October 6th is National "Neighbors" Night Out

Tuesday evening, October 6, is National "Neighbors" Night Out (NNO) and we hope to see neighbors congregating all over Granada and South View and Fox Run.

This year, Texas is the only state that is holding NNO in October. The rest of the nation had their NNO in August. But, as you know, not many folks want to be outdoors on a sweltering August evening in Central Texas.

So, get out in the front lawn with your neighbors from 6:30 until about 9 pm. Have some cool drinks, maybe some appetizers, maybe have a BBQ. Make sure you exchange phone numbers / email addresses and you talk about watching out for each other’s house. We encourage all elderly people to participate as we want to protect you all as well. This is how we do it. Call 911 for ANY SUSPECT ACTIVITY around homes, in the park, strangers walking down the street ... every and any suspicious activity.

This year we are "more than ever" committed to "beefing up" our Neighborhood Watch (NW) Program. Bev Villareal, a resident in Granada Estates, has decided that she will take the bull by the horns and help our neighborhoods to get our act together. She is our "Neighborhood Watch Czar". After we have had so many break-ins and aggravated assaults, we can do no less. Bev also recently coordinated a meeting at the ACC-Pinnacle campus for all of our neighborhoods. She brought in people from the Sheriff’s office to present on "Burglary Prevention". If you were unable to attend, handouts from the meeting will be available at the various NNO meetings around Granada Hills, Estates and Oaks, as well as in Fox Run and South View.

We need YOU in your part of the neighborhood to STEP UP and help your neighbors to learn about how to thwart the thieves and the thugs. Please contact Bev at 288-9850 if you can help with your part of the neighborhood. Also, you can send an email to NW@granadahoa.org and someone will get back with you quickly. If you have an emergency, or a suspicion, PLEASE CALL 9-1-1.

Volunteer to Help Your Neighborhood!

If you are a resident of Granada Hills, Granada Estates, or Granada Oaks, we would like to offer you the opportunity to participate in the care and feeding of our neighborhoods.

The Granada Hills HOA, Inc. currently is composed of a 9-member volunteer Board of Directors with several subcommittees under its purview. We meet about 10 times a year at a Board members house where we have appetizers and refreshments and discuss the happenings and needs of our neighborhoods. Each year, there are openings for people to join the Board or some of the committees. With new blood we get fresh ideas (and renewed energy) as many people want to learn more about our neighborhood and wish to provide input into how our part of Travis County grows and operates. There are opportunities for people with all types of interests, from working on children’s events, to participating in the future planning of the Oak Hill area, helping our schools, gardening, the front entrance, updating our deed restrictions, working on tennis ladders, lobbying for transportation improvements, providing input on crosswalks, trails, and street improvements, and even for those who want to control or protect our wildlife. Really, whatever your interest, there is something for you to do. After donating your time, however limited it may be, you will come out of the process with a renewed appreciation and understanding of how many different things are going on that you never knew about before working with the Granada HOA Board. We make things happen;

(Continued on Page 3)
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Volunteer - (Continued from Cover Page)

without the efforts of the HOA Board and its committees, our neighborhood would be disconnected.

The committees that are currently in place are: 1) the Front Entrance Committee, 2) the Architectural Control Committee, 3) the Welcome Committee, 4) the Pool Committee, 5) Neighborhood Watch, 6) Children’s Events Committee, 7) the Friendly Gardener, and 8) the Civic Committee.

Our By-laws require us to hold our Annual Meeting for voting in a new Board in early December each year. That is when we will vote on new HOA Board Members, and it is likely that there will be at least 4 spots open. If you would like to attend one or two of our meetings before then to see what its like, please email me, Rick Perkins, at rick@granadahoa.org or call me at 426-5728.

CROSSING "UNDER" HWY 290

The other day I witnessed a teenager running across Hwy 290 from Granada Hills at the El Rey intersection. I don’t recommend it.

When TxDOT installed the light at El Rey and Hwy 290, we asked that they also install a pedestrian cross-walk. The answer was a question. TxDOT asked “Why would anyone want to cross Hwy 290?” Well, I guess our answer wasn’t good enough, because we still do not have a pedestrian cross walk at El Rey and Hwy 290.

Here is an alternative that I discovered a year or so ago. There is a clean and clear, 6 foot tall, drainage culvert under Hwy 290. It is located about 100 feet from the El Rey and Hwy 290 intersection, to the East. I have used this tunnel dozens of times when I go on walks and so forth. It has always been clean and dry, but if its been raining, you should avoid it. See the photo. – Rick Perkins

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Crossing "Over" FM 1826

For almost 2 years our neighborhood has been trying to persuade TxDOT and Travis County to do something about making a safe pedestrian crossing over FM 1826. Our discussions have included a pedestrian bridge (too expensive), a pedestrian tunnel (not enough elevation or too novel), a crosswalk at a new signal light (too hilly), and as a last resort a simple painted crosswalk.

We are fortunate, at this time, to be getting even the painted crosswalk. It was necessary to make an issue in the name of Safety that some kids may not take the bus or get picked up from school and will have to cross FM 1826 to go back and forth to the Gorzycki Middle School. Also, we made an issue with TxDOT that the "low income subdivision" called Summervale may actually have kids that have no other choice but to walk across FM 1826. The safety issue combined with a low income neighborhood must have been the trick to get something done in this case. County Commissioner Huber has been unresponsive to our pleas.

So, TxDOT engineers have surveyed FM 1826, up and down between Seton hospital to Slaughter Lane. They have determined that (for now anyway) the best location for a pedestrian crosswalk is equidistant between Summervale Road and the north entrance of Gallant Fox. (See photo.) Forget that putting up a signal light, say at Slaughter or Twilight Shadow would make sense; it doesn’t because the hills do not allow enough stopping distance so that a car traveling 60 MPH over the hill can have enough time to make the stop.

FM 1826 is scheduled by CAMPO to be built up as a MAD4 roadway, which means 2 lanes in each direction, a middle turn lane, sidewalks, and bike lanes. This project will not happen until the people in our subdivisions demand the improvements. Travis County has to purchase the right of way and pay for the utilities to be moved. TxDOT has to tear down some hills and build the street. If you’d like to join an email group focused on a safe crossing over FM 1826, send an email message to Fix-FM1826-subscribe@yahoogroups.com – Rick Perkins
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Extending the Life of Your Tomato Plants

According to Skip Richter, Travis County Extension Horticulturist, tomato plants left over from the summer growing season can be reinvigorated by allowing the plants to root where they fall on the ground. Tomato plants are essentially vines, and if they are left laying on the ground, they will often root and start producing new plants where they rooted. After some good growth has sprouted, cut away the old parent plant and dispose of it, and nurture the new plant. If you have container-grown tomato plants, it may not be easy to let them “lay on the ground.” Instead pile four or five inches of some compost or garden soil around the base of the stem. Continue watering the tomato plant, even if it looks half dead. If you’re lucky, new growth will start sprouting from the lower part of the plant. Wait for the growth to reach the size of a small seedling, and then cut the older, dead part away. If it’s too late this year and your tomato plants have long since hit the compost pile, try it next year!

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Fall is the Best Time to Plant Trees

Spring doesn’t last long enough with its milder temperatures and usually adequate rainfall to get newly planted shrubs and trees established before the vastly harsher conditions of a Texas summer set in. In Central Texas, the fall is the best time to establish landscape beds and plant trees. The milder and usually wetter weather is ideal to start plants and help get them rooted. Over the winter, the roots are continuing to grow so that once summer arrives, the plants are that much better prepared to deal with the stress of a long hot and dry summer. Local nurseries are getting better at stocking plants for the fall season, although it can be a challenge to find much in the way of variety. Just be sure to water adequately while the plants are becoming established. Even plants that are drought tolerant need to be established before they can live up to their “drought tolerant” potential. For trees, it may mean giving supplemental water for the first two years.

– Beverly Villareal