

Communicator

Merriman Park/University Manor Neighborhood Association

March 2008

MPUM 2008 Beautification Meeting

DOOR PRIZES!!

Tuesday, March 18th at 7:00 p.m at Hotchkiss Elementary School

DOOR PRIZES!!

Don't miss this year's Beautification Meeting! It promises to be one of our most interesting and informative! Our Guest Speaker will be Alan Franz, noted landscape artist and architect. Alan has been gardening since the age of 10 with an emphasis Xeriscape and perennial gardening in Texas. He has traveled the world and is a lover of Art, Architecture and Landscape. He is published: Perennial Gardening in Texas.

Also on our program will be Lauren Anderson, our Service Area Coordinator with the City of Dallas. Lauren will give us a brief update on progress being made in both our residential neighborhood and the commercial area surrounding us. This is always an interesting topic so you will not want to miss her update!

In addition to Applebee's sponsoring this newsletter, they will also provide refreshments at the 2008 Beautification Meeting. So grab your family (young and old), grab your neighbors and come enjoy this program, refreshments and door prizes! Join us for an exciting evening!

Planting a Low Maintenance Shade Garden

(By Christopher J. Miller)

Top Ten Shade Loving Plants for Our Neighborhood

Planting a shade garden is more challenging than a sun garden. First, with the exception of tropical plants, most plants don't bloom as profusely in the shade as in the sun. The reason is the sun provides the energy for bloom growth. But, after more than a decade of living in our neighborhood with its alkaline and clay soil, I have discovered ten great shade-loving plants for every garden. Let me give you three rules of thumb to ensure a beautiful landscape.

FOCUS ON LEAF COLOR AND TEXTURE

Shade gardens depend on contrast. When purchasing plants, look for leaf color and texture not bloom. Don't be swayed by tags featuring richly colored blooms. If the tag doesn't show the foliage, there's a good reason. It's probably not very attractive. Remember, most plants bloom for about two weeks a year. You'll have to live with the leaf shape and color year round.

PLANT CONTRASTING PLANT TEXTURES NEXT TO EACH OTHER
Next, always set contrasting plants next to each other. For example, the soft light green foliage of Southern Wood fern will pop in front of the dark green vertical lines of a Cast Iron plant. You would never want two or three items together that all have dark elliptical leaves. Why? No contrast!

PLANT IN ODD NUMBER DRIFTS

Remember to plant in drifts of odd numbers. You should rarely buy one of anything. Three, five, or seven plants close together work best.* Create a sweeping effect and plant in a random pattern. Do not space plants evenly! If you're unsure, remember Mother Nature. The best gardens imitate nature and most plants grow in stands because seeds don't travel far from their parent. Find low maintenance, hardy plants and invest in a "drift" of color and texture.

Following is my list of ten dependable, perennial, "growing well in the shade" plants (additional information, recommendations and personal experience with each of these plants can be found on our website on the Beautification page at www.mpum.com/beautificationframe.html)

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Oakleaf Hydrangea | (Hydrangea quercifolia) |
| Aspidistra | (Aspidistra eliator) |
| Needle palm | (Rhaphyllum Hystrix) |
| Japanese Holly Fern | (Cyrtomium falcatum) |
| Leather Leaf Mahonia | (Mahnia bealei) |
| Wood Fern | (Dryopteris) |
| Loquat | (Eriobotrya japonica) |
| Variegated Pittosporum | (Pittosporum tobira variegata) |
| Podocarpus | (Podocarpus macrophyllus) |
| Japanese Maple | (Acer palmatum) |
| Northern Sea Oats | (Chasmanthium latifolium) |
| Rice Paper Plant | - If you want a lush tropical look this is the plant to use. Enormous dark green leaves, but they do freeze to the ground in the winter. |

Okay, I can already hear the protests! "But these plants don't bloom. I want color." Use these items to create a "backbone" to your garden. Each one of my top ten will return year after year and perform well with little maintenance. If you desire bloom, use pots to place tropicals and semi-tropicals throughout the garden. They can be replanted every year and will add a splash of color. Looking for a list of my top ten tropicals? I'll save that for another article.

*wording edited by Newsletter Editor.

Spring Cleaning

The city is launching a number of programs geared toward the beautification of our city by cleaning things up. We would urge each of you to join in this effort by learning how you can make a difference in our neighborhood, just by doing a little Spring Cleaning on your property.

Alley Beautification:

According to recent reports from our VIP Patrollers, the alleys are looking better and have been easier on their cars! So they send their thanks to each of you who have made the area behind your house cleaner and safer for all! Thanks for your help!!

Election of Officers

It's that time of year again! It's time to make nominations for the Merriman Park/ University Manor Neighborhood Association's Board. We are looking for fresh faces and new ideas to help push our neighborhood ahead. We are looking for people willing to give a little bit of their time to help make our Association better. We have lots of great new ideas about how to make our meetings more neighborhood and kid friendly with a more relaxed and informal feel. There are quite a few projects we have going right now and we sure could use your input. If you are interested in helping, consider the following committees/positions that need both leadership and/or support. Or, if there is something you would like to do that we are not already doing, let us know!

<i>Block Captains (individuals and at least two coordinators)</i>	Crime Watch/VIP
<i>Website Design/Management</i>	Zoning
<i>Newsletter (writing, editing, or publishing)</i>	Children's Programs
Code Chair	Welcome Committee
Pets	Event Planning
Beautification	

Our Nominating Committee is being headed up this year by Brenna Rivas. Members of the committee are Jennifer Lee, Jeff Hanna, Kelly Hanna. If you have interest in helping with any neighborhood activity, you can write to Brenna at crimewatch@mpum.com or call her at (214) 553-5161.

Code Compliance and Crime Watch

The City of Dallas is taking a new view of the relationship between Crime Watch and Code Compliance. It has been proven in cities across the nation that code is an important component of crime watch. We are told by our city officials that the first defense in fighting neighborhood crime is often cosmetic. If a neighborhood is messy, criminals are attracted to that area. They are asking all of us to take a fresh look at our own property and make sure we are not violating any code restrictions.

We hope to highlight several of the areas you need to review in an effort to help you make sure you are in compliance, and therefore doing your part to fight crime in our neighborhood. Just as we have seen more police patrols in our neighborhood, we will now be seeing a lot more of Code patrols as well. Code Compliance is reorganizing their entire department around "beat" policing. The good news is the increased Code and Police presence is also helping us clean up the Commercial area around our neighborhood. So join us in helping the city and our neighborhood and let's all do a little Spring Cleaning and maintenance!

CODE COMPLIANCE

IMPORTANT!!!

AVOID FINES! Make yourself familiar with city code and then make sure you are keeping your property up to code. The City of Dallas needs our help and the best starting place is in our own back yards. So, let's take care of ourselves!

To learn more about the common code violations visit this website:

http://www.dallascityhall.com/code_compliance

If you need assistance with projects you are unable to handle, send a message to info@mpum.com and we will try to help. Citations are expensive and we all need to be responsible in an effort to avoid these fines. The key to avoiding fines is taking responsibility, including asking for help when you need it!!

Cleaning up Skillman & Abrams

A lot of effort is going into cleaning up the commercial area around our neighborhood, especially at Skillman and Abrams. The city has advised us that unkept areas of the city are very prone to crime. So our first effort has been to get rid of Graffiti. If you see any graffiti anywhere near our neighborhood, please call 311 to report it and they will work with the property owner to remove it.

But the cleanup does not stop with Graffiti. We have already had a ton of trash carried off by the city with more to come. The Northwest Highway bridge was painted to remove graffiti, the Abrams Road bridge had trash, couches, shopping carts and about everything you can imagine carted off from under that bridge. Next up is cleaning the area behind the car wash on Eastridge Rd. by Home Depot. Code is working directly with all the businesses and we will keep you posted on their progress. It already feels so much cleaner in our neighborhood but we have a long way to go.

Call 311 To Report Any Code Violations

Did you know you can report neighborhood code problems from your computer? Just visit www.dallascityhall.com and look for the 311 link on the left side of the page. Click the link, and you'll be able report all kinds of problems. If you don't have a computer or just prefer, pick up the phone and dial 3-1-1. And just like 911 calls, you can remain anonymous via the computer or over the phone—simply decline giving out any personal information

Let The Signs Help You!

Don't forget to let our reminder signs help you remember when its time to put your bulky trash at your curb. Signs are posted at entrances each month. So watch for them!!

Pet Tips

Because Code Compliance is beginning a new neighborhood-level "beat" policing — and since Animal Control falls under Code Compliance — various Code Patrollers will be watching for pet violations in addition to housing and other code issues in our neighborhood. To be sure you are not fined, please remember the following:

●**Pets are not allowed to be off of a leash at anytime — including cats!**

The law states that you must keep your pets, cats and dogs, in your homes or on your property behind a fence or on a leash.

●**Pets are NOT to be on a tether or leash or chain without supervision.**

"Supervision" means you must be in view of your cat or dog at all times. Animal Control will issue a citation if they find any animal restrained by anything other than a fence, and unsupervised.

●**Animal Control will pick up stray animals**

●**Code Enforcement will issue citations** for not picking up after your dog or cat as well as allowing your dog or cat to run freely without a leash, whether or not you are with them.

●**Please remember** that the school is not a dog park. Small children play in that area and it is not a place to share with dogs.

Code Enforcement really is not trying to make your life difficult. There are good reasons why we have these laws in place to protect everyone, especially children, and your pets. One example is that they prevent areas in our neighborhood from missing valuable mail in the event mail carriers feel threatened by pets allowed to run freely.

Thank you for being a responsible pet owner and making our neighborhood a better place to live!

Crime Watch

Block Captains

According to the Dallas Police Department, we are one of the few neighborhoods who do not have Block Captains in place. DPD highly recommends Block Captains for neighborhoods, just as they recommend the Volunteer in Patrol program. In fact, these two programs go hand in hand and together can be the center point of eliminating crime in our neighborhood.

Now that we have 16 VIP's and more attending training in March, we are now ready to tackle reestablishing Block Captains in our neighborhood. And this is where **we need your help!!**

Block Captains will help us communicate more effectively to the entire neighborhood all year long – because crime happens all year long! By carving up the streets into smaller blocks, we will be able to focus our attention on smaller groups and inspire these groups to watch out for each other. We are also looking for someone to accept responsibility for all the Block Captains so let us hear from you if you have the time and interest in helping to launch and maintain our Block Captain program.

Please complete the form enclosed and let us know if you would like to be a Block Captain. If you also have interest in the management of this group, please indicate that as well. You can mail your form in the enclosed envelope, drop the form off in the VIP box on the porch at 7272 Walling or, if you prefer, drop us an email – send to info@mpum.com. If you have any questions, call Donna at 214-348-7721 or Dottie at 214-349-7028 or send your questions to info@mpum.com.

Volunteers In Patrol



If you have ANY amount of time to help watch over your neighborhood, send an e-mail to info@mpum.com for instructions on how to join. If you do not have e-mail, you can call Dottie @ 214-349-7028.

Next training class is scheduled March 24, 25 & 27 – you must attend all three classes. There will be a one day training scheduled in May on a Saturday for those of you who cannot attend 3 classes during the week.

VIP TIPS

Crimes of Opportunity have been on the rise and requiring DPD to spend a very large amount of their police force's time. These crimes include open garages, tools left out and burglary of motor vehicles, especially when the door is left unlocked.



Home:

1. Do not leave your garage or storage shed open/unsecured – not even for 5 minutes
2. Do not leave any tools, etc. unsupervised anywhere on your property



Motor Vehicles: LOCK, TAKE & HIDE!!!

1. Clean out your garages and use them to secure your cars (Deputy Chief Easterling asked us to pass this tip to all of you!)
2. LOCK YOUR CAR! Do not leave anything in the car that you do not wish to lose
3. Do not leave anything in view so someone on foot can glance in your car and be tempted to break in

Likewise, don't advertise what you have inside your home by leaving lights on at night with your drapes/blinds wide open. Get in your car and drive by your house at night and see what you are advertising to would be criminals that could be driving through the neighborhood casing houses.

Last tip: Pick up your newspapers and literature left at your door! Leaving it out is like a megaphone saying "NO ONE IS HOME." If you are out of town, be sure you enlist the help of a neighborhood to pick these up or place them out of view.

By following these tips you will protect your property. You may not have considered how important this is to the entire neighborhood. If criminals find easy targets in our neighborhood, they will be encouraged to come back and find other targets. So secure your belongings and help your neighborhood fight crime!!

Alley Sign Initiative

Thanks to everyone who ordered an alley sign or who already have their own signs posted in the alley. Having this identification is very helpful for emergency vehicles and your neighborhood Volunteers In Patrol. If you ordered one and need help installing, please call Robert Giesler at 214-349-7028.

New Police Database

Check it out – real time crime information. We are **BEAT NUMBER 214** and **REPORTING AREA 1085**, so look for stats in those specific areas to see what's happening in our neighborhood. You can find the link on our Website at www.mpum.com.

2008 National Night Out Moves to October

Each year the country celebrates national night out, usually in August. This year, the City of Dallas, the Dallas Police Department and Dallas Fire & Rescue made the decision to move National Night out in our city to October 7, 2008. We all look forward to a cooler temperature for our 2008 National Night Out! So mark your calendars!!

CALL 911

Many of you are hesitant to call 911 when you see something suspicious in the neighborhood. The Dallas Police Department is urging everyone to please call when there is any doubt at all. Remember, **calls can be made anonymously**. When the dispatcher asks if you want to be contacted, simply say no. When asked for your name, simply decline. The operators are only asking the questions they have been trained to ask on every call, but the police say that it's completely up to you if you identify yourself or not.

DPD Quarterly Summit

Several members of this neighborhood attended the Quarterly Crime Summit in January. Highlights:

- Crimes of Opportunity on the rise
- Marking your property helps find property and also ties criminals to more crimes. You can check out engravers from the Northeast Substation.
- If you observe drug activity of any kind, complete a drug complaint form – narcotics follows these up! If you need one request from info@mpum.com

MPUM E-Mail Alerts

If you are not receiving neighborhood e-mails, send your e-mail address to info@mpum.com and we will make sure you are added! Also make sure you copy and deliver the info you receive via e-mail to neighbors you know do not have e-mail capability.

DART

We recently reported problems to DART about their landscaping that, while pretty, has in some cases posed a security hazard. DART was very fast to come trim the area to eliminate these unsafe areas. We will review this issue again in the spring. If you ever feel unsafe because of landscaping issues at the White Rock Station, let us know. Email info@mpum.com.

Trash Trail

We are all on a mission to clean things up and picking up trash is one way you can help! This is also a way to help prevent crime according to city officials. Unkept neighborhoods are targeted most often by criminals because it sends a signal to them that we are not watching. If you have time to pick up trash in the neighborhood, just fill out the enclosed coupon and enclose it in the self addressed envelope provided with this newsletter. If you have any questions, call Dottie Giesler at 214-349-7028. If you have email access you may also send a message to beautification@mpum.com.

General Neighborhood



Annual Dues

Annual dues are \$15 per year, per household. If you're not sure if you've paid, check the paid list on our Website at www.mpum.com. If you do not have Web access, contact Charley Ramirez, 214-341-1861. Please make checks payable to Merriman Park/University Manor Neighborhood Association and use the self addressed envelope provided.

In addition to annual dues, other donations to our Neighborhood Association are always welcome and you can designate how you would like the funds to be applied.



Light Up the Neighborhood

Please leave your porch lights on and, if possible, install flood lights with motion detectors. Street lights help but are hidden in trees, so the

most effective lighting is closer to the ground. With aging streets and sidewalks, help residents see where they are walking and bicycling and help light up the neighborhood!



SLOW DOWN & STOP

We have asked for increased Police patrols in the neighborhood to help decrease speeds and make sure people are stopping at stop signs, especially on Larmanda. Many of the problems reported are as a result of having a neighborhood school which brings in a lot of traffic from outside our neighborhood. But we understand that some of you are also going too fast and not coming to a complete stop and the various stop signs. So slow down and stop!



YARDS OF THE MONTH

February Yard of the Month – 6936 Kingsbury

March Yard of the Month – 6936 Town North

What are Library Friends?

Friends groups at local libraries provide support to help meet various library needs. The Casa View Library Friends (CVLF), where neighbor Sue Ramirez is actively involved, recruits volunteers to help library staff, sponsors book reviews, lectures and many special programs and purchases requested supplies and products. CVLF raises funds mainly through book sales, membership dues and corporate grants for programs such as children's puppet shows. The next big fundraiser will be the Annual CVLF Book Sale on April 11 and 12 (10 AM – 5 PM) and April 13 (1 PM – 5 PM). Casa View Library is located on Ferguson Road, just north of Gus Thomasson (right behind the Casa View Shopping Center).

CVLF membership is only \$5 for individuals 62 or over, \$7.50 for other individuals and \$10 for families. If you'd like to join CVLF and be among the first to shop this huge event at the Members-Only Preview Sale on April 9 (5PM-8PM), stop by the Casa View Library or contact Sue Ramirez at 214-341-1861.

University Manor Garden Club

The new Garden Club Officers:

Position	Name
President	Jean Hazelip
1 st VP	Rose Blatch (Programs)
1 st VP	Alice Stultz (Programs)
2 nd VP	Kellye Rockecharlie (Membership)
3 rd VP	Ginger Hartman (Social)
Secretary	Ginny Howdeshell
Treasurer	Cindy Stone
Parliamentarian	Joy Goyen

Next meeting, April 10th, program is "I Love Texas Wildflowers." Speaker is Martha Hartley. The final meeting of the year will be a luncheon and installation of new officers at Mariano's on May 8th.

Join the University Manor Garden Club for just \$10.00 per year. Donations/memorials are also accepted and appreciated! Please send due/donations/memorials to Cindy Stone, 7126 Edgerton, Dallas, Tx 75231.

Special Announcements/Congratulations!

Eric Williamson, son of A.G. and Marsha Williamson on Kingsbury, has recently moved to Cusco, Peru to take a position teaching English!

Ensign Scott Hill, son of Gary and Carolyn Hill on Kingsbury, recently returned from a tour of duty in Iraq. After surprising his parents (especially his mother) with a Christmas visit, he has returned to Norfolk Virginia where he is in training to be a Damage Control Officer.

If you know of a special announcement or mile marker to share with us please e-mail the newsletter staff at info@mpum.com


Officers and Board Members for the 2007-2008 fiscal year, ending May 2008.

Position	Name	Phone	E-mail Address
President	Bill Haughton	214-801-2425	president@mpum.com
VP - Admin.	Jonathan Bernstein	214-343-4494	vp@mpum.com
Treasurer	Charlie Ramirez	214-341-1861	treasurer@mpum.com
Secretary	Barbara Hansen	214-340-3339	secretary@mpum.com
Crime Watch	Brenna Rivas	214-553-5161	crimewatch@mpum.com
Beautification	Dottie Giesler	214-349-7028	beautification@mpum.com
Zoning/Code	Ed "Rick" Webber	214-348-3526	zoning@mpum.com
Newsletter Editor	Kathy Gifford	469-877-4462	newsletter@mpum.com
Neighborhood Pets	Carrie Clark	214-356-3859	pets@mpum.com
Website	Donna Mason	214-348-7721	info@mpum.com
Volunteers In Patrol	Dottie Giesler	214-349-7028	vip@mpum.com
Volunteers In Patrol	Donna Mason	214-348-7721	info@mpum.com
Past President	Robert L. Giesler	214-349-7028	membership@mpum.com

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSOR – Applebee’s, Medallion Center

The Communicator is a publication of the Merriman Park/University Manor Neighborhood Association, P.O. Box 820803, Dallas, TX 75382-0803. Articles, letters and suggestions are invited and appreciated and can be mailed to the P.O. Box or sent via e-mail to info@mpum.com. *This issue of the MPUM Communicator was Paid for and Sponsored by Applebee’s, Medallion Center, 6464 E. Northwest Hwy, Dallas, TX 75231, 214-361-7625.





Free Appetizer with purchase of an adult entree

For all residents of MPUM only. Must have a valid ID with an address on one of the following streets: Arboreal, Berryhill, Edgerton, Fenton, Freemont, Kingsbury, 6400 Block of Larmanda, Town North, Wakefield, Wakefield Cir., Walling, Whitehill, Wild Valley, Winchester

Take this coupon to Applebee’s in **Medallion Center** for one free Appetizer with purchase of an adult Entrée.*

*Limit one coupon per party per visit. Coupon void if expiration date is left blank. Appetizer Sampler is excluded from this offer. Subject to availability. Valid only at the Applebee’s Medallion Center. For dine-in only. Not valid towards the purchase of alcoholic beverages, or in conjunction with any other offer or discount. Not redeemable for cash. Coupon not applicable to tax or gratuity.

Good until 4/30/2008

Volunteers Needed! If you can help the neighborhood, please clip out these sign up coupons below and return in the self addressed envelope included with this newsletter or drop them in the VIP box on the front porch of 7272 Walling Lane.

If you can assist the neighborhood by being a Block Captain or if you have time to volunteer to help pick up trash around the neighborhood or if you just have a suggestion, please clip out the coupons below, fill them out and mail them in the self addressed envelope provided with the newsletter. If you have internet connectivity, you may also send a message to info@mpum.com and someone will call you. Thanks!



Block Captains Needed!!!

Yes, I want to be a Block Captain! (duties include e-mail, phone calls and some door-to-door)

Yes, I would be available to help launch this effort!

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Email Address: _____

Volunteer for the Trash Trail - Sign me up!

Yes, I would like to help keep our neighborhood sparkling clean.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Email Address: _____

Days/Hours Available: _____

You will be contacted to reserve a time that fits your schedule!



SUGGESTIONS: How can we do things better in this neighborhood? Please include your suggestions in the self addressed envelope or you may send your suggestions to info@mpum.com. Need more space? Use a blank piece of paper and attach to this coupon. We would love to hear your ideas about security, new ideas for neighborhood programs, how we can improve our neighborhood and any other suggestions you might have!

(Personal Information Is Optional: Anonymous Entries Fully Considered)

Name: _____

Address: _____ Telephone _____

Email Address: _____