

# LAUREL CREEK

February 2014

Official Newsletter of the Residents of Laurel Creek

Volume 1, Issue 1

## Message From The Board

*Happy New Year  
Laurel Creek!*

Your Board wants to remind you of some of our accomplishments in 2013:

- We changed management companies from SCS to Sterling in November.
- We worked with Five Star Metals during their construction (still underway by the basketball court). The pipeline company is involved at the fence line as well and assured us that the area will be more beautiful than it was when they have completed the project.
- We completed the water project and restoration to our property. Fill dirt has been added to the low area at the basketball court and grass seeded there. Trees have been trimmed and removed on the property. Pressure washing has been completed on the front entrance monuments, stone pillars, basketball court, and surrounding sidewalks, benches and tables. The waterfall/pond filter and pump have been repaired to allow better water flow and filtration. The Association will continue with other areas in need of maintenance as our budget allows.
- Extra patrol started Thanksgiving week.

Sterling, our new management company, has a website where you can follow your own account and get information at any time by logging into your account – [www.Sterlingasi.net](http://www.Sterlingasi.net).

We will be producing a newsletter every month.

Our next Board Meeting is March 20th. The meetings are open to all homeowners.

## Santa Visits Laurel Creek



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## COMMUNITY CONTACTS

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Becky Lacy ..... President  
Tom Tamaborello ..... Vice President  
Vince Barrale..... Secretary  
Ray Beishline..... Treasurer  
Sue Beishline ..... Director

*To reach a Board Member, please email  
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## NEWSLETTER INFO

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### Call Before You Dig

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..... 1.800.344.8377

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..... 713.207.2222

### Texas Department of Public Safety Crime Service

..... <http://records.txdps.state.tx.us>

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## Dogs Off Leash In Laurel Creek

Several Residents have been complaining to us of “off leash dogs” in the neighborhood. We would like to remind everyone that if your dog is off your property, it MUST be on a leash. This is in our deed restrictions and should be understood clearly and adhered to by everyone!!

There are still too many dogs being walked off leash in Laurel Creek.

1) It is not debatable - It is the Law. At the risk of stating what should be obvious- if there's a law in your town that your dog must be leashed -put the leash on the dog.

2) When your dog is under your control – meaning you have him on a leash - he's less likely to get into something he's not supposed to. Your pet is your responsibility and you must control him and the only way to have complete control is having him on a leash.

3) Just because your dog is friendly doesn't mean every dog is friendly. Not all dogs do well in puppy play groups or on pack walks, and that doesn't make them bad dogs. Some of them just need to walk alone. If your dog is on leash and dog off leash charges your dog, this is upsetting to the owner of the leashed dog and the dog. Both dogs and owners could be injured. Not everyone (to a dog lover's disbelief!) are dog lovers and would prefer to have them at a safe distance.

4) Not everyone you meet is physically able to withstand a dog jumping on them - even a nice dog. There could be a dog bite, scratches, or even injury from the dog knocking down a child or elderly person.

5) People have the right to walk in Laurel Creek without being confronted by loose dogs. There are dog parks locally where dogs can play off leash and there are any number of facilities that have doggie play groups. If you see a dog off leash while out walking-report it or inform the owner that he/she is in violation of the leash law.

Being a responsible dog owner is more than just feeding Fido a grain-free diet or buying the latest, trendy toys or debating the merits of positive training methods. We all love our pets - let's do the right thing and keep them safe - It's the Law Doggone it!





Trash is collected every Wednesday and Saturday. If a holiday falls on one of our scheduled days, trash will NOT be picked up the following day; however it will be collected on the next scheduled pick up day. Your trash/yard clippings should NOT be put out before 6 P.M. on Tuesday for our Wednesday pickup and not before 6 P.M. Friday for our Saturday pickup. If you hire a lawn service, ask them to remove your clippings so they won't sit on the curb prior to our pick up dates. They will not remove it unless you ask them to take it away.

## Who Needs An HOA?

Have you ever wondered why you have a homeowners association? You may not realize it, but your association may be the only thing that protects the value of your home or the quality of your neighborhood.

Community associations do a number of different things. They set and collect the maintenance fees needed to run neighborhood operations. They may maintain landscaping or recreation centers. They may provide for events or meeting places for neighborhood functions. However, the most important function of an association is to enforce deed restrictions.

Deed restrictions are legally binding rules, filed with the real property records, which provide for building, maintaining and using the homes in your neighborhood. They control how homes look and what can be done in the subdivision.

Think for a moment about why you bought your home in the first place. You may have liked the curb appeal of your house or its floor plan, but you probably also considered the neighborhood - how the houses looked next door and down the street. You bought the neighborhood at the same time you bought your house. You bought a lifestyle and surroundings which were much larger than your own property, encompassing everything from the subdivision entries and the recreation center to all the other homes in the neighborhood, assuming it would stay that way.

Unfortunately, many subdivisions don't stay as nice as when they were new. Just like a home, a neighborhood can be well maintained or it can be allowed to fall apart. The big difference between an attractive and an unattractive neighborhood is not really the deed restrictions. Most neighborhoods have reasonably good deed restrictions. The crucial factor is the willingness of the men and women who make up the association's board of directors to enforce the rules that you do have.

What could happen if you don't enforce your restrictions? Plenty! People can amaze you with what they will think is acceptable in a neighborhood. Your subdivision could become a real zoo. Consider the man who kept a full grown lion in his garage, or the couple who kept four or five monkeys in their backyard. Of course there's always the usual demand for goats, chickens and pigs. These are all real cases where one person's idea of what is acceptable probably differs from what you want in your own neighborhood.

Another consequence of inaction is that your neighborhood could become an architectural showcase for the weird and unusual. Take, for example, the man who painted his brick home black and orange, alternating each brick with one painted orange and the next one painted black. Or just imagine a vivid assortment of day glow blue, purple or pink houses down your street. People have differing

*(Continued on Page 4)*

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# THE HARBOUR

(Continued from Page 3)

views of what is attractive and, without deed restrictions, you have a good chance of your neighborhood looking dramatically different from the way it did when you bought your home.

What about commercial use of the properties? Again, you may be surprised. How would you feel about a portable toilet company keeping its toilets and cleaning them on the driveway next door? Or what about a big semi tractor-trailer truck parked across the street? Or people in every business under the sun operating out of their homes? It all happens and the only way you can preserve the lifestyle you thought you were buying is to enforce your deed restrictions. Without restrictions some people would leave garbage in their yards permanently, never maintain their homes, park their cars and boats on the grass in their front yards, park motor homes in the street for years, leave construction unfinished, and make every kind of bizarre, structurally unsound remodeling project you can imagine.

These are real examples of problems faced by many local subdivisions in the last ten years. If the deed restriction violations are not corrected, there can be very negative results. Dr. Barton Smith of the University of Houston Center for Public Policy estimates that property values in a subdivision with an inactive

association can fall as much as forty percent due to failure to enforce restrictions.

To illustrate, multiply an average home price of \$50,000 times the number of lots in an average subdivision of 250 homes. This yields a total property value of \$12,500,000. This is the value of the assets that the association is trying to protect. If that property value is reduced by forty percent, the homeowners in the neighborhood lose \$5,000,000. Obviously, this is a disaster. Even worse, think about living in a subdivision that deteriorated that badly!

Even if home prices only lose ten percent in value due to a moderate failure to enforce deed restrictions, homeowners lose \$1,250,000. That kind of loss is simply unacceptable and completely unnecessary. The association, acting through its board of directors, can control the appearance of the neighborhood by taking deed restrictions seriously and vigorously enforcing any infraction of those restrictions.

Failure to enforce your community rules is like allowing a bacterial infection to go unchecked. At first it may appear to be a small problem, but it soon spreads and becomes very serious. Like getting a shot or taking medicine, enforcing deed restrictions can be unpleasant, but it is necessary for the health and vitality of your neighborhood.



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## 20 MPH Speed Limit Signs

Petitions for 20 MPH speed limit signs to be posted in Laurel Creek were mailed along with your 2014 assessment statement. As of January 10th we had received 61 of the 160 needed. Please remember to mail yours to Sterling and contact Frank or Janine at Sterling if you need one.

## SUDOKU

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View answers online at [www.peelinc.com](http://www.peelinc.com)

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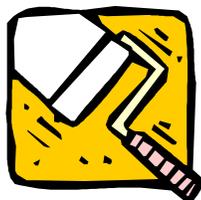
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## POSTURE TIPS FOR MOMS AND DADS

*Mike McTague PT, DPT, OCS*

Lifting and carrying a child, picking up toys off of the floor, and pushing a stroller are normal daily tasks for many parents. Below are some quick tips to avoid overstraining your spine and other body areas.

### **LIFTING YOUR CHILD FROM THE FLOOR**

When picking your child up off the floor, you should use a half-kneel lift. First, stand close to your child on the floor. While keeping your back straight, place one foot slightly forward of the other foot, and bend your hips and knees to lower yourself onto one knee. Once down on the floor, grasp your child with both arms and hold him or her close to your body. Tighten your stomach muscles, push with your legs, and slowly return to the standing position. To place your child onto the floor, the same half-kneel technique should be performed.

### **CARRYING/HOLDING YOUR CHILD**

When holding or carrying your child, you should always hold him or her close to your body and balanced in the center of your body. Avoid holding your child in one arm and balanced on your hip. When using a child carrier be sure to keep your back straight and your shoulders back to avoid straining your back and neck.

### **PICKING UP TOYS FROM THE FLOOR**

As a parent you will too often be involved in cleaning up after your child. When picking toys up from the floor, keep your head and back straight, and while bending at your waist, extend one leg off the floor straight behind you. This is often called a “golfer’s lift”, as you may see some “seasoned” golfers retrieve their ball from the hole this way.

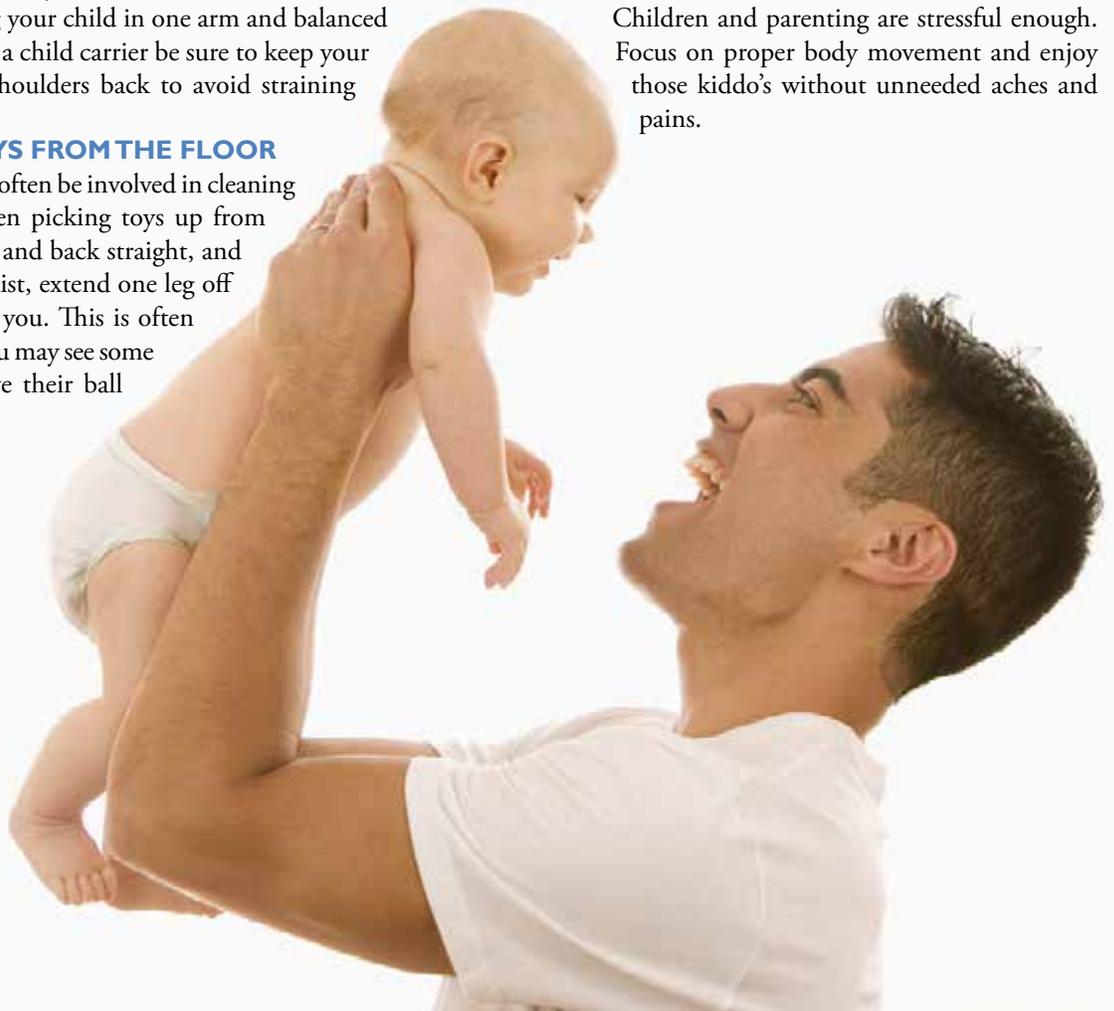
### **LIFTING YOUR CHILD OUT OF THE CRIB**

If your child’s crib has a rail that lowers, you will want it in the lowest position when lifting your child out of the crib. As you lift, keep your feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent. Arch your low back and, while keeping your head up, bend at your hips. With both arms, grasp your child and hold him or her close to your chest. Straighten your hips so you are in an upright position, and then extend your knees to return to a full stand. To return your child to the crib, use the same technique and always remember to keep your child close to your chest.

### **PUSHING A STROLLER**

When pushing your child in a stroller, you will want to stay as close to the stroller as possible, allowing your back to remain straight and your shoulders back. The force to push the stroller should come from your entire body, not just your arms. Avoid pushing the stroller too far ahead of you because this will cause you to hunch your back and shoulders forward.

Children and parenting are stressful enough. Focus on proper body movement and enjoy those kiddo’s without unneeded aches and pains.



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