Norton Hills Estates Recreation Association

Spring 2006 Newsletter

Dirt Track Race Car to Lead Bike Parade in 2nd Annual Block Party; Face Painting, Potluck Lunch Return

Favorites from last year will join some fun new events at the second annual Norton Hills Estates block party on July 15.

A dirt track race car will lead a bike parade for neighborhood children starting at 11 a.m. at the corner of Bloomfield Court and Dunes Parkway. After the parade, bikes, big wheels, strollers, etc., will be judged for best decorations in two age groups, under 12 and 12-over, and prizes will be awarded to the winners.

Games and entertainment will follow on Bloomfield Court, and a potluck lunch will be served — in the shade this time!

We'll have a bounce house again, and face painting was so popular last year that we hope to have at least two painters this year. We also plan a slushy machine, water-balloon volleyball, karaoke and carnival games, and we're finalizing arrangements for entertainment like a puppet show or a clown.

We need volunteers to help set up, cook hot dogs, run the carnival games and more. If you can help, please contact party committee chair Rachael Ernvall at ChairBloomfield@nhera.org or 780-0207.

Contributions for the potluck lunch are divided by street again this year:

If you live on:	**Please bring:**
Dunes Parkway	Main dish
Bellaire or Bloomfield	Appetizer or snack
Norcrest or Dunecrest	Side dish
Blissfield or Pleasant Hill	Dessert
North Hilltop or South Hilltop	Salad or pasta

Police Patrols to Help Traffic Safety, But More to Do

Norton Shores police agreed this month to post a traffic enforcement officer on Dunes Parkway at random intervals to crack down on speeders and drivers who recklessly run the stop signs at Pleasant Hill Drive.

The agreement follows reports from residents of some drivers coming into the neighborhood from the south at speeds estimated at 55 mph or higher, and increased reports of drivers running the stop signs.

Marked cruisers have already been seen patrolling for these violations, and the NHERA Board is grateful for the Police Department's prompt response to our most recent request for help controlling traffic.

City police also say that with enough information, citizens can report traffic violations. Police say that citizen reports of speeding violations can be difficult to verify, but reports of violations like running stop signs can lead to tickets being issued to the offenders.

Your NHERA Board encourages residents to call police when drivers run stop signs in the neighborhood. You'll need the license plate number, location and time of day; the make and model of the vehicle and a general description of the driver can make the ticket easier to enforce. You'll be asked to sign the ticket along with a traffic enforcement officer.

We also continue to work with the city on more permanent solutions to our traffic safety problems, especially on Dunes Parkway. Last year, the Department of Public Works determined that stop signs at Dunes and South Hilltop Drive were not warranted, though the association was never informed of any study or decision at that time. Amid continuing pressure from your NHERA Board, the department studied traffic volume and speeds on Dunes Parkway this spring, but again determined that stop signs at South Hilltop are not warranted.

Director Gerald Bartoszek said he would recommend upgrading the yield sign on South Hilltop to a stop sign and placing a warning sign on northbound Dunes indicating a curve with an intersecting street.

While we support the idea of a warning sign on northbound Dunes, the NHERA Board does not believe these changes will reduce speeds or improve safety. With Board approval already granted, President Stan Miller will appear before the Norton Shores City Council soon to appeal for additional help in controlling traffic.

Residents Report Thefts in Area Neighborhoods

Residents of several area neighborhoods including Norton Hills Estates report thefts from porches, garages and homes as the weather has turned warmer.

The NHERA Board urges residents to safeguard their property and possessions. Keep doors locked, and keep your garage doors down when you're not in front of your house. Have packages delivered to neighbors when you're not home, not left on your porch. Ask a neighbor to bring in your papers and mail and look after your home while you are on vacation. Put lights on timers.

And most importantly, call the police if you witness unusual activity or are a victim of a theft. Police rely heavily on patterns to catch thieves, so every report helps even if it's not enough by itself to lead to an arrest.

City-Owned Lots Fail to Sell

Interest in the three city-owned lots at the corner of Dunes Parkway and Norcrest Drive was so high that the City of Norton Shores put the properties up for bid late this past winter.

However, despite that high level of interest, no bids were received during the bidding period, said Dick Maher, the city's community development director. The bidding period ended Feb. 28.

The city received a tentative purchase offer later for the lot on the inside corner, Mr. Maher said. The offer for that 14,393-square-foot lot was for $45,000, which was the starting price for bidding, he said.

The city expects to put "For Sale" signs on the other two lots within the next few weeks, Mr. Maher said. The city will continue to maintain the terraces on all three lots until they sell, he said.

The neighborhood association will receive $250 from the sale of each lot, and development must conform to the covenants governing the rest of the neighborhood.

Good News, Bad News, Good News About the Park

Your association board hired Coleman Landscaping to do spring cleaning at the neighborhood park, and they did a fantastic job!

They came out less than a week after our first call. They hauled away a heaping trailer full of branches downed by winter and spring storms, cleaned leaves from on and around the tennis and basketball court, raked the entire park, cleaned leaves and debris off stairs, and swept the sidewalk all the way to the street.

One 12-year resident said she had never seen the park look so good!

The board thanks Coleman for a job very well done, and we look forward to continued service.

Unfortunately, just a few weeks after Coleman completed their work, construction crews had to bring heavy equipment through the park to work on a home nearby. The owners of that home have a deed allowing that access; there is no other way to get heavy equipment to their back yard. They notified the board about the work before it started, and we appreciate that.

The heavy machinery was driven on more of the park than we expected, and one of our new benches was damaged when it was struck by a truck.

However, the construction company contacted the board and acknowledged the damage, has promised to repair or replace the bench, and has already made a good start on restoring the park to its previous condition. Your association board will ensure that the restoration is completed; meanwhile, we appreciate your patience while the park is in less than ideal condition.

We will hire a tree service later this spring to remove the dead branches from the large pine tree and to prune and shape several of the park's trees. And we'll be replacing the second basketball goal, too.

Finances: Jan. 1-May 10, 2006

Income	
Association Dues	6,960.00
Interest Income	129.35
Total Income	**7,089.35**
Expenses	
Depreciation	380.00
Maintenance	520.86
Office Supplies	33.90
Post Office Box	40.00
Printing & Reprod.	21.52
Taxes	178.40
Total Expenses	**$1,174.68**
Net Income	**$5,914.67**

Only 3 Residents Late with Dues

Annual dues collections are going much faster this year than in recent years, with only three residents missing the April 30 deadline to avoid late fees.

Last year, five residents still had not paid two months later by June 30, forcing the board to begin collection procedures.

Paying your dues on time helps ensure a solid financial footing for your neighborhood association and saves your volunteer board members time and effort, and we're grateful. If you're one of the few yet to pay, please do so promptly.

Special assessment collection is nearly complete as well. Only four homeowners have yet to pay the $10 assessment, and they now owe late fees.

New Block Chair for Blissfield Court

Brenda McCarl is the new block chair for Blissfield Court. She replaces LeeAnn White, who resigned due to other commitments.

Brenda and her husband, Kip, live at 2242 Blissfield; they have three children. You can reach her at ChairBlissfield@nhera.org or 780-3079.

The Board thanks LeeAnn for her years of service, and thanks Brenda for stepping up to fill the position.

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Lost and found. A bracelet, found in mid-April on Dunes Parkway near Bloomfield Court. Call Barb Miller at 780-9219 with a description to claim it.

Hathaway Court contributes. The NHERA Board thanks the Hathaway Court association for paying $213.05 as their share of several years of maintenance on the deck and beach stairs.

Leaf Raking and Grass Cutting Services. Alex Anderegg, 780-5101.