

THE ESTATER

A PUBLICATION OF THE MERRIMAN PARK ESTATES CLUB

**Merriman Park
Estates**

**HOMEOWNERS'
MEETING**

**Tuesday, March 27
7:00 p.m.**

**Merriman Park
Elementary School
Library**

March 2012

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello, MPE Neighbors:

I would like to express my appreciation to this past year's board members: Vice President Mavis Stewart; Secretary Karen Johnstone; Treasurer Keith Jones, & Directors Bob Skelton, Laura Atherton, & Nancy Davenport; Crime Watch/Voice Mail Bill Chiles & Marilyn Meyer.

Also, a big thank you to *Estate* editors Rebekkah French & Judy Skelton; VIP Captain Gary Fritzsche; Merriman Park Armed Security Patrol Leader Mike Mata; Trustee Chairman Milo Maness and Trustees Al Hearne & Tom Downey; Park Landscaper Lynn Runyon; & Webmaster Dave Franke.

Last, but not least, please accept your board's appreciation for your participation & support of our neighborhood.

Our next homeowners meeting/election of officers is Tuesday, March 27, at 7:00 p.m. in the library of Merriman Park Elementary School.

It has been an honor & privilege to serve as your president. I look forward to continuing our friendship as we support our neighborhood.

Regards,

SHELBY JAMES

Keller Williams Elite

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The Merriman Park Estate...

Is published periodically by &
for the residents of
MERRIMAN PARK ESTATES.

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News, announcements, photos or ad
submissions may be provided to the
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News or announcements for web
postings at www.mpe.org can be sent
to webmaster DAVE FRANKE @
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Help Re-Prioritize Need for White Rock Creek Study!

In a recent flood plain study, the 100-year flood plain in & near Merriman Park Estates was raised by about 3 feet! This trend may continue because the watershed is not fully developed.

Steve Parker, in charge of floodway management for the Dallas, says the critical first step in getting something done before flooding gets worse is a new comprehensive hydrological study of White Rock Creek watershed/flood plain.

The last study was in 1989 & it was only a partial study. Cost of this study is relatively minor for the city, but would greatly benefit our neighborhood & many others.

At the Town Hall meeting March 1, Forest Turner, assistant city manager, gave information about the 2012 Capital Bond program, including needs for the city. The highest priorities likely will be:

- 1) Streets
- 2) Flood protection & storm drainage
- 3) Economic development

Estimated cost of the bond program is about \$500 million over 5 years. This will cover less than 5% of the items on the needs inventory.

Your voice needs to be heard now to make sure the WRC watershed comprehensive study gets on the ballot in November!

Please take a few moments to fill out a comment page requesting a comprehensive hydrological study of White Rock Creek. Though on the city's needs inventory, it is currently not high enough to be chosen for the city's bond program.

Find the comment page at:

<http://2012bondprogram.dallascityhall.com/survey.html>

Your comments will be logged in for the city council. Please be sure to mention White Rock Creek hydrology & plan update.

A large number of responses will make a difference in where this study is placed on the needs inventory list. Let Jerry Allen, our city councilman, know that this is important. Send your comments this week!!!

*-Steve & Kay Morton
-Guillaume Coffinier*

YOU Are Needed for MPE Clean-Up March 31!

The City of Dallas has designated Saturday, March 31, as volunteer clean-up day for our parks & the bicycle trail.

Our park is in fairly good shape, but there are things to be done for spring, such as:

- 1) Cleaning & preparing the beds along the Parkway; i.e. weeding, trimming, & cleaning the beds. LYNN RUNYON will coordinate.
- 2) Clean up the valley & creek banks by removing excess underbrush & opening up more areas for mowing at the North end of the creek. If you feel like swimming, the logs in the creek could be removed (that's a joke!) MILO MANESS will coordinate.
- 3) Pick up trash in the valley, creek area & along the bicycle trail from Abrams

- 4) You may think this is a job for the city Parks Department, not us & that's partially true. However, we require a lot more services than the norm & receive more than our fair share! Anyway, the area is ours & we want it to be recognized as THE BEST in Dallas.

So, once a year volunteering is a small price to pay for having a semi-private park, an area for kite flying, golf practice, run for dogs, playground, fishing, & a beautiful parkway to stroll!

Time: 9:00 a.m. to noon

Please sign in at the playground for a head count & if you have saws, trimmers, etc., please bring. No power equipment is needed. The Parks Department will provide manpower along with power saws & trash bags.

Congratulations...

To the neighborhood "green thumbs" who garnered Garden Club awards for their yards & alleyscapes!

Yards of the Month

January - Bob & Judy Skelton, 6847 Topsfield

February - Sam & Amber Harrell, 6914 Hyde Park

March - Dub & Kay Cox, 7147 Cosgrove

Alleys of the Month

January - Elizabeth Johnson, 6840 Colfax

February - Ron & Nancy Ashby, 7103 Claybrook

March - Phil & Natalie Devero, 7132 Tabor

Garden Club Gatherings Promise Fun & Education...

Jeanene Tips will host a 9:30 a.m. meeting at her home April 10 at 7012 Blackwood when Kathleen Cunningham from the Dallas Arboretum will talk about this spring's exhibit "Chilhuly in Nature" (May 5 - November 5). This beautiful glass sculpture will be the 12th Arboretum of Chihuly's work. Other pieces have been shown worldwide. For further information, check out the Arboretum's web site at: www.dallasarboretum.org.

In May, the annual garden club spring lunch will be held, featuring Nathaniel Shell showing how to make the most of easily accessible flower arrangements from grocery stores.

Cost is \$10. Reservations are required. Lady with the details is club president Kathleen Thompson, kmt7139@yahoo.com or 214-348-7719. Membership, in case you're interested in joining, is \$20.

Couples celebrating Valentine's Day gathered for the club's annual dinner at the home of Dick & Nancy Davenport. The meal was catered by Aboca's restaurant!

Kathleen reports that some new members provided the entertainment of reciting how many houses they had been to before finding the right one. No names will be mentioned!

Members will also be participating in the "It's My Park" Day March 31. (Details on page 2)

Though the city will be doing the heavy work, you may not realize that it's the MPE Garden Club that provides the flowers & oversees the plantings on Merriman Parkway. Your help is really needed on March 31, member or not!

Horticulture Expert Provides Spring Yard Care Tips...

Linda Walker gives us some ideas about keeping our yards in tip top shape through the months ahead:

As we are probably going to have another hot, dry summer in 2012, here are some survival tips for your landscape!

The time for pruning trees & shrubs is almost past. Only prune where there is dead wood to be removed. Don't prune any oak trees between now and August as the sap beetle that carries oak wilt is active. We don't want to give the beetles any open cuts to introduce the disease into our neighborhood. Also, don't burn any possibly infected, newly cut oak in your fireplace as the disease can also be spread by the smoke. Wait until the wood has dried for a year before burning it.

To prepare your lawn for the heat, aerate with a coring aerator or with a spiked aerator. Home Depot & Lowes have various types for rent or sale. After aerating, spread a 1/4 to 1/2 inch layer of fine compost over the lawn & water it in. Don't fertilize until after the second spring mowing. Use a slow release organic product. Fertilize again in June & not again until September.

Remember that watering restrictions are in effect now & will remain all summer.

Even numbered houses are allowed to water only on Thursday & Sunday. No watering is allowed between 10 a.m. & 6 p.m.

Set your sprinklers to water at least 10 to 15 minutes in each zone so the water has time to soak in deeply. Watering just before dawn or in the early morning helps prevent the growth of fungus.

Protect your flower beds & shrubs by putting down a good layer of mulch. It will keep the soil moist & protect plant roots from temperature extremes. Natural mulch is better than colored mulch. Avoid rubber mulch as it does not decompose to add nutrients to the soil.

Check with nurseries for plants that will keep looking beautiful. You'll find plant suggestions also at Dallas Arboretum's web site: www.dallasarboretum.org.

Thanks to everyone for making our neighborhood such a beautiful place to live!

A Note of Sadness...

Longtime Merriman Park resident Homer Schmidt, 81, died February 5 in Dallas. The Schmidt's, who lived on Colfax for many years, had moved to an area assisted living facility.

Homer was a professional, a military leader, & involved in many civic & religious activities. According to Shelby James, he was a dedicated member of Merriman Park's Volunteers in Patrol for many years.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Diane Hetherington Schmidt, as well as 3 children, 4 grandchildren, & a great grandchild.

Like It or Not...

Crime Affects MPE

In the past several months, the following criminal activity has been reported in the Estates, according to Marilyn Meyer, chair of the Crime Watch:

Cosgrove --

2 thefts; 1 burglary

Winedale -

1 theft

Merriman Parkway --

1 burglary

1 burglary of a motor vehicle (BMV)

Sedgwick -

1 theft; 1 BMV

Definitions:

Theft = stealing something from the property; i.e. from an open garage or from a store

Burglary = breaking into a home & stealing property

BMV - = breaking into a car & stealing items from it

Although not in our reporting area, both Walgreen's & Penney's have reported thefts.

Info you can use: "Found Property" is a new police category which consists of unidentified property found within MPE & then placed in the Police Property Room; i.e. a laptop, cell phone, etc.

So, if you are missing an item, you might check with the PPR, providing an item ID as well as yours to see if it is included within "Found Property."

To help you with identification, we remind you that MPE has etching pencils that you may borrow to etch your driver's license number on appropriate items.

Check with Marilyn Meyer, 214-341-6024 to borrow an etching pencil.

But Our Volunteers in Patrol (VIP) Give Time & Effort to Keeping Eyes & Ears Open...

By driving the neighborhood to look for suspicious activity, garage doors open, & more.

And, we owe them a great big thank you for what they do 'cause they make MPE just a little bit safer.

Below is information regarding the program provided to the *Estate* by VIP Captain Gary Fritzsche:

Patrollers Needed

Though a number of new patrollers joined VIP in 2011, additional volunteers are needed. With approximately 365 households in Merriman Park, currently only about 30 households participate in VIP.

Our goal is to have 90 patrols on the street each month for more visibility on our streets. We are presently averaging only 30 to 40 patrols monthly. There are morning, afternoon, & evening one-hour shifts available.

It's easy to join VIP & you'll have maximum flexibility in picking your days & times. It's a good way to "get out of the house" for some quiet time as you drive the streets & alleys of MPE.

To volunteer, call Gary Fritzsche at 214-341-2840

Patroller's Don't Forget!

To add your preferred times for volunteering to the schedule for the coming month(s) prior to each month end.

The blank schedule is in the notebook you carry with you on patrol. That information is passed along to Bob Skelton who will now be publishing the schedule via email, transitioning that responsibility from Bill Chiles who is "retiring" after many years of service.

House Numbers in Our Alleys...

If you have a new fence &/or you have never posted your house number in the alley, please remedy that situation as soon as possible.

Presently, there are 30 to 40 homes in Merriman Park that do not have numbers posted on the fence or on the garage.

These are critical to your safety to help emergency services; i.e. police or fire departments in locating your home on an ASAP basis as needed.

Yielding to VIP Vehicles

Thanks to residents who yield to VIPers when you see a flashing amber light on our cars... especially in alleys. We appreciate your courtesy & encourage all to do the same.

No Parking in Park's Red Zone

Child safety is at issue here! The red zone in front of the playground is designed to help our children stay healthy & happy.

As you know, they may be prone to dart into the street & from behind parked cars is especially dangerous.

VIP aggressively reminds playground patrons to park in the appropriate areas. We hope residents who use the park will join us in this effort.

Just imagine the pain of a precious little one being hurt or even worse, killed, should they be struck by a car on Merriman Parkway... that will be your "why" for joining this cause!

Another Crime Prevention Measure...

In the neighborhood is the paid services of Dallas Police Department officer Maquire.

And, we need your help in providing the money to continue this program.

DPD officer Mike Mata & Merriman Park resident heads up the Merriman Park Armed Security Patrol (MPASP) effort which has been very successful in the past in identifying suspicious persons & activity. He has made several arrests during his tenure with MPE.

The goal is to schedule enough hours during the day & late night for his services at times our homes are most vulnerable, particularly during holidays & summer.

And, one of the most valuable services of this program is that when you are going out of town & would like the officer to do a random personal check on your home, let Mike Mata know at mmata7313@yahoo.com & the patrolling officer will ensure that your home is checked to see that doors & windows are secured & more.

There is a dues form enclosed with this *Estate* issue for you to help financially with this effort. We ask that each household contribute \$150, but if that is not possible we appreciate any amount you can provide.

Please complete the form & mail or deliver it to John Beall along with your check payable to MPASP at 7104 Winedale, Dallas, TX 75231, indicating MPASP 2012 Annual Dues, providing your name & address as well.

If needed, you may email Mike Mata at the "address" above & he will pick up your check. Use that email, as well, for any questions, concerns or advice you may wish to address to Mike.

Please don't forget... send your dues today so that we can keep this important security program going!

New MPE Directories Should Be in Your Hands Now...

Or shortly! Thanks to Karen Johnstone for heading up this gargantuan effort!

Only paid members of MPE Club will receive a copy of this updated very valuable resource.

If you need any info about the directory &/or acquiring one, please contact Karen @ 214-759-2961 or karen.johnstone1@yahoo.com.

A Truckload of Thank You's is Due So Many in MPE...

Who volunteer their time, effort & more into keeping our neighborhood a great place to live! For this issue, there's not time to ferret out all who should receive gratitude for what they do. That will be a goal of a future issue. If you know of sung or "unsung" MPE heroes who should be recognized, please contact *Estate* editor, Judy Skelton, with your ideas! They will be appreciated and will make their way into print!

Transitioning *Estate* Editors

Judy Skelton, a MPE two-timer, has agreed to take over editing the *Estate* for a time.

Now living on Topsfield, the Skelton's first moved to MPE in 1977 where they resided at 7147 Cosgrove for 17 years. Moving away & taking other residences for personal & professional reasons, they moved back in September 2001, taking up housekeeping at 6847 Topsfield. Needless to say, MPE is HOME!

Judy is no stranger to the world of writing & editing. At about age seven, she became the kid always called on to be the reporter. That calling extended through high school & college & throughout her professional life.

That's not to say she "knows it all," particularly when it comes to new technology, but her mind is open to learning.

A busy lady, she works part time for Foundation for Responsible Television which produces the McCuiston television program; manages a direct sales business, Blessings Unlimited; and is very involved in First Dallas Alumni Club, an organization of persons who have at one time or another worked for First National Bank in Dallas or its successors (where she also writes & edits a periodic newsletter); and is active which church & non-profit organizations as a volunteer.

She'll be seeking your help in determining what you'd like to see in the *Estate* & soliciting news & views & photo's to be included.

Special Thanks to...

Rebekkah French who lent her expertise & time to editing & producing the *Estate* during the past year or so. She assumed the role after the many years (40+ we believe) that Bill Chiles was the man in charge! Rebekkah is employed fulltime & is a mom, so her busy schedule didn't allow time for such a chore... and chore it is!

However, she did a masterful job & we appreciate her efforts so very much!

Minutes – November 25, 2011 General Meeting of the MPE Homeowners Association

Those attending: Shelby James, Karen Johnstone, Keith Jones, Lyn McMurry, Carolyn Carter, Augie DeCarlucci, Mavis Stewart, Al & Judy Hearne, Kay Morton, Doyle & Pam Grundy, Jeanene Tips, Gary Fritzsche, Sam Friedman, Bob & Lynn Runyon, Guillaume Coffiner, Sandra Bruns, Nancy Davenport, David Franke, David Dunson, Linda Walker, Bob & Judy Skelton, Kathleen Thompson, Jeff & Deb LaFayette, Marilyn Meyers, & Denise Smith

Welcome

Shelby James extended a welcome to all residents & thanked them for attending this important meeting.

Presidential Business

Shelby reported that Rebekkah French has had to give up doing the *Estate* due to work constraints. He believes he has the job filled, but he will let residents know for sure soon.

He reminded attendees that Christmas light judging will take place on December 6 & encouraged everyone to decorate their homes. The best house will receive NorthPark Gold as a reward.

He thanked Linda Walker & the entire Garden Club for their work in the MPE market & asked Nancy Davenport to report on the pansy sale. Linda reported that they exceeded their goals & sold 138 flats.

The Nominating Committee will start working in January to nominate new board members. If you are interesting in serving on the board, please let him know.

Finally, Shelby thanked Mavis Stewart for all her hard work on the Fall Festival & reported how well the festival went.

Officer Reports

Treasurer, Keith Jones, reported that we have surpassed our goal for paid HOA members with 228 now, 22 more than last year.

Secretary, Karen Johnstone, reported that she is working on the directory & hopes to have it printed in March. If you would like to put an ad in the directory, please contact her at karen.johnstone1@yahoo.com

Volunteers in Patrol, Gary Fritzsche, thanked the Women's Social Club, especially Deanna Boyd, who has sent a list of new people to work for VIP. The current number of volunteers is 30. Bob Skelton reported that the November calendar is almost full.

Garden Club, Nancy Davenport, thanked everyone for their pansy sale support.

Vote on Bylaw Changes

Sandra Bruns reviewed the proposed bylaw changes & communicated that the changes had to either be accepted or declined – no additional changes could be made. It is noted in the bylaws that they must be revised every 5 years to keep them current.

In order to have a quorum, the neighborhood needs 21 voting members in attendance – there were 31 members in attendance so a quorum was present.

After review of all proposed changes (copy available from Karen Johnstone), all were approved except the change in the first paragraph.

Miscellaneous Business

Nancy Davenport asked if anyone wanted to opt out of receiving the free mailing. Shelby said we could put it on the next agenda, but it was not something we could have voted on at this meeting.

It was also reported that the City of Dallas will be putting additional water restrictions into effect starting December 12. Take note & check with the city to see exact restrictions.

Meeting adjourned.

-Submitted by Karen Johnstone-

Important Connections...

Web Site:

- www.mpedallas.com

Email:

- info@mpedallas.com

MPE Voicemail:

- 214-967-5075

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8201 Preston Road, Suite 265, Dallas, Texas 75225

Allison Combs

is a very enterprising young lady...

Your pets would delight being in her care!

A student at Lake Highlands High School & an alumni of Forest Meadow & Merriman Park, she has lived in MPE her entire life & this will be her 4th year to own her business.

Call her when pet care extraordinaire or other services are needed!

214-343-9191 (home)

972-510-7975 (cell)

clovisfeet@aol.com (email)

MPE Board

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1/8 page = \$25

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News, announcements, photos in electronic files ready for use may be sent to the editor at

jleskelton@gmail.com or by calling

214-341-3656

REFLECTIONS ON NEIGHBORS...

A bad neighbor is as great a calamity as a good one is a great advantage.

-Hesiod-

A great neighbor is a fellow who smiles at you over the back fence, but doesn't climb over it!

-Arthur Baer-

It's folly to punish your neighbor by fire when you live next door!

-Publius Syrus-

Sometimes a neighbor whom we have disliked a lifetime for his arrogance & conceit lets fall a single commonplace remark that shows us another side, another man, really; a man uncertain, a puzzled, & in the dark like ourselves.

-Willa Cather-

The impersonal hand of government can never replace the helping hand of neighbors.

-Hubert H. Humphrey-

Where ignorance is bliss, it's foolish to borrow your neighbor's newspaper.

-Kim Hubbard-