

ONION CREEK MEADOWS property owners association

P.O. Box 434

Manhaca, Texas 78652

Volume 2013

Neighborhood Newsletter

Issue 1- March

Read Me I'm Your Newsletter

"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart." In this issue of your neighborhood newsletter we are singing the praises of **VOLUNTEERS** because they are the backbone of our community. Some are leaving; others are just climbing on Board. Anthropologist Margaret Mead once said *"Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."* Your neighbors who volunteer their time to change things that don't work and to add things that enhance our way of life make Onion Creek Meadows a better place to live for all of us. Throughout the newsletter you will find stories about volunteers who make a difference in our neighborhood. Join the fun. *Consider being one.*

As always, we welcome **your** ideas about ways to keep Onion Creek Meadows the great place to live that it is.

Phyllis Stegall, Editor
pjstegall@austin.rr.com

ANNUAL MEETING ONION CREEK MEADOWS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

May 5th from 2-4 p.m.

At the new MVFD Hall on FM 1626

Join in to have a say in the future of our community, and **renew friendship with neighbors over some grilled hotdogs and drinks afterwards.**

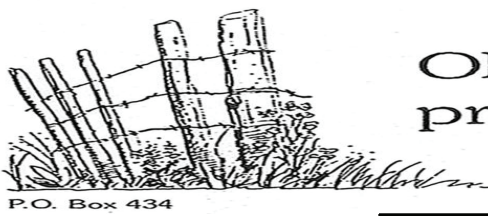
OCM ANNUAL YARD SALE April 20th



Robin Field Haralambous, our **Yard Sale Coordinator**, has set April 20th for what has now become an annual **Onion Creek Meadows** event. In case of rain, the sale will be postponed to April 27th. Each household is encouraged to participate by selling your unwanted items either from your own driveway **or** joining in the fun of being with others in the open field at Old San Antonio Rd. and Turley (*where you will be highly visible*). Several local publications such as the **Statesman**, the **Austin Chronicle** and **Craig's List** on the internet will carry information on preceding days. Signs will be posted at intersections approaching the neighborhood and on Old San Antonio Rd. as well as within OCM.

Start collecting your items now. Email all your friends in your address book, post the event on your Facebook page, and spread the word.

We encourage you to consider giving 10% of your day's sales to our Association to help us defray advertising costs.



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SO LONG,
FAREWELL,
AUF WIEDERSEIN ,
GOODBYE



To **Joellen and Ron Simmons** and to **John and Donna Zimmerman**, we say goodbye and many many thanks for the untold number of hours given to the Onion Creek Meadows community as **volunteers**. Over their time living here, both Joellen and John served on our Onion Creek Meadows Homeowners Association Board, benefitting our community in too many ways to count. The Simmonses are moving to Rockport, and the Zimmermans to Bend, Oregon.

Although they are not leaving us, **Winnie and Maynard Spitz** have now retired from the various Board and committee positions they too have held for years. We owe them such a debt of gratitude for working tirelessly to keep our neighborhood a wonderful place to live.

Volunteers are not paid; not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.

CHANGES TO OUR DEED RESTRICTIONS

At their March meeting, the Onion Creek Meadows Homeowners Association Board voted to present some changes to the official Deed Restrictions all homeowners agreed to when purchasing their property. A committee was appointed to make recommendations for possible changes. A vote of 51% of homeowners is necessary to ratify any changes to our deed document, and committee members and volunteers will be making personal contact with Onion Creek Meadows residents seeking enough votes to make changes.

Nothing that would change the value of your home is being considered. #1 issue? Quite a number of residents wish to keep a few chickens for personal egg consumption. Roosters would be banned because of noise but up to four laying hens would be allowed. Many of us are aware that *several* households in OCM already keep chickens (and yes, other outlawed farm animals too) but the change would seek to make possession transparent and available to all. Housing for chickens would have to be located according to the current placement of outbuildings on individual lots, and attractive to look at.



This is a heads-up that your signature for approval will be sought in the near future. While you personally may not choose to keep chickens, for instance, you may want to agree with this, so that those who do, can.

TRAVIS COUNTY, UNDER SEVERE DROUGHT CONDITIONS, HAS A BAN ON OUTDOOR BURNING. Grilling is permitted as long as it is within a closeable container. Keep water nearby to douse flames.



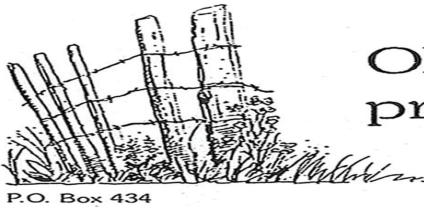
Our thoughts and prayers are with our men and women who serve and protect our country here and overseas. We thank them and wish them a safe and healthy return home.

DAUGHTERY RIDES AGAIN

Gerald Daughtery, County Commissioner of Precinct 3, says he would proudly be "the roadway warrior." He says it has been 16 years since Travis County voters approved spending money to purchase right of way for SH 45 SW, and "we are basically no closer to getting the darn road built than when we passed the road bond."

He designates getting the road built his #1 priority. Daughtery calls "ludicrous" the plans by CAMPO to dedicate large amounts of funding for alternative forms of transportation because people are not going to give up their cars. "If you don't provide a comprehensive roadway system, you are never going to do anything (to ease) traffic. He champions transit wherever feasible, and is in favor of bus systems over rail because "you can change a bus route."

Commissioner Daughtery supported the building of the widely-used I-35/Ben White flyover and says that traffic improvements may need more tolled roads.



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We Welcome New OCMPOA Board Members



LISA PUTMAN

When an unsolicited MLS listing for an Onion Creek Meadows home for sale landed in her mail box in the Oak Park neighborhood, **Lisa Putman** was not even thinking of moving....but she felt the pictures of that house on Onion Creek Drive beckoning to her, whispering "*this is home.*" She liked the feeling that they could live in the country but be so close to city life. In June 2012, she and her partner **Mark Granzow** moved here. Lisa has lived in Austin for 24 years, and has worked administratively in the environmental field for 26 years. She currently works for SWCA Environmental Consultants as a technical editor and proposal coordinator. Mark is a professional real estate photographer and audio production specialist, creating voice over for commercial, promotional, and educational projects.

Lisa's hobbies include kayaking, fishing, hunting, and touring the hill country on a motorcycle, so it's obvious she loves the outdoors. This busy lady likes to cook and *is also a beekeeper on her family's ranch in Columbus, TX.* Her son, **Ben**, will join the Navy this September. Mark's daughter, **Jessica**, is a pre-dental student at Texas State. Lisa and Mark are planning to Xeriscape their yard and welcome plant cuttings or seeds from neighbors for their "friendship garden." They both love living in Onion Creek Meadows, and Lisa adds that she is "excited to serve on the Board."

TRUDY RICHARDS

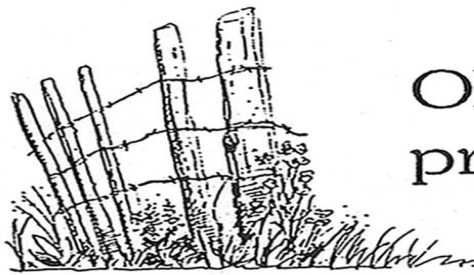


The Richards family: Trudy and Dijar, Ella (8), Egan (6), and Nico (4), canines Jackaroo and Bingo, and felines Ivy and Little One moved to Onion Creek Meadows in May 2012 from Del Valle where they had lived for 10 years. Trudy is the scholarship coordinator for the University Interscholastic League (UIL), which provides academic, athletic, and music contests for schools throughout Texas. They were first attracted to Onion Creek Meadows because of its proximity to San Marcos where Dijar is a geneticist for Texas Parks

and Wildlife there. The larger lots sizes appealed to them as well, and the fact that OCM is an established community.

Originally from Columbia, Missouri, Trudy has lived in the Austin area since she was 4 years old. In her leisure time she enjoys being outdoors with family and friends, especially in the rivers and creeks throughout the Texas Hill Country. "I also enjoy photography, traveling, reading, and cooking."

Did you ever wonder what it is about those individuals who participate on panels for taste and smell testing? Trudy is one of them. "Most people don't know that I have an extremely keen sense of smell and taste. I'm one of those *supertasters* you may have heard about."



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Sen. Kirk Watson Supports Moving Oversight to PUC

Senate Bill 567 addresses the problems brought on by the purchasing by national corporations of small privately-owned public water and wastewater systems. These companies view water as a profitable commodity, not a basic necessity of life like the air we breathe. Watson believes Texans need protection from these entities. We say YES.

Central Texas has had its share of problems with investor-owned utilities. In 2012 TCEQ announced its own investigation into the billing practices of Monarch Utilities, and wide spread questions were raised about Aqua Texas rate boosts. Our OCMPOA participated in a lawsuit against Aqua Texas, alas, to no avail.

567 would give Public Utility Counsel authority to intervene in water rate cases of behalf of residential customers in unincorporated and rural areas.

DO I NEED A PERMIT TO ADD ON TO MY HOUSE?

"YES," says Anna Bowlin of TNR: "If the property is not in incorporated limits of a municipality, it is necessary to get a Travis County development permit. If the property is on septic, a new septic permit may be needed.

HANDY PHONE NUMBERS

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Police/Fire 911 | Non-emergency Police 311 |
| Acting OCMPOA President | Jim Cullen 447-8201 |
| Aqua Texas emergency calls | (877) 987-2782 |
| Non-emergency Sheriff calls | (512) 974-0845 |

Volunteers who delivered this newsletter to your door: **Marilyn Buckland, Debra Tompkins, Sherry Krupinski, Emma and Nathaniel Duhon, Robin Field, Lee and Debby Rapp, Pat Nixon, Robert Walker, Ryan and Andrea Bright Fontana, and Tony and Lucy Lopez.**

KEEP YOUR VEHICLES LOCKED

Travis County Sheriffs are reporting an unusual spike in thefts of **trucks** in the Buda and Kyle area, as well as increased criminal activity and trespassing along Old San Antonio Road.

Newsletter Distribution Changes

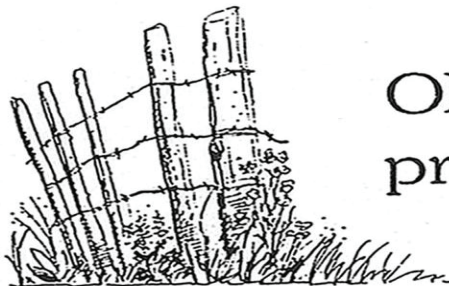
Andrea Bright Fontana of Turley Drive will take over the printing and distribution of our quarterly newsletter beginning with this issue. Previously, your Editor handled the entire production from ideas to news-gathering to delivery, and Andrea's willingness to share these duties is most welcome. Additionally, Andrea has found a source for printing the letter which will reduce production costs. You can reach Andrea @ abrightfontana@gmail.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH ESTANCIA?

Fact Daily, an on-line publication, called **Estancia Hill Country** the largest new development in the southern portion of the Austin I-35 corridor.

Ron Ralph, Chair of the **Heep Ranch** Committee for **OCMPOA**, reports "Estancia development is moving along and negotiations with the City of Austin are progressing. Things became stalled when Estancia applied for limited annexation and City staff changed it to full purpose. In areas annexed for full purposes, the City provides full municipal services, assesses taxes, and enforces City ordinances and regulations. Residents may vote in all City elections and run for office.

With full purpose annexation, the developers would renege on many of the promises made to our neighborhood. The City has abandoned full purpose negotiations with Stratford Land and is now discussing limited purpose. Limited purpose annexation extends the City's ordinances and regulations pertaining to land development and the environment and, in some cases, health and safety. The City collects no taxes in limited purpose areas and does not provide municipal services such as police protection. Residents may vote in city council and charter amendment elections. They may not vote in bond elections or run for office. This is much more desirable for the developer and will reinstate many of the promises made to us by Developer Ocie Vest. (such as affordable housing, good water drainage, green building standards, and parkland and greenbelts).



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Life's Rhythms

Over Spring Break, **Ryan and Andrea Fontana** with their three boys, **Ethan, Lucas and Ryder**, drove first to Hattiesburg MS to visit old friends, and then on to Dauphin Island, AL to visit Andrea's grandparents. Her Mama and Dad traveled in from Michigan for the family get-together. The Fontanas live on Turley.

Ron and Joellen Simmons have a new mailing address **starting April 3rd** - P O Box 1331, Rockport TX 78381. Joellen and Ron loved this neighborhood, their neighbors, and their home on Onion Creek Drive of almost 30 years (and we loved them), but it was "time to move nearer to the grandkids."

Stephen Moser on Wild Turkey was given an "Outstanding Achievement" award by **DIFFA** (Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS) at the Hotel ZaZa in Dallas on March 23rd for his 2013 collection of men's evening jackets and women's evening wear. Stephen designs under his own label "Made In Heaven."

We are pleased that **Gabe Tamayo's** health has improved so much that he has agreed to come back on the Board as **Deed Restrictions** Chair. Gabe lives on Easley.

Deb Tompkins on Algerita took advantage of her Spring Break from her duties as Book-keeper at Parades Middle School to visit Florida with her mother and sister. Besides visiting Sarasota and Orlando, they enjoyed beach time on Sanibel Island.

Josh and Dani Whitaker on Turley personally paid to have the street light at the corner of Mystic and Turley turned back on, so that the children who wait at that corner for the school bus during the dark winter mornings will be seen and safer. Mucho gracias to the Whitakers.

ROBERT WALKER III



Not quite 18, Robert Walker packs more into life than many do at three or four times his age.

Born in Lewes, DE, he has lived with his Mom (Jennie Morrissey) and Dad (Robert Walker Jr.) on Onion Creek Dr. since 2006. In his junior year at Akins, he is additionally earning college credits at Austin Community College to use at the university which offers him "the best financial package;" he is applying to UT, A&M and Texas State. On his high school Varsity football and JV baseball teams, he also enjoys movies and video games as well as time with family and friends. Beside his dog Rusty, he has a pet snake and a turtle.

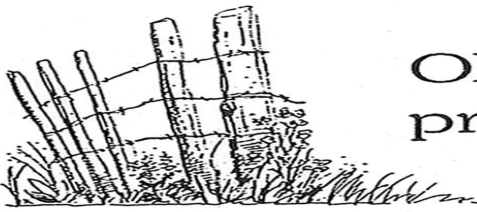
Robert has completed all the required Eagle rank badges (First Aid, Environmental Science, Camping, Hiking, Communication, Emergency Preparedness, Personal Fitness, Family Life, Swimming, Personal Management, Citizenship in Community, World, and Nation, along with Wilderness Survival, Geocaching, Fishing, Boating, Dentistry, Animal Science, Orienteering, Art, and Music). However, he has yet another hurdle before attaining Eagle Scout: he still needs to manage *by himself* an "Eagle Project" which is a community project he has completely planned, raised money for, and carried to fulfillment. Wait, he has to do this **before** he turns 18! In Scouting, Robert feels he learns important life skills while having fun and making friends. "I went to Philmont (mountains of New Mexico) and did a 2-week trek, camping and hiking over 75 miles."

Last month Scout Troop 80, of which Robert is a member, set a goal of gathering 500 pounds of food for the food pantry at Manchaca United Methodist Church to feed needy families in our community. Robert collected 150 pounds himself by asking his neighbors here in OCM to be generous and donate to the effort.

Serving our community, Robert has distributed our newsletter to the duplexes along Old San Antonio Rd. and to all of Onion Creek Drive from OSA to the dead end. We can always count on him to fill in on other routes when needed, which is often. He works at small jobs around the neighborhood, mostly outside yard work, and *wants more customers*. (Full disclosure here: he used to mow and clean-up our yard before a grandson took over.)

When asked "what is something about you most people don't know?" he answered "I have a black belt in Karate." I immediately wondered when he could possibly have found time for that.

(cont. on pg 6)



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WRITE YOUR CONGRESSMEN

Senate Bill 957 and House Bill 2082, if passed, would **undermine** the ability of property owners (government, business, and private property owners) to obtain an impartial hearing on permits for large polluting facilities. The right to appeal a permit which would necessarily threaten the quality of your air and water is being modified to make it harder to oppose such permits.

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has been able to grant Contested Case Hearings (CCH) to governments, businesses and residents who can prove they would be affected by new or expanding facilities near their property. These CCHs provide parties with the ability to oppose the changes and put their case before a neutral Administrative Law Judge. At the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH).

Bills SB 957 and HB2082 would cut off access to a hearing regarding air quality, water quality and waste permits. For instance, if a new landfill is planned, the new bill could cut off the right to an evidentiary hearing and give oversight and the right to approve the permit to a state office. Under the new law, SOAH would have complete discretion whether to grant or deny a hearing

Additionally, if a permit is appealed to a State Court, parties protesting the permit would be held to a higher standard of review than the permit applicant pursuing the appeal.

If you oppose this change *which limits your right of appeal*, write to your congressman and make your voice heard.

**Sen. Donna Campbell Box 12068,
Capitol Station, Austin TX 78711**

**Rep. Paul Workman P O Box 2910,
Austin
TX 78768**

Walker (cont. from 5)

Robert answers my question :

What is an Eagle Project?

"I need to raise money and haven't come up with any ideas yet. It needs to be a project that is for a non-profit and has to be open to the community. I am currently awaiting a response from someone who does park projects and am hoping he has some ideas for me. I will probably do some wood working like benches, picnic tables, bird houses or cleaning trails, planting trees and plants. I need to find people who are willing to provide or donate materials as well. An Eagle project is anything that benefits the community. It can be just about anything that I can plan, carry out and show leadership in."

If anyone in Onion Creek Meadows has ideas or help to offer Robert as he works toward his Eagle badge, he can be reached at
rwalker1115@austin.rr.com

WATER WOES

We are currently under **Stage II Alarm Drought** which requires each household to reduce its usage by 20%. The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook by the National Weather Service says that, without significant rain, **we can expect Drought III (30% water reduction) by the end of March.**

We are running out of ways to convince you that **joining our Homeowners Association** is a wise move. **Just \$20.** helps us help you maintain the quality of life we enjoy. In OCM. Send in your check today, or **call any Board member who will be happy to come pick up your check.** Just do it, do it, do it....

PLEASE SLOW DOWN

The speed limit on Turley and Onion Creek Drive is still 30 mph.

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

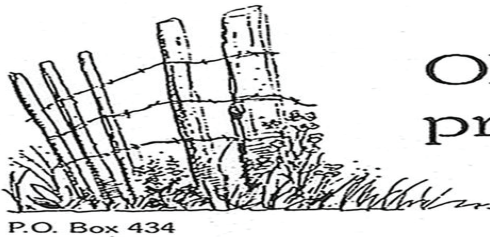
Think about this the next time you reach for your phone while driving

You think you've heard all the data about texting and talking while driving, but *you still do it?* **A Texas Transportation Institute study** reports that sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes off of the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. **That is the equivalent, the report said, of driving 55 mph down the length of a football field while blindfolded.**

Can you follow this "logic"? "It's not that I think that I can drive while texting, but since looking down at a small screen so fast is not all that time consuming, it is not much of a distraction," one high school student reasoned.

The data also show that 11 percent of all teenage accidents are caused by distracted driving. Approximately half of young adults are webbing with some frequency while driving. In a survey of 60 Hays Co. high school students, 47 admitted they text or surf while driving.

Teenagers are by no means the only offenders. Any distracted driver poses **23 times more risk to other drivers on the road than one who is not.** So when you are using your phone *for whatever reason*, it is not just you who is at risk. Ask yourself, **"IS IT WORTH A LIFE?"** to answer or make that call, or to send or read that text.



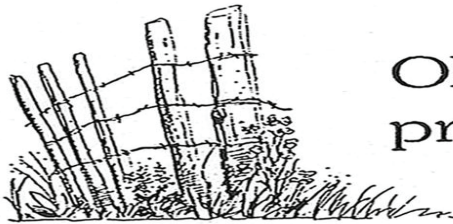
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| | | |
|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Jim Cullen | Acting President, Board Secretary, Database, Membership | 447-8201 jcullen@austin.rr.com |
| | Vice President (vacant) | |
| Sherry Krupinski | Board Treasurer, Welcome Committee, Alert Back-up | 280-1144 sherrykrupinski@yahoo.com |
| Debra Tompkins | Board Member, Nominating Committee, Website Manager | 282-2380 deblou4@juno.com |
| Phyllis Stegall | Board Member, Newsletter Editor, OCMPOA Alert, Yahoo Group List | 291-0202 pjstegall@austin.rr.com |
| Andrea Bright-Fontana | Board Member, Activities Committee, National Night Out | 577-6368 abrightfontana@gmail.com |
| Tony Lopez | Board Member, National Night Out | 291-4992 lucy65@yahoo.com |
| Lisa Putman | Board Member, Deed Restrictions | 517-5095 lisaatthelake369@gmail.com |
| Trudy Richards | Board Member, Facebook Page | 560-7543 trudy.richards@hotmail.co |
| Gabriel Tamayo | Board Member, Deed Restrictions | 282-6529 gabeta-mayo@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 active) 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 at **onioncreekmeadows@yahoogroups.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.