

ONION CREEK MEADOWS property owners association

P.O. Box 434

Manchaca, Texas 78652

Volume 2012

Neighborhood Newsletter

Issue 2- June

READ ME- I'M YOUR NEWSLETTER

With school out and longer daylight hours, more families will be out enjoying the neighborhood, so **please drive slowly** as you go through our community.

We are very pleased to have elected Board members who will be serving us for the first time, and we introduce them to you on page 3. You and your families benefit from the hours your Board puts in on behalf of Onion Creek Meadows. When asked, we hope you will support their efforts. It costs just \$20. (that's \$1.66 a month!) to join your neighborhood association.

The Boone-Heep project moves very slowly through the permit process. An update on its status is on page 4. Only 54 of our 200+ OCM community signed the petition opposing the developer's present plan. Thankfully, over 200 Arroyo Doble neighbors registered their disapproval, so the commissioners' court will understand there is significant opposition.

Phyllis Stegall, Editor
pjstegall@austin.rr.com

Onion Creek Meadows May Have Its Own Informal 4th of July Street Party

More details will be sent out on the Yahoo group list (onioncreekmeadows@yahoo.com) when available or you can call any Board member (see page 7) later on for more information.

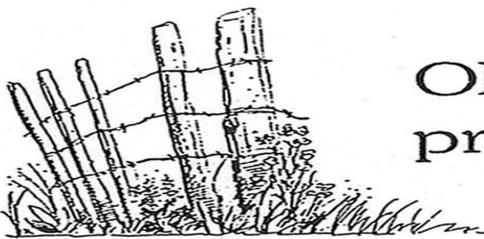
HAPPY 236TH BIRTHDAY, USA



The annual Red, White and Buda Independence Day Celebration and Fireworks Show

A Children's Parade which will begin at Garcia's Restaurant and end at City Park will kick off the holiday festivities on Wednesday, July 4th, at 10 am. Decorated bikes, wagons, scooters, strollers and more will make their way down Main Street. Free children's activities include inflatable play stations and an on-stage magic show from 10 til noon. Food will be available for purchase at various concessions.

Beginning at 6 p.m., The Trishas, The Kevin Smith Band, and the Keith Kelso Band will provide a varied musical program for the whole family. Bring your picnic, a blanket or lawn chairs to City Park. Then, get ready at 9:30 pm for *the biggest free fireworks show that the City of Buda has ever held, 24 minutes of spectacular pyrotechnics...to delight...and thrill all ages...*



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REDUCE YOUR CHANCES OF BEING A VICTIM

Sgt. Ruben Garcia, a veteran of 19 years with the Travis County Sheriff Department, told those who attended our May 6th annual Homeowners Meeting that the best way to fight crime in the neighborhood is to **KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS**. Although Onion Creek Meadows is considered "relatively very safe", Sgt. Garcia urged us to take normal precautions to protect our property and lives. The majority of residential crimes actually occur in the daytime. Don't think you do not need to lock your door because you are only going to be gone for a few minutes. Criminals can be in and out of your home with your valuables **in less than 15 minutes**. Security systems signs deter to some degree but many people forget to turn the system on when they leave, and thieves know that.

"Car hopping" is a favorite of groups which consist of a driver plus four others. The driver slowly moves down the street while pairs cover both sides of the street checking for unlocked car doors. They may score change, medications, computers, phones, jewelry, and wallets or purses. The car hoppers average four subdivisions a night and may net \$500-700. a night from their car prowls. He advises you to **empty your car of valuables at night, and LOCK YOUR VEHICLE**.

Sgt. Garcia also highly recommends that **you engrave some identification on your valuables and copy down serial numbers**. Should possessions be stolen, those numbers can be entered in a national data base (NDB) where they will stay for 90 days. If thieves try to sell your items to, say, a pawn shop, the shop owner checks the NDB, identifies the items as stolen and contacts the police. Serial numbers from fire arms stay in the NDB forever.

We have had our first home burglary of the year on the west end of Turley where thieves kicked in the back door and stole valuables. The owners were out of town. A car at Blackwell and Old San Antonio Rd. was broken into overnight recently, and its contents which included a GPS were cleaned out. Sometimes, no matter what you do, the bad guys are going to get you, but we can all make it harder for them to be successful by taking every precaution. Keep your valuables hidden.

NEW FIRE STATION IS OPEN

The long-awaited Manchaca Volunteer Fire Department's new 12,000-square-foot headquarters, located at 655 W. FM 1626, is now serving our community. The 1626 station contains living quarters for firefighters, equipment, training facilities and fire trucks, meaning firefighters will be there 24/7. Four paid firefighters will be on duty round the clock, as well as twelve part-timers. As a result, the tanker which was housed on Onion Creek Drive has been moved. We now have no fire equipment at that site.

MVFD needs recruits (over 18 years old) for firefighting positions. An auxiliary group, not actually involved in firefighting, needs volunteers for other staff positions such as photography, post-disaster family assistance, web upkeep and office staffing.



"We could certainly slow down the aging process if it had to work its way through Congress."

Will Rogers (1879-1935)

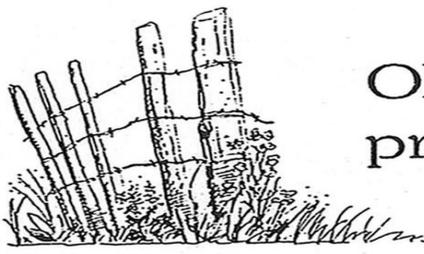
FIRE HYDRANTS 101

What look like fire hydrants in our neighborhood are actually "flush valves". They are not for fire-fighting, and are not operational. MVFD uses a fire-fighting foam which expands 10-fold to smother flames, and tankers which holds about 5 minutes worth of water. Other sources of water are brought to the scene as needed.

Chief Chris Barron urges you to CALL 911 as soon as a fire starts, BEFORE you try to douse it yourself. Fires double and triple within minutes, and minutes are important when trying to control a blaze.

Our thoughts and prayers are with our men and women who serve our country here and overseas. We thank them and wish them a safe and healthy return home.

* **Because of the proximity of the new fire station to us, our community is now classified as PPC Class 3 for fire insurance purposes. This new class will lower the premium you pay for fire coverage. Call your insurance company to adjust your policy coverage and save money.** *



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INTRODUCING THE NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR ONION CREEK MEADOWS PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION BOARD

Tony Lopez (with help from his wife **Luz**) will serve out a one year unexpired term. He has agreed to take over the **Neighborhood Watch Program** from **Joellen Simmons** who chaired it faithfully for 12 years. Tony also has agreed to help out on the National Night Out committee. Native Texans, Tony and Luz are originally from Eagle Pass and moved to 13105 Wild Turkey Drive in 2003. Their three children, now grown and living away, are Monica who lives and works in Austin, Yvette in Katy, and Tony Jr. in Pflugerville. Tony Jr. has blessed them with their only grandchild, one year old Maya Nicole. Luz works for the IRS, and Tony for the City of Austin. When they are not jogging or bicycling around the neighborhood, Tony plays softball on a team, and Luz loves dancing. Asked if he loved dancing too, Tony laughed and said "I follow her." What we didn't know was that four years in a row, both Luz and Tony have cycled the 110 mile *Tour de Cure* from San Antonio to Austin in support of diabetes research.

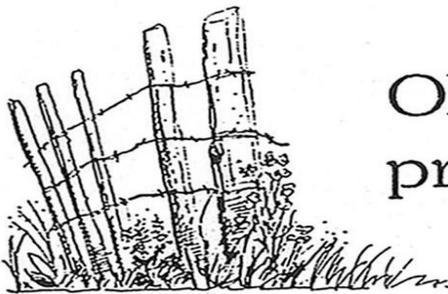
Kelly Mighell who will serve a three year term as a general Board member has lived at 13202 Algerita with her daughter **Ally** since 2001. An "Air Force brat," Kelly lived in Houston for 34 years before moving to Austin. She worked for Continental Airlines for 25 years, but since the merger now works customer service for United at Austin- Bergstrom Airport. If you fly United, she may be the one helping you on your way. Kelly loves doing arts and crafts and watching movies, and has a dream of one day visiting London. Once she won a car in a contest but didn't believe it, thinking it was a joke. She found out later, too late, she actually won the car. When asked why she volunteered to serve on the Board, she said "I haven't given my fair share and decided it was time I did." Love that!

Andrea Bright-Fontana of 304 Turley was elected to a three-year term and has agreed to work on the Deed Restrictions Committee. A native of Michigan, she hold a degree from Michigan State and an MA from Texas State and is also an American Sign Language Interpreter. She and husband **Ryan** (who works for Texas Parks and Wildlife have 3 sons; **Ethan** 8, **Lucas** 5, and **Ryder** 7 1/2 months old. The family enjoys camping, visiting the lakes, hiking, and spending time with friends. Something most people don't know?: "I originally went to school to major in criminal justice with the hopes of being an undercover cop. My, how things change."

John Zimmerman , formerly Vice President, has stepped up to fill the vacant President's spot, and **DeDe Whittaker** replaces John as our new Vice President.

FIREWORKS ARE PERMITTED THIS YEAR

Though last summer's heat prevented Travis County residents from celebrating the Fourth of July with Roman candles and sparklers, **fireworks will not be banned this Independence Day**, county officials said. The Travis County Fire Marshal's office released a statement that said **the office would not restrict sales as the county was not experiencing drought conditions**. But Travis County Fire Marshal Hershel Lee warned residents that they should still take precautions when using fireworks. "It has been awhile since our last beneficial rainfall, and the county is slowly drying out," Lee said in the statement. "With high humidity weather, fires have not been a big problem yet. **As summer begins, we want everyone to be safe while using fireworks, or leave the fireworks to professionals.**" Firework sales are legal from June 24 through July 4.



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BOONE-HEEP UPDATE

County Commissioner Karen Huber's office has updated us about the 344 acre mixed-use development south of OCM toward Buda: "According to Transportation and Natural Resources, they have not seen an update since January when (TNR) let the developers know their proposed alignment with SH 45 would not meet County standards, and they would be limited in their development off of Horsethief Trail, given the constraints of that roadway's size and access through the flood plain. The application will reach its one year lifespan around July 20th."

Within the past month, a petition registering strong opposition from both OCM and the Arroyo Doble neighborhoods expressing concern about the damage the project would have to Onion Creek and the heavy traffic the project would bring (estimated at up to 8,000 cars a day) was signed by nearly 300 residents of both communities and forwarded to the County review staff. The developer must reply to this opposition.

LIFE'S RHYTHMS

Ron and Joellen Simmons on Onion Creek Dr. celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary this month. They have lived here since 1979.

Marilyn Buckland on Vinyard is excited about a first granddaughter expected in August.

A species of butterfly never before seen in this area was spotted in **Winnie and Maynard Spitz's** yard on Onion Creek Dr. recently: *Xami Hairstreak*.

Ron Ralph 's recent 70th birthday celebration was made extra special by a visit from his sister who flew in from California.

Skip and Val Anderson have lived on Onion Creek Dr. since 2003. Val works for the State and Skip is a self-employed contractor. (see service shopping list)

HANDY PHONE NUMBERS

Police/Fire 911
Acting OCMPOA President **John Zimmerman 282-1371**
Aqua Texas emergency calls **(877) 987-2782**
Non-emergency Sheriff calls **(512) 974-0845**

Non-emergency Police 311

Please thank the **Volunteers** who delivered this newsletter to your door: **Marilyn Buckland, Debra Tompkins, Sherry Krupinski, Angela Duhon, Robin Field, Lee and Debbie Rapp, Pat Nixon, Robert Walker and Max Moser.**

SERVICE SHOPPING LIST

Angie's List has reached iconic status nationally as a source of reliable service providers. Here is a partial list of local providers (in some cases, OCM residents) suggested from time to time by neighbors on our Yahoo list. We'll call it our Onion List.

Plumbing Chris Burris
736-0649
(this is a phone # correction)

Handyman Services Rob Walker*
Small home repairs 786-7768
7

Grass cutting/trimming Robert Walker*
699-3533

Tile and masonry artisan,
Residential painting/carpentry
Small engine repair Skip Anderson*
291-1939

Notary Public (will travel) Deanna Limon
282-6315
deanna.limon@yahoo.com

A/C (Heating and Air) Chris Price**
376-0277

Window Glass Repair Paul Danna
801-9944

*Onion Creek Meadows residents

** We feel compelled to note that Chris Price of Beagle Heating and Air was mentioned by 5 different responders as being prompt, competent and honest.

"NO DROUGHT" DECLARED

At its meeting on March 22, the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District's Board of Directors declared a **No-Drought condition for the aquifers within the District, effective immediately.** The second of the area's two groundwater drought indicators – the water level in the Lovelady monitor well – has been rising steadily because of the extraordinarily wet winter and spring. The other indicator, sustained flow rate at Barton Springs, moved above its threshold in late January, but both indicators need to be above designated thresholds to emerge from drought. The District declared a groundwater drought on April 28, 2011, with mandatory water-use restrictions being enforced since then.

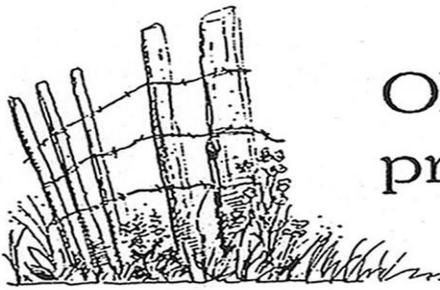
In No-Drought status, groundwater users are encouraged to maintain conservation practices BY REDUCING USUAL WATER USAGE BY 10%, but water use restrictions are lifted.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

We currently have 92 paid Memberships in the Onion Creek Meadows Property Owners' Association.

Well over 100 households have not invested \$20. for a year's membership in a group that serves and protects the neighborhood they live in. We welcome your ideas about how to increase our membership.

Dues paid NOW are good through June 2013!!



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Ida Mae Carpenter 1924-2012

Longtime Onion Creek Meadows resident Ida Mae Carpenter of 13105 Shawnee passed away on April 30th surrounded by her family. Born Ida Mae O'Loughlin in Geneva, Iowa, she married Charles Carpenter in 1944 when he completed his training as a Naval aviator. Ida Mae and Charlie, who saw WWII action in the Pacific, chose Texas as their home after the war, and his career took them to many places across the state. A naturally athletic woman with a knack for golf, Ida Mae sadly contracted polio in 1956 which left her paralyzed and wheel-chair bound. With great strength and resolve, and the love and dedication of her husband, she raised four boys and two girls.

The Carpenters bought two lots in OCM in the early '70s at 13101 and 13103 Shawnee when there were very few houses out here, and later purchased a third at 13105. With permission from the developer, Charlie tapped into the water lines to bring water to the trees he planted on the vacant lots. In 1985 they moved into the house at 13105 for which Charlie had acted as General Contractor while living temporarily on Old San Antonio Rd. After Charlie died in 1989, Ida Mae lived alone in their home for the next 23 years, testimony to her courage and independent spirit.

Preceded in death by her husband of 45 years, Charlie, and a daughter Christine Gautier, she is survived by Cathryn Carpenter Luhrman of Austin, and sons Charles of Anchorage, Alaska; Michael of Fulshear, TX; Dennis of Dallas, and Kevin of Austin; 21 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren. Ida Mae was laid to her eternal rest on May 4th in Assumption Catholic Cemetery in Austin.

FREE PET MICROCHIPPING AND TAGS

The City of Austin's Animal Services Office is kicking off a citywide program offering members of the Austin and Travis County communities free pet I.D. tags and microchips to help keep pets out of the animal shelter system. The free I.D. tags, collars and HomeAgain Microchips will be offered to all pet owners in the community from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily at the Austin Animal Center in Central East Austin at 7201 Levander Loop.

Public service announcements will be made throughout the community through June 2012, highlighting the need and importance of identifying pets.

Last year, only 30% of the 7,000 stray dogs that ended up at the animal shelter were reunited with their families. Many animals arrive in good health and with collars on, suggesting that they are some person's missing pet. Without any identification on the pet there is no way to notify the owners. The animals wait the legally required three-day holding period, often scared and grieving, and then move through the shelter system and become available for adoption....or not.

"THE CITY IS HERE NOW"

"You came here to get away from city life. Well, guess what? The city is here now," commented Garry Brown, Chief of Staff for County Commissioner Karen Huber's Office, with a smile, as we talked at the May OCMPOA annual meeting about encroaching Estancia and Boone-Heep development which will bring increased traffic.

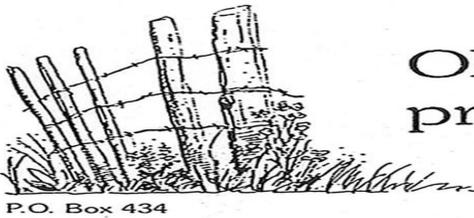
Twenty-four acres at the corner of S. 1st and FM1626 are being covered with **296** luxury apartment homes called Colonial Grand at CityView.

Forty-three acres of the old Adams Extract property have been sold to developers who are planning **924** units. The apartment homes will occupy the rear portion of the tract fronting on Old San Antonio Road, FM 1626 and Onion Creek Parkway. Located within the complex will be a public street between Onion Creek Parkway and FM 1626.

And yet our request for a traffic light at Old San Antonio Rd. and FM1626 has been denied as unnecessary!!!

BRIDGE OVER ONION CREEK

The design for the new two-lane bridge on Old San Antonio Road to parallel the single lane existing one will begin this fall, but construction which will take about nine months will not be complete until 2014, according to Garry Brown, Chief of Staff in County Comm. Karen Huber's office. Some of the right-of-way land for the new bridge has not yet been acquired.



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From the States- man:

“The number of new private water wells being drilled in **Austin** is increasing as more homeowners become frustrated with dry, dead lawns due to city watering restrictions. Despite higher rain levels this year compared to last, Austin remains under **Stage 2 watering restrictions**, which for many homeowners is not enough to keep their grass green. They are hiring local companies to drill private wells on their property to source water from the northern **Edwards Aquifer**. For them, this means green lawns and a reduced summer water bill - **but what does this mean for the rest of Austin’s water supply?**

The **Austin American-Statesman** reports that, according to the Texas Water Development Board, 153 new wells have been built since 2006, with 47 built in 2011. The majority of these new residential wells have popped up in **Tarrytown, Pemberton Heights, and Old Enfield**. It seems that a private water well is the hottest new amenity a West Austin property can boast, retailing anywhere from \$18,000 and \$32,000 within the city limits. **Mack Brown** himself has drilled his own well.....Drilling in this northern segment is unregulated, in contrast to the heavily regulated **Barton Springs** segment.” NOTE: *We are prohibited from drilling private wells*

* * * * *
* **A THOUSAND THANK** *
* **YOU** *
* *All of us here in our OCM* *
* *neighborhood owe a huge* *
* *debt of gratitude to Joellen* *
* *Simmons and to Winnie and* *
* *Maynard Spitz, who retired* *
* *from the OCMPOA Board in* *
* *May. All three carried the ball* *
* *on so many issues for so* *
* *many years and simply* *
* *made OCM a better, safer* *
* *place FOR US ALL.* *
* * * * *

Read Your Water Bill Closely?

Our April and May water bills included an extra charge called “Regional Pass-through Gallonage Charge.” Apparently, **Aqua** has gone ahead and added this new charge already as part of their rate increase request, the one many of us wrote protest letters against. State law allows private water companies to raise rates **before** they’ve been approved by regulators.

A few residents reported that when they called Aqua to inquire they were given various explanations, including that *Aqua had to buy water from someone else for Onion Creek Meadows*. When told that we had our own wells, the Aqua staffer said she’d have to check on that.

In a telephone survey by Aqua recently, OCM resident **Virginia Dragon** was asked what she would say to the President of Aqua if he were to ask her about their service: “I told her that I would ask him to be more customer-oriented, to remember that it is the customer who uses the water and pays the bill, and that (customers) need and want better service.” On a scale of one to 10, Virginia rated most Aqua’s customer relations and services as a 5. Do you think Aqua is listening?

Monarch, another private water utility, recently settled for a 14% rate increase with Buda and Kyle instead of the **62%** they sought. This came only after *months* of negotiations. In a statement censuring the water utility, city officials said that “Monarch is not welcome in the City of Kyle” because it provides “poor, expensive service.” Sound familiar?

On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress, seeking to promote national pride and unity, adopted our national flag. “Resolved: that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation.”

WHAT’S YOUR HURRY?

The speed limit on Turley and Onion Creek Drive is 30 mph, not 50, as some drivers seem to think. We have more families with young children living here in OCM now, so please **slow down** and watch for “children at play” to avoid a tragedy.

You may have noticed that the 30 mph speed limit sign on Turley has been moved closer to Old San Antonio Rd. Transportation and Natural Resources (TNR) has placed the sign 50’ from OSA, whereas it was 150’. The nearer placement *should* remind drivers to slow down sooner.

In reply to our query, TNR said they have looked at installing a 4-way stop at Turley and Mystic a couple of times in the past. According to them, it doesn’t warrant a 4-way stop. *All-way stops cannot be used for speed control*, the law reads.

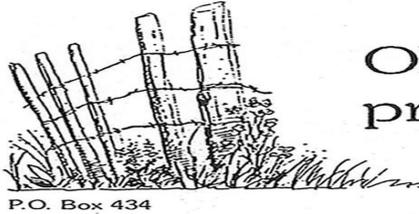
THE SOLUTION TO THE SPEEDING PROBLEM IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD LIES WITH EACH DRIVER.

Manchaca or Menchaca?

Retired State District Judge **Bob Perkins** is on a crusade to replace the spelling of Manchaca Road with its original and correct spelling of Menchaca. “It is not right that a guy would put his life on the line (referring to Capt. Jose Menchaca who was a veteran of the battle of San Jacinto and fought with Sam Houston) and have his name spelled wrong. If you are going to honor the man by naming a road after him, at least spell his name right.” We’ll see how that goes....

HELP PREVENT ROLLING BLACKOUTS

Warren Lasher, Director of System Planning for ERCOT, says that consumers can help by changing their habits from 4 to 7 p.m. Lasher suggests you turn up thermostats a couple of degrees, turn off pool pumps and don’t do laundry or use dishwashers during those three heavy-use hours.



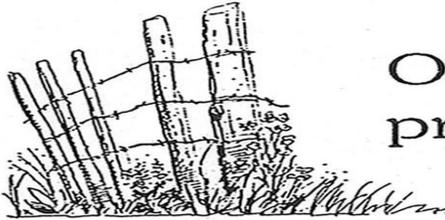
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BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Zimmerman	Board President, Aqua Texas, SH45	282-1371, cell 921-0822, johnz3000@yahoo.com	
DeDe Whitaker	Board Vice President, Deed Restriction Chair	280-4270, doroathome@sbcglobal.net	
Sherry Krupinski	Board Treasurer, Welcome Committee, Alert Back-up	280-1144, sherrykrupinski@yahoo.com	
Jim Cullen	Board Secretary, Database, Membership	447-8201, jcullen@austin.rr.com	
Phyllis Stegall	Board Member, Newsletter Editor, Alert System, Yahoo Group	291-0202, pjstegall@austin.rr.com	
Debra Tompkins	Board Member, Nominating Committee	282-2380, deblou4@juno.com	
Andrea Bright Fontana	Board Member, Deed Restrictions	577-6368, abrightfontana@gmail.com	
Kelly Mighell	Board Member, National Night Out, Activities	291-0667, keanmi5@att.net	
Tony Lopez	Board Member, Block Watch Captain, National Night Out	291-4992, lucym165@yahoo.com	
Robin Field	Garage Sale, Heep Ranch Committee	569-9648, robin_302@yahoo.com	
Ron Ralph	Heep Ranch Development, County Commissioner	280-9648, ronralph@austin.rr.com	



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MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM (From July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013)

Onion Creek Meadows Property Owners Association
P.O. Box 434
Manchaca, TX 78652

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Date: _____

Lot(s) For Each Per Year Total*

Property Owner Membership: _____ X \$20.00 = _____

*Multiple lot owners may choose to pay (1) the minimum \$20 dues for a single lot and one membership vote or (2) \$20 for each additional lot which entitles you to an additional vote.

Join your **ONIONCREEKMEADOWS@YAHOOGROUPS.COM**

Here is a useful (and often very busy) on-line forum to share your neighborhood news directly neighbor-to-neighbor, such as offering free or for sale items or services, sharing seeds and plants and gardening advice, locating lost and found pets or other items, looking for household help or services, asking questions about area concerns, making announcements or sharing information you think others might be interested in. Anyone living in Onion Creek Meadows and its surrounding neighborhoods is welcome to sign up.

This site is monitored for content and appropriateness by two moderators. Join now at **onioncreekmeadows@yahoo.com**.

Get OCMPOA Alerts

If you are interested in reporting or receiving information about unusual or suspicious activity in the Onion Creek Meadows area, be sure your email address is on **ocmpoalertlist@gmail**. This is a free valuable service available to anyone living in OCM. Your email address will not be shared with anyone else.

911 Emergencies

In an emergency your **first** call is to **911**. Make sure that your house has numbers easily readable from the street, especially at night, and that lights are on outside to guide the emergency crews. If possible, have someone outside to help direct emergency vehicles exactly where help is needed.

Non-Emergencies

The **non-emergency** Sheriff's Department number is **974-0845** to use if you want to notify them you will be out of town and would like them to keep a close watch on your house. When you call, wait out the options until a live voice comes on the line. Ask your neighbors to keep an eye out too.