

Montibello News

The Newsletter of Montibello Homeowners Association

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www.montibello.org

April 2007

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President's Letter

Dear Neighbors,

We have just completed our 2007 membership drive. The membership tally as of this writing is right at 400 homeowners, which is 70 percent of the total 571 homes. This compares favorably to the membership figures of the past several years, and we anticipate, as always, a few late-coming memberships.

It takes a lot of work during the early months of each year to operate a successful membership drive, and I want to thank the team of people by name who made this happen this year: membership chairperson Ann Marie Huston, street host coordinator Kristin McKittrick, and our dedicated street hosts - Karen Holbert, Brenda Rohe, Elizabeth Blom, Elizabeth Crenshaw, Jill Conner, Sarah Bailey, Toby Ruda, Sheri Brown, Alfred Marshall, Isabel Johnston, Sonya Sandell, Ulla Ossman, Cari Berger, Laurie McKay, Kimberly Beason, Michelle Sellers, Liz West, Lorrie Arcilesi, Helen Williams, Suzanne Allen, Mark Currie, Lauren Black, Amy Boswell, Nan Markham, Jane Bass, Brenda Gasior, Michelle Duffy, Candy Hansberger, Amy Millikan, Molly Brown, Betty Lynn Lambert, Carol Richards, Mary Lou Mason and Elizabeth Phillips.

The Montibello Homeowners Directory is in the process of being printed and distributed. Each year we strive to make the directory as thorough, accurate and helpful as possible. I refer to mine often, and I hope it is a useful resource to you as well. I encourage you to use your directory to help get to know more of your Montibello neighbors by name.

Another resource we will be working on in the coming months is our neighborhood website, www.montibello.org. Please visit this website, bookmark it and revisit regularly. The core content on the website at present includes back-issues of the newsletter, a narrative history of the neighborhood, some important community links and an association contact list. We are especially striving to build up the discussion group and event-posting areas of the site. We are also adding handy links to essential city services and other non-commercial items of broad interest.

We have just added a link to a letter on the Charlotte Police Depart-

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President's Letter (Continued)

ment's website written by Montibello neighbor, Officer Wes Eubank. I encourage you to go to www.montibello.org to read "An Officer Thanks You".

With neighbors opening their windows to the warm spring temperatures I've started getting calls about noise - specifically about barking dogs and loud stereos. I urge everyone to exercise common courtesy, of course, but I also want to point out that the enforcement of city ordinances - such as noise - is not the responsibility of the homeowners' association, but of the city. If you have a complaint that you can't or don't want to work out with your neighbor directly call 311 - Charlotte's non-emergency call center number - to discuss or file the complaint.

In recent weeks I have pulled together a loose association of presidents of other homeowners' associations in the Carmel Road area. We are now exchanging information with the HOA leadership of Royden, Giverny and Kingswood on crime alerts and development issues. To one extent or another these neighborhoods wrestle with the same issues as we do - traffic violators, crimes of convenience and suspicious solicitors. These other areas report problems with vandalism by youth that I don't think we've experienced. I hope to grow the list of neighborhoods involved in this cooperative. Building this sense of community beyond our borders gives us greater visibility into the issues that will impact us sooner or later and lays the groundwork for a more powerful collective voice on rezoning issues.

Lastly, on the topic of signage and landscaping upgrades at our entrances: we continue to make progress toward our goal of beginning the physical improvements yet this spring. We have presented the signage and landscaping plans to the homeowners at the first several entrances and have gotten their feedback. Our successful membership campaign has allowed us to accumulate the additional funds necessary to launch the first phase. As we have said before this is a multi-phase project that will be funded from a portion of your association dues over a period of years. We again thank you for your continued support.

Jim Curtis

Vice President's Report

We are fortunate to live in a neighborhood that has very few significant problems; however, there is one issue the MHA hears about regularly. The good news is that solutions to this issue are easily addressable by each of us, won't cost any money and can be enacted immediately. Additionally, the solutions will result in Montibello becoming a safer and more enjoyable neighborhood.

And the issue is.....

TRAFFIC!

More specifically, the issues with traffic include speeding, ignoring or rolling through STOP signs and, on occasion, using the speed bumps as practice ramps for the next X Games. Some of this behavior is understandable as all of us feel constantly pressed for time; plus, with its long straightaways, sweeping curves and steep hills, Montibello would make for a great race track - that is if it weren't for all the people and houses.

Back to the good news - since most of the traffic within Montibello is from neighborhood residents, each of us has the ability to make an immediate impact. We can individually decide to slow down and observe the neighborhood wide speed limit of 25 MPH (especially when going down hills and around corners) and make an effort to come to a complete stop at intersections. It will only take a few extra seconds from our days, but the result will be a significantly safer environment for the runners, dog walkers, families with babies in

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Vice President's Report (Continued)

strollers, and all the unpredictable children playing in their yards and near the streets. With the warm weather arriving (notwithstanding April's record low temperature), this pedestrian traffic will only increase.

Feedback is always welcome, so if you have any alternative suggestions or points of view, on this or any other neighborhood issue, please let me know by emailing VicePresident@Montibello.org

David Hanson

Treasurer's Report

The accompanying financial report shows 2007 budget compared to actual income and expenses for the first quarter of calendar year 2007.

Revenues from 2007 membership dues totaled \$23,700 at March 31. By April 13, dues revenues had increased to \$29,775 representing 397 memberships.

Extraordinary (not regularly recurring) expenditures totaled \$604.79, all for Landscape Capital Improvements: \$570 for work on landscape design at Montibello entrances and the remainder for items related to cul-de-sac upgrade.

The next financial report, covering the first and second quarters, will appear in the August newsletter.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns you may have about MHA financial matters at (704) 542-2119 or treasurer@montibello.org.

Hap Arnold

Neighborhood Watch

On February 27, 2007 the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department South Division held a Safe Community Forum. Police Chief Darrel Stephens and his staff explained the structure of CMPD, response areas, chain of command, staffing, response times, crime trends and targeted initiatives. The South Division has 60 regular patrol officers, 6 community coordinators, 3 traffic officers, 8 officers assigned to high schools, and 3 division investigators. The South Division covers 57 square miles, 637 street miles and 400 neighborhoods and apartment communities. During 2006 the South Division recorded a 26.5% drop in armed robberies, a 13.3% drop in auto thefts, an 8% drop in residential burglaries, a 17.9% drop in commercial burglaries, an increase of 2.1% in larceny from autos and a 22.9% increase in arson.

Chief Stephens advised the **NUMBER 1** crime problem in our area is **PROPERTY CRIME** which accounts for 85% of the crimes committed.

Keep your garage doors down.

One of the most challenging crimes for law enforcement today is identity theft and identity fraud. These are

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Neighborhood Watch (Continued)

terms used to refer to all types of crime in which someone wrongfully obtains and uses another person's data in some way that involves fraud or deception, typically for economic gain. Many people do not realize how easily criminals can obtain their personal data without having to break into their homes.

In public places criminals may engage in "shoulder surfing," watching from a nearby location as calling card numbers, credit card numbers or pins are punched in. They also may listen in on a conversation if a credit card number is given over the telephone.

Some criminals engage in "dumpster diving." This term refers to going through trash cans or communal dumpsters in search of personal information that can be used to steal an identity. Make sure to shred any documents that include credit card, checking account or bank account numbers. Also shred any pre-approved credit applications that you receive in the mail.

The internet has become an appealing place for criminals to obtain personal information. No responsible company will ever ask you for personal identifying information via email. Respond to any email asking for personal information as you would to a stranger. It may look legitimate with a familiar logo of a bank, e-Bay, or Pay Pall, but if it asks for personal identity information it almost certainly is a scam. Your best plan of action is to **DELETE**. Never provide your social security number at any site. Be positive a site is secure before providing credit card information.

The following tips should be helpful in reducing identity theft:

- Be careful when giving personal information.
- Protect your documents and mail. If you plan to be away request a hold on your mail either at the post office or by phoning the USPS at 800-275-8777.
- Don't leave outgoing mail containing personal checks in your mailbox for pick-up. They are a target for thieves.
- Guard your credit cards. Maintain a list of your credit cards in a secure area. If your list is on your computer make sure it is password protected.
- Pay attention to billing cycles.
- Safeguard personal information in your home.
- Be aware of who has access to your information in your workplace.
- Be smart about passwords and pins.
- Check your credit history at least once a year with each of the credit bureaus.

Montibello has been calm and quiet during the last few months. There was one larceny from a vehicle, and several instances of doorbells being rung late in the evening for no apparent reason other than mischief.

Vacation time is approaching. Remember to alert your neighbors that you will be away, make plans for your home to be checked and your mail and paper discontinued. Please be good neighbors and eliminate advertisements that may be in the paper boxes of your neighbors when they are on vacation. Remember, **BE A NOSEY NEIGHBOR!**

Chuck Richards

Social Committee Report

Thanks to everyone who indicated they would like to help with the social committee on their directory membership information. We have some ideas we would like to explore to get people involved with both our current and possibly new events. Please join us for a social committee meeting to brainstorm, share ideas, meet one another and plan for some fun activities. Our first meeting will be **Tuesday, May 8 at 7:00** pm at my house 5618 McAlpine Farm Rd. Please RSVP to brown5618@earthlink.net or 540-0038. If you can not attend the meeting, let me know and we'll be sure to keep you informed.

Also, please mark your social calendars for the following events:

- Annual Picnic - Sept 29
- Halloween Party - Oct 27
- Santa's Visit - Dec 15

Karen Brown

Beautification Report

Congratulations to YARD of the MONTH winners, Karla and Herb Voigt, 5700 McAlpine Farm Rd. Their yard is beautiful with spring flowering trees and lovely landscaping.

Our neighborhood has been beautiful through the spring, with many very attractive yards.

There are several areas that need some attention:

1. If you have a storm drain along your curb line please see that it is clear of debris. If the drain is clogged with debris, rain water can't flow into the drain, and a hazard develops on the street when there is a rain storm. Not to mention clogged storm drains are unsightly.
2. If you have trash to be picked up that will not fit in your garbage can you must call the Solid Waste Department for a special pickup. You can contact that department either through 311 or 704-336-2673.

Thank you for all you do to keep our neighborhood beautiful.

Carol Richards

**Montibello Homeowners Association
2007 Financial Report @3/31/07**

	Budget	Quarter	Year to	Budget
	2007	Ending	Date	Position
		03/31/07	03/31/07	Over/(Under)
				2007
Beginning Cash Balance	40,916.24	40,916.24	40,916.24	0.00
Income				
Membership Dues	30,800.00	23,700.00	23,700.00	(7,100.00)
[See Membership Stats at Bottom of Report]				
Contributions:	0.00	75.00	75.00	75.00
Interest	<u>800.00</u>	<u>205.24</u>	<u>205.24</u>	<u>(594.76)</u>
Total Income	31,600.00	23,980.24	23,980.24	(7,619.76)
Expenses				
Operations:				
Communication*	1,000.00	327.43	327.43	(672.57)
Membership Administration**	1,000.00	318.16	318.16	(681.84)
Insurance	1,900.00	0.00	0.00	(1,900.00)
Supplies	450.00	0.00	0.00	(450.00)
Postage	25.00	7.80	7.80	(17.20)
Miscellaneous	<u>60.00</u>	<u>138.83</u>	<u>138.83</u>	<u>78.83</u>
Total Operations	4,435.00	792.22	792.22	(3,642.78)
Grounds:				
Maintenance	9,000.00	2,688.00	2,688.00	(6,312.00)
Landscaping:				
Beautification	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Capital Improvements	<u>700.00</u>	<u>604.79</u>	<u>604.79</u>	<u>(95.21)</u>
Total Grounds	9,700.00	3,292.79	3,292.79	(6,407.21)
Professional Services	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	(1,000.00)
Member Activities:				
Egg Hunt		0.00	0.00	
Picnic		0.00	0.00	
Halloween Party		0.00	0.00	
Holiday Party		<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	
Total Member Activities	5,000.00	0.00	0.00	(5,000.00)
Taxes	150.00	0.00	0.00	(150.00)
Miscellaneous Expenses	250.00	34.32	34.32	(215.68)
Reserve for Landscape Capital Improvements	34,300.00	0.00	0.00	(34,300.00)
Contingencies	5,000.00	0.00	0.00	(5,000.00)
Total Expenses	59,835.00	4,119.33	4,119.33	(55,715.67)
Ending Cash Balance	12,681.24	60,777.15	60,777.15	48,095.91
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Paid Memberships	412	316	316	(96)

*Category changed from Newsletter to Communication

**Category changed from Directory to Membership Administration