

The Oak Grovian

November 2001

New Board Members Needed – Now

Within the next few months, new candidates will be needed to fill all positions on the Oak Grove Board of Directors. Efforts are under way to fill one position currently open on the Board, as well as the remaining four that will become available early next year.

All homeowners are encouraged to attend a meeting to learn about serving on the Board. This informational session will take place **November 5 at the Good Earth restaurant, at 7pm**. A regular Board meeting will follow it at approximately 7:30pm.

Nona Williams announced her resignation from the Board during the October 1 meeting. In addition, Gail Anikouchine and Honorah Simpson have notified the Board of their resignations effective February 2002. Both Gail and Honorah recently moved from Oak Grove.

The terms of the two remaining seats on the Board will expire in February 2002. Katie Doan and David Rasmussen, who currently hold these positions, do not intend to run for re-election.

The Board will appointment people to fill the vacant seats. Those selected by the Board will complete the existing terms that run until February 2003. The Board may act as soon as the November meeting to

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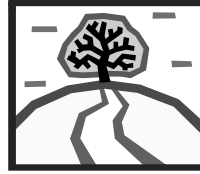
FACTS ABOUT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- ***The Board is in charge of overseeing all aspects of the Association. The Board's mission is to insure the satisfaction of all homeowners, while managing the needs of the Association in a financially responsible manner.***
- ***A Board of Director term last for two years.***
- ***Board positions are Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and Member-at-Large.***
- ***Board member positions are rotated every year.***
- ***The Board of Directors currently meets eight times a year. In the past the Board has met as few as six times a year and as many as 12.***
- ***Meetings average 90 minutes.***
- ***The agenda is typically a review of property maintenance activities, and responding to homeowner inquiries***
- ***Good Management handles the day-to-day business of the Association. They report to the Board on their activities at each meeting.***
- ***Decisions are made by a vote among Board members. The Chairman is in charge of the meeting, and does not vote, except to break a tie.***
- ***Occasionally a meeting is followed by a closed Executive Session. This is where confidential issues are reviewed in order to protect the privacy of a homeowner. ■***

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“How I See It”



By Leslie Ward

Oak Grove Homeowner

I live here too. I drive our little streets, all two of them, and fuss about the trash and the gardeners like everybody else. But some things are just good and we gotta stop complaining.

Remember when you were a kid? What did you do - you made noise and messes. Remember what the 'old folks' did? They griped.

Well, I think too many of us are getting too old to remember what it was like to be a kid. We don't have nearly enough kids in our little neighborhood because families are moving away, as my neighbors did this month, to be able to afford to give their kids space. I am sorry we can't have more kids in the neighborhood. Families and kids are what the future is all about. So, what's my point?

Our new Sport Court !

So the kids make noise - what, up until dark? On weekends? Remember that saying - "Parents, do you know where your kids are?" Well, if they're on the basketball court, you know where they are, right?

I went down the hill everyday for two weeks straight - (what a writer will do for research!) and guess what? I never saw any kids playing there - never once in those two weeks at 7pm Monday through Sunday, two weeks straight.

OK, so maybe they played earlier, or later, but - too much? I ask you - what do you want kids to do? Think of what they could be doing. Now isn't making a little noise worth it?

Maybe instead of complaining we should get out there and shoot a few baskets, too. Come on, we all need exercise, right? I'll even walk down the hill and join ya. ■

Leslie Ward has lived at Oak Grove since 1999. She writes as a hobby, and said she has been published in "some not-too-famous magazines."

The Oak Grovian would like to share what Leslie and other homeowners what think in future editions of this newsletter.



*Do you offer a product or service that would be beneficial to Association residents? If so, submit an informational article to the Oak Grovian for inclusion in our “**Vendor’s Corner**” column.*

Board Members Needed – *continued from page 1*

appoint a replacement for Nona.

The positions currently held by Katie and David will be filled through the annual elections in February. All households may participate in this vote. Winners of the election will serve a two-year term.

If you've ever considered joining the Board, now is the time to step forward and discover what it is all about. ■

Drain of Association Funds Can Be Avoided

Ever careful of spending Association money, Good Management has come up with an idea that may save Oak Grove thousands of dollars in maintenance costs this year.

The subject is mundane enough – the cleaning of rain gutters. However, the approach the Association will take this year is inspired in its simplicity.

“Staff from Good Management Company called four vendors to obtain estimates to clean all rain gutters before the rainy season begins,” reported Chris Ricketts of Good Management. “Of the four vendors, only one responded with an estimate of \$3000 to \$5000 minimum.”

Chris and the staff at Good Management came up with an alternate plan that, with minimal assistance from all homeowners, will be much more friendly to our operating budget. This tactic will consist of two simple efforts.

First, prior to the winter rainy season, we are asking all homeowners to take look at the rain gutters around their unit. If a homeowner detects a potential problem, you are asked to contact Good Management. Typical maintenance of a gutter is to clean out clogs of leaves, twigs and other plant matter.

If you can safely clear the problem with a few sweeps of a broom, go for it! Otherwise, Good Management will



A Simple Plan

- 1. Inspect your gutter before it rains, and report potential clogs.***
- 2. Once the rain comes, notify Good Management of faulty drainage.***

collect all maintenance reports and dispatch a vendor to clean or repair the gutter as needed.

The second approach to gutter maintenance will commence once the rain begins to fall. Again, we are asking homeowners to visually inspect their gutters in action, and notify our management company of any possible problems.

“If you notice a rain gutter that appears to be overflowing,” said Chris, “or a downspout that does not appear to be working correctly, please call the staff at Good Management at 564-1400 to report the problem.”

Maintenance of the needed areas of Oak Grove rain gutter system – rather than an extensive inspection of all gutters - promises to have significant savings in maintenance costs this year.

Our thanks go to Chris and the people at Good Management for their creative thinking! ■

How to Handle Neighbor Conflict



By David Rasmussen
Oak Grove Board of Directors

Like taxes, conflict is something most of us try to avoid. But whether you like it or not, conflict is going to happen. How you deal with it is up to you.

During my three years of attending Board of Director meetings, I've seen all kinds of neighbor-to-neighbor conflicts. Many of these quarrels were dealt with successfully. However, others were not, and tempers are still smoldering.

I'd like to share my thoughts on how to effectively deal with neighbor conflict. Maybe it will help you some day.

Since moving here in 1990, I've found the majority of homeowners as being friendly, thoughtful, and kind people. Most folks here at Oak Grove want harmony with their neighbors.

So what interferes with our desire for peaceful co-existence? Basically two things: Noise and Common Area disputes.

By far, noise complaints rank as the number one Oak Grove clash. Most protests are fairly typical: loud music, barking dogs, noisy children, and revving car engines in the parking lot.

Common area conflicts are equally varied. Homeowners have lodged grievances about the number of potted plants displayed by a neighbor, personal items left outside, unsupervised dogs getting into trouble, parking spots being used for storage, and homeowners washing cars with Association water.

Now that we've identified the most common problems between neighbors, what should you do if you have a beef with a fellow Oak Grovian?

Take some advice from our expert in community living, Michelle Armstrong of Good Management. "If you are comfortable talking to your neighbor, that should really be the first step," explained Michelle.

"Try to work it out informally neighbor to neighbor."

Let me step in and say even if you *are uncomfortable* talking with your neighbor, go ahead and do so anyway. Remember, most neighbors want to get along with each other. When informed in a direct and polite manner, the "offending" neighbor will usually agree to work out the issue to everyone's satisfaction.

But many homeowners do not do this because – let's face it – conflict is uncomfortable. It's easier to have the Association deal with it, right? Wrong!

If you involve a third party (i.e. Good Management) too early in a dispute, you may bruise the ego of the neighbor you are trying to come to terms with. In turn, they may be less inclined to work out a reasonable solution with you. Sometimes, a neighbor may even search the CC&Rs in order to counter with a formal complaint *about you*. This kind of knee-jerk reaction will put finding a solution farther and farther out of reach.

So let me emphasize the key point of this article: **It is best to try to work out concerns directly with your neighbor.** Keep your emotions in check, objectively state your concern, and then – *this is important* – listen to your neighbor's response.

Sometimes homeowners are unable to work out a problem themselves. In this case, you may want to have the Association look at the matter. Be sure the issue at hand is an Association rules issue, rather than a personal or legal matter. The Association cannot help you if your neighbor did not return your power drill or stares at you funny in the parking lot.

Assuming the conflict is not an emergency situation (i.e. neighbor building bonfires in their dining room), your next course of action is to document your concern.

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Future of Empty Rehab Site Discussed

Residents from Oak Grove and Forte Ranch, as well as other concerned citizens, attended a Town Hall meeting in August to review plans for the now vacant Rehabilitation Institute buildings. The complex is located near the southwest corner of Oak Grove.



Supervisor Susan Rose was in attendance, as were a number of County planners and architects.

Exactly what will become of the site, and when, is still under review.



After 20 years of occupancy, the Santa Barbara Rehabilitation Institute moved to new facilities in February 2001. Since then the property has lapsed into disrepair – overgrown shrubs can be found around the buildings and sprouting through the parking lot. The abandoned structures show signs of wear and vandalism. Some Oak Grove homeowners have even witnessed illegal dumping at the uninhabited site.

The County is currently considering a plan to demolish all but perhaps one building in the

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Neighbor Conflict – *continued from page 4*

“Sit down and write a letter,” advised Michelle Armstrong. “It doesn’t have to be long, just a brief description of what the alleged infraction is. Be very specific – date, times, unit number - put that in writing to us and we will respond in writing.”

Typically, Good Management will review your written complaint and compose a letter to the so-called offending neighbor. The Good Management notice will outline the objection and point out specifically how the alleged infraction violates an Association rule. The letter will request either feedback to the complaint or immediate compliance from the homeowner.

The accused household can respond in a number of ways. They can take action to stop the rules violation. They can respond to Good Management, by phone or in writing, seeking further discussion of the matter.

The homeowner can even ask to speak to the Board of Directors during the next meeting to share their perspective on the issue.

Getting one of these letters does not imply the Board or Good Management have found you guilty of anything. It simply means a formal complaint has been lodged, and it’s now your opportunity to respond. Believe me, the Board and our management company knows that - when it comes to neighbor-to-neighbor conflicts - there are two sides to every story.

The bottom line is you can’t always control *when* conflict will come knocking on your door. You can, however, be *in command of the manner* you decide to deal with it. ■

In our next issue: “How Handle Conflict With Good Management”

Do...

- **Try to deal directly with your neighbor**
- **Clearly and respectfully state your concern**
- **Actively listen to your neighbor’s response**
- **Document your complaint to Good Management, if your attempts at direct settlement of the matter are unsuccessful**

Don’t...

- **Let your emotions take control over good judgment**
- **Prematurely involve a third party to solve the problem**
- **Ask for Association help with a matter that is not a rules violation**
- **Ignore written communications from Good Management regarding alleged rules infractions**

Sound Advice



As Oak Grove moves into its second decade of existence, it is natural for homeowners to make improvements to the interior of their homes. For those of you living on the second floor – and considering replacing your wall-to-wall carpet – here is some *sound* advice.

Please think about the possible noise ramifications to your neighbor below should you convert from carpet to tile or wood floors.

Carpet muffles many routine noises that we all make. This includes the sounds of the TV, stereo, normal conversation, pets and the like. If you remove the carpet even subtle sounds, like walking across a room, may become an irritating noise to the household below you.

Does this mean second floor homeowners can't have wood flooring? Of course not. But for the sake of good neighbor relations, consider first these suggestions:

1. Talk with your first story neighbor about your plans to change flooring
2. Review with your flooring professional the latest soundproofing techniques and products.
3. Let your neighbor know when the installation work will be done ahead of time.
4. Limit installation work to reasonable hours in the day – usually the project should not start

before 9am, and end before 6pm.

5. Once the new flooring is in, raise sound system speakers from off the floor.
6. Use throw rugs on high traffic areas of the floor.
7. Keep in touch with your neighbor and find out what sound reduction practices are working, and make reasonable adjustments if needed.

Okay, so what if you are the lucky first floor homeowner faced with this situation? Open and honest communication with your neighbor is your best ally. Let your neighbor know what noise you can hear and when. Suggest the application of the sound muffling techniques listed above.

Use good sense when dealing with this issue. All homeowners also have the right to update their flooring. It is also reasonable for a first story homeowner to request some sensible adjustments to the upstairs unit in order to minimize the increase in noise.

At the end of the day, good communication between neighbors will minimize the noise problem that comes with new second story flooring. ■

Rehab Site *continued from page 5*

complex, and put up new structures. The new complex would handle Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health services (ADMHS), whose administrative staff are currently located in "deficient space" at 315 Camino del Remedio.

While the plan calls for part of the complex to be a treatment center, it was not clear if the campus would house patients overnight.

One spokesman for the County said that he did not foresee much traffic going in and out of the complex after business hours. In fact, the planners are considering changing the main entry point to the upper site from Oak Grove Drive to San Antonio Road. This suggestion brought concerns from the residents of Forte Ranch. There was some discussion of converting the current entrance at 4510 Oak Grove to a greenbelt, making it accessible by pedestrians only.

Leveling the existing buildings could start as soon as this month, with construction ending about December 2003. However, the County representatives were quick to add that it is difficult to predict the exact timetable for a project of this scope. The budget for this development is \$9.9 million.

Residents were encouraged to send comments to the Office of the County Architect by fax 568-3249, or by e-mail to comments@countyarchitect.com.

More information is also available at this web site: www.countyarchitect.com. ■

Board of Director Meeting Highlights

Over 30 homeowners attended a special meeting of the Board of Directors held at Oak Grove Park on July 23. Excluding annual meetings, this was the best-attended regular gathering of the Board in memory.

It was an informal setting with many people enjoying the warm summer evening from the comfort of their lawn chairs. The agenda of the meeting was revised to allow more homeowner comment time, with less attention spent on routine Association business.

Several people suggested more Board meetings should be held in the park. "This was a great idea," said homeowner Kathy Schmitt near the end of the get-together. "We should definitely do this again."

The comments and questions raised by homeowners covered a variety of Association subjects. Many of the issues are summarized below.



July 23, 2001

Concerns were raised over...

- traffic exceeding 25 MPH speed limit, particularly vehicles rushing down Oak Glen Drive near the park
- possible infestation of aphids in some jacaranda trees
- messy trash area near 4551 Oak Glen, including some heavy items abandoned by a former homeowner
- termite inspection policy and procedures
- use of leaf blowers and difficulty getting trees trimmed by landscape workers
- view of dumpster and portable toilet near park
- dog waste near Omega House

Suggestions were made to...

- post signs with trash and recyclable instructions
- install drinking fountain in park
- develop land area just north of 460 Camino del Remedio into a garden
- look for a new landscape contractor

October 1, 2001

Homeowner Comment

- A homeowner suggested the installation of an outside mirror to deal with a partial blind spot where the parking lot at 4551 Oak Glen meets the street.
- Another homeowner asked that a contractor investigate an apparent exposed electrical or telephone wire that appeared to be spliced to the building at 4545 Oak Glen

Other Agenda Items

- Good Management is working with Direct TV on the possibility of offering satellite television service to Oak Grove homeowners using shared reception dishes. The tentative plan may offer free installation of Direct TV service if a minimum number of homeowners in the same building sign up.
- The Association's annual Reserve Study, which is used to plan for common area repair and replacement, was distributed to the Board. The study suggests an increase in monthly dues of approximately \$5 per unit exclusively to maintain a proper level of reserve funds next year. A two-page executive Summary will be mailed to all homeowners. A copy of the entire 20-page document can be obtained from Good Management for a nominal copying fee.
- Allstate notified the Association that it intends to cancel our insurance coverage effective November 21, 2001. Good Management is talking with two other providers to take over our coverage.

Oak Grove Board of Directors

Gail Anikouchine – Chairman
David Rasmussen – Vice Chairman
Honorah Simpson – Treasurer
Katie Doan – Member at Large
Open – Secretary

Association Committees

Landscaping
Communication
Architectural Review and Compliance

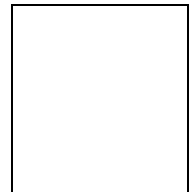
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Mailing Address
Street Number and Name
City, State ZIP