

Ridge Reporter

Fall Newsletter

Issue 1 - Sept'07



Neighbors, be sure to join the
Scotfield Ridge Yahoo Group

- Exchange information
- Find out about neighborhood events
- Hear community news

To join, go to:

www.YahooGroup.ScotfieldRidge.org

Do you live at the Ridge, would you like to help in sponsoring our news letter? Contact Lenny @ 799-9032 or join our Scotfield Ridge Yahoo Business group @ scotfieldbusiness@yahoogroups.com

Ridge at Scotfield Social Events

My name is Jocelyn Fagan and I am this year's Social Committee Chairperson for the Ridge. I want to share with you our planned Social Calendar for the upcoming year, and I'd like to put in a plug for helping out! Let me know if you'd like to join the Social Committee!

October: Fall Festival

November: Charity Drive (Tricia Dunlap - dunlap@mac.com)

December: Cookie Exchange (Jocelyn Fagan)

January: **Need Host**

February: Wine & Cheese Party

March: Easter Egg Hunt, March 15 (Laurie Higginbotham)

April: Garage Sale (Julie Johnson)

May: **Need Host (Memorial Day BBQ)

June: Pop at the Pool (Jocelyn Fagan)

July: Ice Cream Social

August: **Need Hosts (National Night out Block Parties)

Sept: **Need Host (Labor Day BBQ)



As you can see, we still have a couple of events with no hosts, as well as a couple of months with no ideas for events. Does anyone have any interest in hosting or co-hosting???

Thanks for participating in the neighborhood!

Jocelyn Fagan

Social@ScotfieldRidge.org



National Night Out Block Party

ON THE WATCH

Scofield Ridge Neighborhood Watch is once again watching! The past year's noticeable increase in crime here in our neighborhood led to the creation of a neighborhood-wide group to help us to all have a safe and happy community.

We launched the Neighborhood Watch program on August 7 with National Night Out with ten block parties throughout Scofield Ridge. Neighbors gathered together to share information and get to know each other. The evening also offered everyone the first peek at the new block system and announcement of block captains.

Quite a few neighbors joined the team of block captains during National Night Out, but it's not too late for anyone else to join also! We still need more block captains, since there are nearly 50 "blocks" in Scofield Ridge! Thinking about becoming a block captain, but not sure what that means? Block captains introduce themselves to each home in their "block". They maintain a roster of the residents of their block. This roster can be used to notify neighbors if there is an emergency, to pass along important crime or safety information or to let neighbors know about upcoming safety meetings or events. Some block captains also choose to host

occasional or regular gatherings of their neighbors to help build a closer community. A community of neighbors who know and care for each other is one of the strongest crime prevention tools we have. Neighbors who have signed up to be block captains are already visiting with neighbors and creating their rosters. Look forward to a visit soon - or better yet, sign up to be a block captain yourself!

If you are interested, please contact Karen Liston, Co-Coordinator of Scofield Ridge Neighborhood Watch, at NeighborhoodWatch@ScofieldRidge.org or 252-8226.

Neighborhood Watch: We look out for each other!

Come to our meetings and learn how to protect your family and your home

For example:

- 1) Leave porch lights on at night
- 2) Trim hedges & trees around your home
- 3) Know & support your neighbors in protecting our neighborhood.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOUR CHILD WAS LOST?

Could you provide their height and weight? Do you have a current photo? The fact is that over 34% of parents don't have this vital

information readily available and over 40% don't have a recent photo to share. This is crucial information that law enforcement says could make the difference between an immediate recovery or a prolonged search.

Racha and Farmers wants to help! In partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and Imagery Concepts, Farmers is getting families back where they belong - home safe and sound. Our m.i.l.k. program provides parents with identification software that includes a standardized, high-quality digital image of their child with a place to record current detailed characteristics. If the unthinkable occurs, a parent can immediately transfer this important information to law enforcement with the click of button.

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What's up with the easements behind our fence lines not getting mowed frequently enough? Why are the sprinklers going off so frequently, even on days when it rains? How can we best address the low-hanging branches making it dangerous to walk on our sidewalks? These are the questions leading your HOA Board to call for a rebidding of our landscape contract and to ask everyone to report trees and shrubs in need of trimming to our Maintenance & Safety Committee Chair.

The pattern that seems to be typical with property maintenance contracts is that when a new company is hired they do an excellent job but as time goes on their performance drops off. Eventually, things often get to a point where the performance becomes poor enough that the only way to correct it is to call for a competitive process to rebid the contract. We believe we've reached that point with our current landscape contractor, TruGreen.

Although we will consider a new bid from TruGreen in this competitive bidding process, my experience has been that it's more likely we would switch to a new company. Consistency in mowing and upkeep of all our commons areas and entrances as well as properly maintaining and setting our irrigation system are critical areas of performance. The single largest line item in our HOA's budget is for water used in our irrigation, so ensuring that we are not wasting water is of great importance to ensuring we stay within budget (in addition to the obvious

Re-bidding of Landscape Contract and Overgrown Trees & Shrubs

environmental concern of not wasting water).

A separate issue that has come up more often recently concerns homeowners' trees and shrubs not being trimmed properly and thus causing a safety issue to those attempting to walk along the sidewalk. Overgrown shrubs, in particular, also can provide more cover to criminals who might want to remain hidden close to a house or individual they may be targeting. The Board strongly urges all homeowners to bring their homes' landscaping into compliance with our deed restrictions by allowing at least 8 feet of clearance for all tree branches above sidewalks and keeping shrubs trimmed back to allow easy passage and not so tall that you can't see over them from your home.

The best time to trim oak trees is the hottest or coldest months of the year in order to keep them from contracting Oak Wilt. Oaks **should not** be trimmed from February 1 through July 1, but if you must do so you should immediately paint the wound with a tree trimming paint or spray. This prevents the beetle that spreads Oak Wilt from coming into contact with the sap of the tree and thus spreading the fungus to your trees. Our neighboring association, Scofield Farms, has had to remove some oaks that fell victim to Oak Wilt, so we want to ensure that we avoid any activity that can help the disease to spread into our community. For more information: www.OakWilt.ScofieldRidge.org

Under no circumstances should any neighbor take it into their hands to trim others trees without their permission! Doing so has a very high probability of spreading the Oak Wilt fungus if any of the trees they trim are infected! Instead, please jot down the address of the home whose trees

need trimming and send it to our new Maintenance & Safety Committee Chair, Nathan Graves, at MaintSafe@ScofieldRidge.org. He has started a program to address concerns directly with homeowners and can help to educate them about and promote proper maintenance.

Given the safety concern that low-hanging branches have become in many areas of Scofield Ridge, the Board is also hoping to offer a program to help homeowners get their trees trimmed professionally. We are exploring the possibility of having a tree trimming company, or possibly our own landscaping company, offer a bulk discount for having homeowners' trees trimmed and removing any remaining support posts. If you would be interested in taking advantage of such a program, please e-mail me at Trees@ScofieldRidge.org. I will be collecting names, addresses, and phone numbers of homeowners who are interested. (Please NOTE: each individual homeowner would be responsible for paying the tree trimming company themselves. The HOA is only acting to organize this service and try to negotiate a discounted rate for our homeowners!)

Finally, if you do know of a landscaping company you'd like to recommend for the Board's consideration or otherwise are interested in helping the Maintenance & Safety Committee with some of these issues, please contact me at Ricardo@ScofieldRidge.org. Thanks for your help in keeping your property well maintained and thus keeping our neighborhood looking good. If there's any other issues you'd like for the Board to address, please let me know or e-mail the entire Board at Board@ScofieldRidge.org.

Ricardo Guerrero

MEET THE HOA BOARD MEMBERS AND THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW PROCESS

Ricardo Guerrero is currently serving a second 3-year term as President/ Treasurer of the Board. He has lived in our neighborhood since 2002. Prior to joining the Board, he served for a year as chair of the Publicity Committee, where he led the effort to publish the first edition of The Ridge Reporter newsletter. He originally took on many of the administrative duties on the board and also provided support for the now-defunct Web Committee. With the addition of outstanding Board members Rey Rodriguez and Janet Reber, Ricardo has focused his recent efforts on assisting the Neighborhood Watch group in their successful kick-off and block captain recruitment effort at the recent National Night Out block parties and scheduling regular meetings of the Board with our property manager, committee chairs, and neighbors. Though educated as an anthropologist, his career has focused on creating effective web content for various divisions at Dell.

Rey Rodriguez is currently serving out a 3-year term, and is Vice President of the Board. He has lived in Scofield Ridge Since 2001, and his background is in public policy, government and economics. He joined the board because of his commitment to the community and its surrounding areas, specifically in the areas of safety, health and home values. Thus far, he has been most active in bringing community issues such as zoning, speeding and dumping to the attention of local officials, and working toward making HOA operations sustainable and consistent over time.

Janet Reber is serving a one year term as Secretary. She has been a resident of Scofield phase VII since 1999. She's a biochemist who has been a stay-at-home mom since the birth of her children. She joined the board because she cares about the neighborhood and the quality of life here. So far, she has been active in most issues before the board, and she has particularly focused on establishing an organizational structure within the board and improving communication flow between Goodwin Management, the Board, the committees, and the neighborhood.

My name is **Dean Dresser**, a resident of 5 years, and I have assumed the position of Chairman of the **ARCHITECTURAL CONTROL COMMITTEE**. To be successful we need your help. I would like you to email me if you are interested in serving on the committee. I plan to have 3 people on the committee. Please let me if you are interested in serving please email me at ACC@ScofieldRidge.org by September 15th, 2007. Give me a quick background summary of your experience on HOA work experience or your work experience so I have some information with which to base my recommendation to the Board of Directors. Also, prior to making any permanent improvements to your home, please submit an Architectural Approval form to my committee. You can find this form at: <http://sco.goodwintx.com>

Now the ACC plans to do the following going forward...

Typically when we get a request I will send it to the members of the ACC (TBD) and then get their ideas to form our collective ACC recommendation. On each Friday / Saturday you will have the ACC approval / variance / disapproval on open applications that are no older than the previous Friday. Another practice I am implementing is to contact the homeowner upon receipt of the application to let them know:

- 1) We have reviewed the application;
- 2) the request is being reviewed;
- 3) our anticipated date for an answer on their request.

On the timeline for approvals I have set up an example to give everyone an idea of the targeted response time for requests. For example: All applications received by Friday 10/05/07 will have an ACC approval / variance / disapproval to the BOD and mgmt company by 10/12/07. We would then forward on the findings to the homeowner by 10/15/07. This gives them an answer within 10 days given no unusual circumstances. If a physical review or additional research is required we will allow for another week for that process and the ACC decision

would be finalized by 10/19/07 with the decision sent to the homeowner on 10/22/07. In addition to the initial contact to the homeowner announcing our receipt of the request, if more information is needed I will request that data or meet with them and let them know that the process will be pushed 1 week from the normal 10 day turn to 17 days to allow for the increased complexity in the case.

POOL COMMITTEE NEWS

It seems that summer came a little late this year and fall is just around the corner. Nevertheless, many of us are still enjoying the pool this time of year. While there will be no lifeguards on duty after Labor Day, the pool is still open for use. Stop by if you haven't already. If you need a key, email Pool@ScofieldRidge.org.

We have had several challenges with the pool this year, particularly with lifeguards. The HOA is aware and very concerned about this. As things currently stand, we will be putting the lifeguard and pool maintenance contract up for bid. We want the pool to be a place we all enjoy and don't have to worry about.

If you have any suggestions on how to improve the pool or pool area, we would like to hear them. Should we add a lane line for lap swimmers? Do we need to open the pool earlier in the morning so you can swim before work? Do you want to be part of the pool committee? Simply email Pool@ScofieldRidge.org.

A warm THANK YOU to all the great volunteers whose dedication past and present has helped make The Ridge at Scofield Farms such a wonderful community in which to live!

The Health of the Housing Market

Is the housing market going up or down? That is the question every buyer and seller wants to know the answer to. In response to this inquiry the business section of the American Statesman wrote on August 8, "Backed by healthy job growth, Central Texas' real estate market is expected to remain strong in 2008." Home sales data: Prices appreciated 11 percent in early 2007 compared with a year earlier. Home prices are likely to continue to appreciate substantially in the next 12 months. However, the mortgage lending has put a temporary damper on entry level buyers. So far this has not had a major effect in Austin lending. Our home continues to be the best ever investment of our lives.

The Scofield market has remained a strong market attractive by its professional and family clientele and convenient location between two freeways. Maximum marketing of homes by use of websites and the internet, flyers, newspapers, neighborhood publications, signs, open houses, professional and national real estate books are ways to successfully to bring homes on the market.

A seminar for homebuyers will be presented on Thursday, Sept. 27 at 6:00 pm in the Streetman Model Homes at Circle C. Free pizza and door prizes with free credit analysis and property portfolios will be given. You will get a total approach to home ownership from a real estate agent, a mortgage loan officer, and a homeowner's insurance agent.

Meet Your Neighbors

1. Maize Bend Drive: Judy and Charlie - Franchise experts: Charlie is supervisor for Glazing Saddles, a franchise of Krispy Kreme Donuts. His territory covers Dallas, Corpus Christi, San Antonio and Austin, but he stays mostly in Austin. Judy is his lifetime assistant.

2. Maize Bend Drive: Ruth and Patrick work as programmers for an outsourced Korean Company in gaming. Excel Race is one of their creations. Ruth and Patrick met at Carnegie-Mellon in Pittsburgh while in college studying computers. It was news to me that Austin is one of the top 4 cities in the US for gaming!

3. Maize Bend Drive: Chris & Anais: Austin is a hubbub of small technology companies. And Chris works at one of these hardly ever heard of companies that constitute a major portion of the Austin economy. Centaur Technology design microprocessors for the big companies. The chips are manufactured in Taiwan. Judy works out of her home most of the time for American Express Corporate Accounts.

4. Lynnville Trail: Amala and Tota have a nine month old son named Savith. They are from southern India and love to cook. The kitchen is an important place in the house. Tota travels internationally frequently due to his work for IBM Global. Amala makes master chips at Tappan Photo Mask.

5. Maize Bend Drive: Jane and Judd- Both are proud of their yard where they have cultivated a variety of shrubs and a beautiful burr oak tree. Jane Elizabeth feels fortunate that she lives so close to work at FreeScale. Judd works for a small software company Ticom Geometrics. Austin is a city with many, many smaller tech companies dotting the landscape.

6. Will Rogers Lane: Anju and Pravind are from the beautiful island of Mauritius off the east coast of Madagascar. The island is in the middle of the Indian Ocean, approximately 60 x 40 miles wide and has a population of 1.2 million people. Anju and Pravind recently got married about a year ago. They enjoy their beautifully landscaped yard.

Introduce Yourself....

I have enjoyed talking to everyone. It was a real treat to see the diversity in our neighborhood and to realize we are such a center of technology intelligencia. Please email me for the next issue of the Scofield Ridge newspaper. We all want to meet the members of our Scofield family. Please email your contributions to Molly Guthrie at MolGuthrie@yahoo.com

RECIPE FOR THE RIDGE

Compliments of a Chef right HERE in our neighborhood!
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Pasta alla Norma
Penne Pasta with Eggplant and Tomato Sauce

This has become a family favorite in our house. It comes from the traditional Sicilian cooking that we enjoyed while living in Italy. Most of the dishes there are very simple, but you must use quality ingredients to get the best end result. Enjoy!

16 oz penne pasta
6-9 oz Italian tomato sauce
1 medium sized eggplant, diced
2 oz grated baked ricotta cheese (if you can't find this, use regular ricotta salt and pepper
Fresh basil for garnish
vegetable oil

Preheat frying pan over med-high heat. One pan is hot, pour enough oil so that it is 1 inch deep. Add eggplant and fry until soft. Set aside.

Cook pasta as directed on box, but in heavily salted water. Drain, reserving some pasta water. Pour pasta back in pot and add the cheese. Mix quickly. Add tomato sauce, eggplant, pepper to taste, and mix again. Garnish with fresh basil. Serve immediately.

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Saving a little Money and a releasing a little less Carbon

Whether you believe that Global Warming is caused wholly by our release of carbon based gases into the atmosphere by the burning of fossil fuels or is simple a change in the Earth's natural processes with a token contribution by people, it is now hip to be **GREEN**. In this article we will look at a couple of ways to save energy within your home - and just as importantly - save a little money. We will look at two extremes, first, simply switching incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) and secondly, a long term approach by installing solar panels and connecting to the Austin Energy grid.

Compact Fluorescent Lamps

One of the simplest and most cost effective ways that a home owner can cut his electric bill is to replace his existing incandescent light bulbs with new CFLs. A CFL of equal luminous flux (brightness) will use one fourth the amount of electricity (60watts vs 14watts) and last for many more years. It is argued that a single CFL will save you over the life of the lamp \$30 dollars compared to an incandescent and save 2000 times its own weight in greenhouse gases. The initial cost is considerably more, almost double that of incandescent bulbs, but they can pay for themselves back within the first year. A good price for the bulbs would be around \$10 for a six-pack at either Lowe's or Home Depot.



Some drawbacks are a limited selection of sizes, odd shapes, inability to handle dimming switches, and a higher mercury content. Most of these problems have been addressed in the newest generation of CFLs.

Plan on saving 100s of Kw Hours of electricity every month!!

Solar Panels

A more long term approach to saving money while lowering your "Carbon footprint" would be with the installation of solar photovoltaics. As Austin Energy customers we are fortunate to have the opportunity to take advantage of City of Austin rebates that would cover up to 75% of the cost to install solar panel on existing structures, and furthermore have access to federal tax credits of up to \$2000. The solar panels work by collecting solar energy on the roof and converting it to electricity and connecting it with the City of Austin electrical Grid. You can use the energy from the solar panels to run the house, and use the City's when we need more, the best is that we "Sell" the extra back to the City. The break even point is said to be between 12-18 years, but the life expectancy of the panels is calculated to be between 60 to 80 years. The panels are weather resistant to softball sized hail.



We currently have at least two home owners in Scofield Farms with City of Austin approved solar installations and we can get a look at the cost and return on investment of Solar.

Cost:		Return
Parts and install	\$21,200	From August of 2006 to August of 2007
City Rebate*	-\$13,400	The User produced 4400 KwH of electricity.
Fed Tax credit	-\$2000	
Out of pocket Cost	\$5800	4400 x \$.12 = \$528 in one year!

At this rate it will take 11 years to recover the upfront cost, but everything after that point will be pure profit and even better -- 100% clean energy.

*The rebate is calculated based on the efficiency of the panels installed and the home must have a south facing roof without cover or trees. Visit www.austinenergy.com and select rebates for more information.



Rasha Zarif

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Home Maintenance Tasks For Sept 2007

Watch for year-end close-out sales on lawn and garden equipment

Paint interior rooms while it's still warm enough to leave windows open

Shampooing or replacing carpets

Check heating system pilot lights, and burners, etc.

Have the system serviced by a qualified professional if necessary

Clean and vacuum dust from vents, baseboard heaters and cold-air returns

Tour the outside of your house to make sure that soils around the foundation are properly graded. Soil should slope four to six inches for a distance of three feet out from the foundation walls

Inspect storm windows for any signs of deterioration and make necessary repairs

Scofield Farms Data

	Homes Sold	Avg Sales Price	Sales Per Sq Ft	Days on Market	List Price: Sale Price %
2005	155	\$198,519	\$89.37	94	97%
2006	151	\$205,075	\$94.04	50	98%
2007	81	\$222,506	\$100.70	32	99%

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