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# Willow Meadows News

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May 1998

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## June Meeting

The next meeting of the Willow Meadows Civic Club is Tuesday, June 2, 7:30 p.m. at the Willow Meadows Baptist Church. Please come and take part in what is going on in your neighborhood.

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## From The President

Greetings to all of you in Willow Meadows:

Hasn't the weather been wonderful this Spring? We have been blessed with the absence of hot and humid days. I know they are coming soon, but anytime we can get away with a few extra cool, dry days, we are truly blessed. Try to take advantage of this wonderful weather to do some extra yard projects. Do the things you don't normally do when it gets too hot: plant, landscape, trim trees, edge at the curb, fertilize, and weed the flower beds. If you try and do a few projects in the Spring, you can appreciate the fruits of your labor all summer long.

Cliffwood residents should be getting back to normal and restoring their yards after the recent sewer line modifications. Hopefully, many, if not all, of the run-off problems will be cured. After hearing the theories and scientific projections about what we should expect, I will anxiously await the reports of each household's experience during and after the next big rain.

Upon occasion, there are requests which are made by individuals to club officers regarding adding stop signs, traffic signals, or some other speed inhibitors (like the controversial speed humps), and the individuals are seeking to have officers join in the quest to obtain such devices. The Civic Club, and we hope all residents, are concerned about speeding in the neighborhood, and we need to look at our own speedometers as we rush off through the neighborhood to do errands. In regards to traffic control projects, please remember that the City of Houston has very specific criteria for such projects, including average speeds, traffic counts, etc., and we won't be able to change those rules. In addition, the speed humps have proven to split the community, as we found at previous meetings, so the Civic Club board should not be forced to choose sides, when in this case the City requires an individual to file the application and achieve the required percentage of petitioners. The Civic Club will continue to pursue projects which benefit the **majority of the neighborhood** and which are **achievable**. Our civic club has plenty of projects which can be accomplished for the general good of all members. Please keep that in mind and help us change what we can change with unified support.

Most sincerely,

Charles D. Rusciano

### 1998 Willow Meadows Civic Club Officers and Executive Board

President:	Charles Rusciano (721-3136)	Security:	Mac Leichtman (723-4492)
Vice President	Chris Brouwer (723-9235)	Beautification:	Jane Leslie (729-4918)
Treasurer:	Andrew Strong (723-6923)	Deed Restrictions:	Doug Koy (723-0067)
Secretary:	John Kirtley (728-3057)	Architecture:	Rob Chase (723-4878)

## TREASURER'S REPORT

This report summarizes the income statement for the Willow Meadows Civic Club through the first fiscal quarter, relative to our full year budget for 1998. As you know, our primary source of revenue is your dues, so please submit your annual dues of \$150 as soon as possible to: Willow Meadows Civic Club, P.O. Box 35551, Houston, TX 77235.

Category/Description	Jan. 1-Mar. 31, '98	1998 Budget
<b>REVENUES</b>		
Dues	\$ 72,611.89	\$81,000.00
Interest checking	0.00	0.00
Interest savings	686.89	4,000.00
Advertising	380.00	500.00
Other Income	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 72,611.89</b>	<b>\$85,500.00</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
Bank charge	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Donations	0.00	500.00
Miscellaneous	0.00	1,000.00
Mowing	1,158.32	4,400.00
Pest control	0.00	4,200.00
Postage	330.44	800.00
Printing	0.00	1,500.00
Security	15,700.86	62,803.44
Supplies	100.62	150.00
Legal Services	125.00	3,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 17,465.24</b>	<b>\$78,353.44</b>
<b>SURPLUS</b>	<b>\$ 55,146.65</b>	<b>\$7,146.56</b>

## NEWS ARTICLES WELCOME

We will always welcome any ideas or news you may have for the Willow Meadows newsletter. We believe this newsletter should be used for communicating anything of interest to our neighborhood. Please contact Chris Brouwer if you want to contribute a news item.

## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

This edition of the Willow Meadows newsletter had to go to print much earlier than usual due to extended schedule conflicts. We apologize if some of the information herein is somewhat out of date.

## AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Some people have called regarding the surveyor's marks recently found around the Meyer Park ponds and driving range. Please note that the driving range has been given notice to end their operations so that the property can be used for other commercial or residential projects. You may recall a civic club meeting last year where MC Development kindly shared some of their thoughts on potential retirement housing and additional stores in that area. As we went to press, MC Development advised us that no firm contracts are in place, and that the surveying was in regards to evaluating the removal of the hill at the driving range. You may have also noticed new realtor signs at Meyer Park, as they become more aggressive to seek new tenants for the vacant spaces in the shopping center.

Not far from us, you may have noticed Wolfe Nurseries is going out of business. We understand they are closing all of their Texas operations due to financial problems at their California base. Competition has been fierce and El Nino was reported to have caused them some problems, too. Wolfe used to contribute our Yard of the Month gift certificates, so we must find another source.

The Stella Link Shopping Center renovations are basically complete, and Food City has moved in. More tenants are supposedly lined up to occupy this rejuvenated center. We also noticed that Bellaire Café is renovating the old Jack in the Box location across the street. Meanwhile, you should be pleased by the renovations at the shopping center at Stella Link and Braeswood, where Sellers Brothers has moved into the old Apple Tree location. Across the bayou, the center that housed Food City is being renovated by Center America, with the first steps involving the removal of the small freestanding buildings at the front of the property which housed a barbecue restaurant, pharmacy and fast food restaurant. Look for big changes there.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

As always, we never seem to have enough volunteers, yet we get plenty of suggestions on things we should do in the neighborhood. Currently, we desperately need volunteers for the Civic Club Board. We welcome our new treasurer, Andrew Strong, who has replaced the hard working Dean Gore and his predecessor Joanne Gore at this important post. Since Andrew's appointment, we have received a few calls from volunteers to work as treasurer, so we will be working on training these new volunteers so that Andrew can assist in other areas of the Civic Club that also interest him. We never seem to have enough volunteers, so if you are curious about a particular position, or if you just have a few hours a month to volunteer, please contact any of the board members listed on the cover page. No prior civic club experience required! Expert training provided!

## **GARBAGE REMINDERS**

It is important to keep in mind the various rules and regulations regarding garbage pick-up and recycling. This information is provided to you in hopes that you will adhere to city ordinances and help the neighborhood achieve exemplary conduct reflecting pride in our neighborhood.

Our neighborhood garbage pick-up occurs once per week, with some residences scheduled for Tuesday and some for Friday. Please remember to abide by the rules set in place for the city's Solid Waste Department. Here are some of the most important rules and regulations:

1. Do not place garbage cans and bagged clippings and leaves on the curb until 6:00 p.m. the day before pick-up day. (Complaints about violations may be phoned in to the SW Division Office or the Community Outreach Inspector at 865-4177. Violators will be issued a first warning, then fines can be imposed from \$50 - \$2,000. It is not worth the risk.) **PLEASE ADHERE TO THE RULES.**
2. Yard clippings must be placed in separate bags. No other materials are to be placed in the bags--even paper is not allowed. The bags should not weigh more than 50 pounds, and the

bags should be placed at least 3 feet from the garbage cans.

3. Heavy trash is picked up on the fourth (4th) Wednesday of each month. On weeks where there is a Monday holiday, the pick-up day will be moved to the Thursday after the scheduled Wednesday pick-up. NOTE: Concrete, bricks, sheetrock, or plaster are not to be including in "heavy trash" pick-up.
4. Used motor oil and used oil filters only may be placed in the recycling bin. Place oil in a sealed plastic container (plastic milk or water jugs) and included in the recycling bin. Used tires are also permitted to be placed with the recycling bin.
5. DO NOT place "hazardous waste" materials in the recycling bin or in your garbage can. "Hazardous waste" includes antifreeze, batteries, fuel oil, paint, paint thinner, pesticides or household cleaners. (See the information below about the Westpark Consumer Recycling Center for how to dispose of these wastes.)

## **GARBAGE:**

We are a part of the Southwest Division of the Solid Waste Management Department. Main telephone number: 865-4100; SW Div. Office telephone number: 551-7300. Call the main number for general questions; call SW Div. number for specific information. The two key persons in the Solid Waste Department are Everett Bass (Director) and Charles Ross (Asst. Director). If you have any problems finding answers to special complaints, I recommend you call Marina Coryat at 865-4100. She is very helpful and enthusiastic about lending assistance.

If your garbage can is damaged, contact Assistant Director, Charles Ross at 551-7300. It will be repaired or replaced.

If your can is vandalized or stolen, report it to the Houston Police Department so that you can obtain a case number. With that case number, you can contact the Solid Waste Department and request replacement.

For those requiring assistance in placing their trash on the curb due to any disability, there is help available. Write to City of Houston Solid Waste Management Dept., 601 Sawyer, Ste. 720, Houston, Texas 77007. You will need to provide proof of disability, such as a note from your physician. A form will be provided for you to fill out and return so that special arrangements can be made to allow city personnel to come on to your property and take your trash to the curb.

### **RECYCLING:**

The recycling "hotline" is 865-4201. Call if you have any questions. Since there are certain restrictions, ask plenty of questions to make sure you comply with any restrictions. Please note that we are close to two of the four city recycling centers. The Westpark Recycling and Educational Center, located at 5815 Southwest Freeway (accessible from Westpark), is the closest. This center will accept deposits of "hazardous waste" from our residents. Bring a Texas drivers license or other ID with your address on it, or a utility bill. Please note that the Westpark Center is about to open an Educational facility where anyone can come to see what happens in the recycling process. A grand opening for the Educational Center will have occurred on April 20th . . . after publication of this newsletter. One of our residents, Henrietta Bell, has expressed great enthusiasm for the new education center and is planning to attend. Hopefully, she can report back to us at the next general meeting regarding this new facility.

### **DEED RESTRICTIONS**

We have noticed that there are many major remodeling projects throughout the neighborhood. We must remind everyone that the original deed restrictions ARE STILL IN FORCE in Willow Meadows. That means set back limitations, second story restrictions, and all other aspects of the original deed restrictions are still in force. Any previous violation does not set a precedent and indicate the Deed Restrictions are void.

All plans which affect the outward appearance of the house MUST be reviewed by the Architectural Committee. While some people have taken their chances and proceeded without review, they risk to have the City later condemn their project and they can force it to be removed. Regarding one home which constructed an addition beyond their setback limitations, we understand the City of Houston Legal Department originally decided not to pursue the case

because of errors the City had made at the beginning, but we understand they are reinvestigating this case.

The Deed Restriction Modernization Project continues! It takes longer than we thought, with many back and forth communications with the lawyers who are reviewing the small details of the project, but we want to get it right. Our latest projections are that we will be printing the final deed restrictions for mail out at the end of May.

If you have any other questions regarding the deed restriction project, or if you have some time to help us in the final steps of this project, please feel free to call any of the Civic Club board members.

A Deed Restriction Complaint Form is included in this newsletter so that you can indicate any suspected infractions of deed restrictions. Please remember that the Civic Club board members are not searching the neighborhood looking for infractions, but if you report anything, we will investigate and take appropriate actions.

### **RECYCLING SCHEDULE**

The schedule for recycling in the coming months is as follows:

May 12 & 27 (Wednesday following Memorial Day),  
June 9 & 23, July 7 & 21, August 4 & 18.

Acceptable materials for curbside recycling include aluminum and tin cans, #1 and #2 plastics, glass bottles and jars, telephone books, newspapers, magazines and used motor oil.

Don't forget: Heavy trash pick-up is the fourth Wednesday of every month. It is a violation of City ordinance to put heavy trash out for pick-up earlier than the weekend preceding scheduled collection. The schedule for the coming months is:

May 28 (Thursday following Memorial Day), June 24,  
July 22 and August 26.

### **ADVERTISING**

We would like to remind you that the Willow Meadows newsletter will accept advertising to help defray the costs of printing and other civic club expenses. If you have a local business or provide a

service useful to our neighbors, you may want to let us know about it. We use the following advertising structure, and we generally go to print the first week of February, May, August and November.

- Half page: \$75 each edition
- Quarter page: \$50 each edition
- Eighth page: \$30 each edition

Please contact Chris Brouwer at 723-9235 if you are interested to place an advertisement.

## CIVIC CLUB DUES

This is a reminder that Civic Club Dues are payable at the first of each year. We are off to a solid start, with more than 63% of all households paying within the first three months. This is in line with last year at this time, but in the end, we finished 1997 with only 67% of neighbors paying, compared to 70% in 1996. How about the rest of you? You too benefit from the constable patrol, as well as the mosquito spraying, the esplanade maintenance, and this newsletter, as well as all the behind-the-scenes work by your volunteers.

If you haven't paid your dues yet, or if you misplaced your dues notice, please make your check for \$150 payable to Willow Meadows Civic Club, and mail it to P.O. Box 35551, Houston, TX 77235. Don't forget to indicate how many security stickers you would like.

For your information, here are the percentages of dues paying members by street through March. How is your street doing?

Breakwood: 53%	O'Meara: 60%
Cheena: 77%	Osby: 59%
Cliffwood: 60%	Piermain: 73%
Firestone: 72%	Sarong: 67%
Greenwillow: 66%	Silverwood: 85%
Knickerbocker: 64%	Waynesboro: 50%
Lemac: 61%	Wigton: 57%
Lymbar: 90%	Willowgrove: 74%
McDermed: 57%	Willowisp: 33%
Meyerwood: 52%	Woodvalley: 48%
Nenana: 69%	



### March: 4707 O'Meara

By Jane Leslie, new Beautification chairperson

I have recently been asked to fill this position which for the past two years has been well served by Harry Boswell and Randall Doe. I love to work in my yard and am pleased to see so many of our neighbors, both longtime and newer residents, updating tired old landscapes. A well-landscaped and maintained yard enhances the curb appeal of a home and increases the property value of that home as well as neighboring homes.

Our Yard of the Month (for Mid-March – Mid-April) was 4707 O'Meara. We will get back on track and award the next Yard of the Month in May. Wolfe's Nursery, our donor of the gift certificates we had been awarding to the Yard of the Month recipient, has gone into bankruptcy and is closing. I am working to locate a new donor.

#### GARDEN TIPS:

While we continue to enjoy this pleasant spring weather, we all know that another hot summer is just around the corner. It's time to fertilize your St. Augustine and is also a good time to re-sod or plug any areas that might need it. Watch out for chinch bugs as it gets hot and treat your yard with products such as Dursban or Diazinon to kill them. Also watch out for grub worms which feed on the root systems of grass and other plants. Dursban or Diazinon can also be used to treat for grubs.

This is a good time to work beds and add organic enrichments before planting for the summer. You can buy such additives as peat and humus, shredded bark mulch and sand, by the bag at area garden centers. It is also a good time to fill low places in your lawn. A half-and-half mixture of top-soil and

sand can be ordered from one of the local soil companies. They also carry garden mixes to build or enhance existing beds and mulches. I recently purchased soils from a local supplier on South Main and found that they had only a 2 yard minimum for free delivery. They will also separate a load, which allows you to purchase two different soils or mulches in one order.

The area nurseries and the garden centers at local home improvement stores like Home Depot and Builder's Square are all brimming with summer color plants. Planting now before it gets so hot will allow plants to build more mature root systems and help them withstand the heat of summer.

Happy gardening!

## 1998 CIVIC CLUB MEETINGS

JUNE 2

SEPTEMBER 1

DECEMBER 1

## SECURITY REPORT

Please note that Mac Leichtman has graciously taken over the position of Security chairperson from Jane Leslie. Mac would like your feedback on how often you see the constables during their patrol hours, and he will focus on good reporting from the constables. With summer around the corner, Sergeant Cerda once again reminds us to be watchful of individuals in the neighborhood mowing yards. Driving around the area with a lawnmower in the back of a car or truck provides an excellent cover to someone with a criminal intent. Also remember to keep your garage doors shut and not to leave lawn equipment, bicycles and other easily stolen items out and unattended. We will also probably see a lot of garage sale activity soon, and that invites criminal activity.

Overall, we have had a pretty stable three months, with few serious incidents. Mac wishes to express thanks to Precinct 7, and Sgt. Cerda for continued cooperation and responsive assistance with information. There were two reports of significance during this reporting period:

- 1) March 17<sup>th</sup> at 2:15 P.M. – 4800 Block of McDermed @ Willowgrove. Report of two black males in a small black vehicle, driving by a nanny walking a baby. One of the male suspects demanded money. The nanny told them she did not have any. She says one suspect made a move towards the baby. She ran with the baby to the nearest house. The suspects drove off without money or the child, traveling on Willowgrove towards W. Bellfort. This incident, though very scary, had a safe ending.
- 2) April 16<sup>th</sup> – 4400 Block of Sarong. Automobile was stolen from residence.

There were a total of 130 citizen contacts with Precinct 7 Constables. Of these, the two serious matters are noted above. Others consisted of suspicious person calls, suspicious vehicle calls, various false alarms, and vacation watches.

Please keep your eyes and ears open. When in doubt, call. It never hurts to have the Constables come out and check out suspicious persons.

## USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

PRECINCT 7 CONSTABLES:	<b>643-6602</b>
EMERGENCY:	<b>911</b>
POISON CONTROL:	<b>654-1701</b>
MAYOR'S OFFICE:	<b>247-1888</b>
MARTHA WONG, DIST. C:	<b>247-2004</b>
ODOR HOTLINE:	<b>783-4348</b>
WATER/SEWER REPAIRS:	<b>754-0600</b>
NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION:	<b>525-2525</b>
TRAFFIC LIGHT/SIGN REPAIRS:	<b>865-4000</b>

# INSURANCE DISCOUNTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Mac Leichtman was speaking to the Constables the other day and a discussion arose regarding insurance discounts for homeowners who add security devices or take other measures to help secure their homes. The Constables are available to conduct inspections and provide your insurance agent with substantiation for some discounts which are offered under the guidelines of the Texas Department of Insurance. Using the TDI internet site ([www.tdi.state.tx.us/](http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/)), the following information is provided to encourage you to consult with your insurance agent about whether you are getting discounts to which you may be entitled, as well as what you can do to achieve more discounts. It is suggested that you call your agent and go over some of the following. If the Constable's office may be of further assistance to document certain matters which entitle you to discounts, they expressed a willingness to serve you.

## Homeowners Discount Checklist

Check the discounts for which you might be eligible.

### **Mandatory discounts for homes meeting eligibility standards:**

Electronic burglar alarm system	15%
Burglar-proofing – dead-bolt locks, secondary locking devices, etc.	5%
Sprinkler System	8%

### **Optional discounts for burglar alarm systems that do not qualify for the mandatory discount, as follows:**

Central station	12%
Remote alarm	10%
Local alarm	2%

### **Other optional discounts (up to percentages shown):**

Combination fire, smoke and burglar alarm systems	4-15%
Sprinkler systems (not eligible for mandatory discount)	8%
Theft prevention - Property identification discount	5%
Fire extinguishers	2%
<i>Building features:</i>	
Age of house	15%
Noncombustible roof	2%
Care & condition of premises	2%
Claims experience for three consecutive years	5%
Companion policy in same company or group	5%
House insured to full replacement cost	5%
Senior citizens discount	5%

*\* These discount percentages are not mandatory for Lloyds and reciprocal exchange companies.*

All deed restriction complaints are reviewed and appropriate steps taken for enforcement. Complainants are advised in writing of the Board's actions on their complaints. Please mail in the form below to report suspected violations.

**WILLOW MEADOWS CIVIC CLUB  
P.O. BOX 35551  
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77235  
DEED RESTRICTIONS COMPLAINT FORM**

NAME OF  
COMPLAINANT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

NATURE OF COMPLAINT: (Please be specific - Give Names, Addresses, Dates, Details)

If legal action would be required, are you willing to be a complainant and appear in court as a witness if absolutely necessary? \_\_\_\_\_

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