Todd Pfalzgraf is a local investor who buys apartment complexes which may be in decline and renovates them. He seeks properties based on their proximity to shopping, to light rail and because of their location in emerging neighborhoods.

Recently, he purchased two properties near Merry Oaks: The Chase, a 132-unit apartment complex at 2728 Commonwealth Avenue, and Wembley Arms, a 101-unit townhome apartment complex off Central on Wembley Drive.

What are your intentions with The Chase?

“The property has been neglected for years now. I intend to improve it with more than a half million dollars in renovations, including new roofs, repairing the exteriors, and a nice newer entrance. Also, the interiors will be renovated with new appliances, light fixtures and about a million smaller details. We will be focusing our advertising at the folks uptown and in the medical center as well as Kings College and Johnson and Wales University.”

What do you think the next five years hold for the neighborhoods along Central Avenue out to Eastway?

“I love this area. In the past five years the area has improved considerably and I think that will continue. I feel City Council really needs to move up the trolley project for our area to finally get rid of the last few negative areas in our neighborhood and encourage new development, especially small retail shops along Central.”

What is our biggest hurdle?

“There are still a few holdouts. We have a few apartment complexes, especially on Eastcrest, which need to be knocked down, redeveloped, or renovated and repositioned to help cut down on crime in the area. Also, the trolley line would encourage new business to build along the Central Ave. corridor. I would love to see a Starbucks/Caribou Coffee, a Fed/Ex-Kinkos and a Salsaritas/Qdobas be built here soon.”

Where should we concentrate our efforts to help the neighborhoods improve?

“Apply pressure to apartment complex owners and managers to improve their properties and also

to be more selective on who they let in. Also, the apartment managers have to be tough on crime. If you rent to anyone, it just becomes a breeding ground for crime.

Also, I would like to see the city encourage new development of shopping along Central. As I mentioned above, there are quite a few nice stores, shops and restaurants I would like to see here. Once they come in, the area will continue to improve.”

Anything you want to say to neighbors in Merry Oaks?

“I am so happy to be doing business in an area where the local neighborhood association takes an active and vocal part in the city’s development efforts. I think the association is doing the right things to make this one of the great places to live in Charlotte.”

What one change in the “Avenue” between Morningside and Eastway would you make?

“There are certain areas where crime is still a problem. I would like to see more of a police presence; but more importantly I would like to see property managers be more selective in who they allow to live on the property and also be very aggressive in evicting people that violate the rules. I am very strict at both Wembley and the Chase. If anyone causes trouble, they are out. I know Randy Johnson at Birchcroft is the same way. We do not tolerate any negative behavior and we are quick to remove it from the area.”



The Vyne at Briar Creek and Central (Former Plummer property)

The first building currently under construction should be complete by the end of 2008 so people will start moving in. The pool and park at the corner of Central and Briar Creek Road will be next, then a second building will begin second quarter of 2009. The third building will start as a future undetermined date. The project has generated excitement among young people wanting affordable close-in condos; sales are good.

7 Check out <http://www.thevyne.com/>

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Dept.

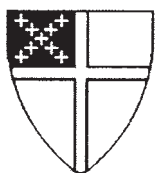
Cordelia Park Pool

Cool Off Nearby This Summer

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department's Cordelia Park Pool (2100 North Davidson Street) is only about three miles away from the Merry Oaks neighborhood. It's a big, beautiful public pool with a short water slides, lap lanes, and a skyline view. Admission is only \$1 for all day. Here are the summer hours:

- Saturdays: 11am-5pm
- Sundays: 1pm-5pm
- Weekdays: 12noon-6pm

Cordelia Pool offers FREE swim lessons for children beginning June 16 on Mondays and Wednesdays, 11am-11:30am (priority for ages 3-5) and 11:30am -12pm (priority for ages 6-12) Older children are allowed if space is available. To register call 704 336-7855 a week ahead of when you will attend.



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

Why not bicycle to the pool? Bring a bike lock and try this route (about 3 miles). It's safe, but there are a few challenging hills.

- From Arnold Drive, take the greenway to Masonic Drive, turn right.
- Take the connector trail left up the hill to Logie. Turn left.
- Take a right onto the "choker lane", which becomes Roland.
- Go straight on Roland, then turn right on Club Road to Belvedere.
- Turn left onto Belvedere all the way up the hill (right fork) to The Plaza.
- Go right onto The Plaza fifty yards or so, cross left over The Plaza at the crosswalk, then cross right over Parkwood at the crosswalk.
- Go straight onto Lola (no vehicular access here, just pedestrians and bikes).
- Go left onto Grace.
- Go right onto Allen.
- Go left onto East 24th and see the pool!

Spraygrounds are open at Cordelia Park (2100 North Davidson St.) and Veterans Park (2136 Central Avenue) 10 AM to 8 PM. These are FREE and offer water sprays, nozzles and spouts for children and adults to run through and cool off. It's a great way too cool off after a hard game of tennis at the Veterans Park courts!



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NO SUMMER MEETING!

But save this date for MONA's 10th birthday party:

Saturday evening, OCTOBER 18.

Details will be available by Google Group and in the October newsletter

MONA is turning 10!

Come out, meet your neighbors and learn how you can be part of shaping the future of this wonderful, tree-filled neighborhood oasis that we are proud to call home.

Over the last 10 years we have seen the face of Merry Oaks change in numerous ways. It's possible that more than half of our neighborhood's residents moved here during that time. A core group of Merry Oaks neighbors has worked on everything from street lighting to creek cleaning to chili supper drop-ins. Merry Oaks is now one of the most sought-after neighborhoods in Charlotte for middle-income people who want to buy or rent a home in a close-in, established neighborhood.

Turnover in leadership must occur for the neighborhood to thrive, and we know there are many newcomers eager to play a part in the future of Merry Oaks. Current MONA board members agree that some things should be up for discussion and possible change, including but not limited to:

- What tasks should be prioritized? Crime watch? Social networking? Other?
- How should MONA communicate to its members? Do we still need a printed newsletter?
- What MONA board and general meeting format and schedule is best?
- What Board composition and rotation method is best?

The current Board meets three times per years and has numerous email conversations in between. If you want to get involved, please email the current president Tom Poston tom@tranquility-base.us or contact another board member (on the back page of this newsletter).

Café Central

Coffee, Sandwiches, Desserts

Corner of Central and Arnold Drive

Join Us For Music and Cookout on
Saturdays

At 11:00 a.m. and Paella on Fridays

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Appointment or Walk in M - F - Sat. 9 am - 2 pm
T - W - Th 9am - 6 pm

MONA Board & Volunteers

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Merry Oaks Neighborhood Association Financial Statement

through May 29, 2008

Income

Newsletter Advertising	8,939.17
1999-2007 Member dues	2,791.00
2008 Membership dues	165.00
2009 Membership dues	10.00
Contributions Income	
Restricted	560.00
Unrestricted	1,305.00
Grants	637.50

Total Income 14,407.67

Expenses

Office supplies	534.41
Postage and Delivery	367.80
Printing/reproduction	8,577.73
Supplies	297.13
Program expense	234.00
Contributions	61.45
Dues & Subscriptions	75.00
Bank Fees	141.00
Bank Service Charges	66.00
Neighborhood Improvement Proj.	842.50
Total Expense	11,197.02

NET INCOME \$3,210.65

(does not include current newsletter or expenses)

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.