Howdy Neighbors,

It’s Spring in Barkers Ridge – the flowers are in coming into bloom and our seemingly lifeless yards will soon return to vigorous growth over the next months (and the weekly mowing, weeding, and trimming that this entails). All in all, it is the annual celebration of new life and a renewal of our what we hold most important.

In that spirit, we are now gearing up for what should be a very productive 2018 for the Association. We will quickly adopt the changes to our governing documents that was the focus of the prior year (these changes are outlined on page 4). Our priorities in the new year will be to affirm and build on the sense of community that has made Barkers Ridge such a unique neighborhood - and to strengthen communication with our residents (of which this newly designed newsletter is but a start). In this issue, we celebrate a key reason for that strong network—the block captains that remind us just what it means to be a neighbor. As importantly, we will be focused on a disciplined investment strategy to rebuild the facilities that you, as members of the Association, own and set the standard for the quality of life values that we share. We have no doubt that these changes will be successful because, ultimately, we all enjoy and love the neighborhood we live in.

In the spirit of community involvement and renewal, the Board would like to invite everyone to the annual meeting to be held on March 27th at 6:30 p.m. in the Mayde Creek Junior High cafeteria. We are looking forward to hearing your ideas and your concerns but, as importantly, we want you to attend, to celebrate our community and join in our plans to move forward in 2018.

_The Barkers Ridge HOA Board of Directors_

**The Lost Art of Being a Good Neighbor**

by Judith McGlaughlin

It's a sign of the times. In many neighborhoods, people are extremely transient: you just meet the new neighbors and the next thing you know, they are moving out (decided to buy a new home or they got a job transfer) so after a while, you start holding off on getting too involved with the neighbors because you know there is the high probability they’ll be moving on soon. Many people also work outside the home – and on the weekends, they’re trying to catch up – catch up on the millions of things

Continued on page 2.
that didn’t get done during the week, or just catching up on the sleep they deprived themselves during the work week – so you seldom actually see your neighbors. Today, most people don’t even know their neighbors’ names, let alone trust them or even offer to help out in the time of need.

Friends and Neighbors

Well, that’s all true – sort of. There’s no doubt that there are a lot of things that make it hard to be a “good neighbor”. And, perhaps there’s a misperception about just what a neighbor is. A neighbor (as English philosopher Gilbert Chesterton famously points out) isn’t necessarily a friend: a friend is someone close to us, regardless of where they live: a neighbor is a person we depend on when we need help. Both, however, are a very key part of our sense of belonging.

It is a strange and probably not well understood coincidence that we all chose the same spot on this planet to put down roots, to raise our families, and in some cases, to remain when our kids have grown and created lives of their own. Yet, it means we have shared the same experiences and have, together, watched the world change around us – even as we try to keep our worlds the same.

And, there is no doubt that in times when that community is adversely affected, we turn to and offer our support. No more clearly was this demonstrated then during the flood of last September, which spared Barkers Ridge, but reminded us that we are all “Houston Strong”.

The Barkers Ridge Neighborhood

All neighborhoods have their own personalities, reflecting the demographics of the residents and their willingness to organize. At Barkers Ridge, for example, there’s not a huge turnover of residents. In fact, our turnover rate, that is, the number of new residents purchasing homes in the community, is about 5% - and has been at that level consistently over the last 15 years (since we have been keeping those statistics).

And, we have a strong communications network, including a Google Mail account where some residents in 75% of our 762 homes have asked to receive updates from the Barkers Ridge HOA on events and issues that affect us all.

Barkers Ridge “Neighborhood Watch”

Perhaps the most tangible contributor to the Barkers Ridge neighborhood is the block watch program. Today, there are 40 residents who have volunteered to be the neighborhood block captain for one of the 60 blocks that exist. These 40 captains account for 448 homes, or roughly 63% of the total population.

These block captains are responsible for the exceptional “National Night Out” events for which Barkers Ridge has been recognized. But, their job is more. They reach out to all residents in their blocks, to make sure everyone knows that they are there to keep watch if that resident is out of town – and are responsible for many of the “suspicious” calls to the constable.

We also survey our block captains regularly for what’s working and what we can do better. In response to one such inquiry, one block captain offered: “My suggestion is to continue to build up a more active Block Captain network - idea sharing, meetings, etc. Facebook is great; but, the Block Captains have a real face - and work to keep everyone included. Our block address/email/phone list keeps us all connected. Neighbors seem to really be watching out for each other. Over here, there is good communication between friends when folks

Continued from Page 1.

The Lost Art of Being a Good Neighbor (2/3)

“We make our friends; we make our enemies; but God makes our next-door neighbor.”

Continued on page 3.
The Lost Art of Being a Good Neighbor (3/3)

are out of town, of suspicious vehicles, etc. The 13 or so houses that make up our block have become a REAL neighborhood.”

Strengthening our Neighborhood

Many of the drivers that make it difficult to foster “neighborhood” in this community just don’t exist: we don’t have a lot of crime, and chances are your neighbor has been your neighbor for the last 20 to 30 years. And, there are not enough words to convey the importance of our block captains.

But, while the statistics on neighborhood watch are good, they can be better.

During April and May, we will be focusing on strengthening the block captain network. If you don’t know who your block captain is, or even what section and block you live in, contact us at BarkersRidgeHOA@gmail.com. Our block captains will be going door-to-door to introduce themselves, and let you know they are there for you. You will know they are your block captain because they will be wearing a t-shirt to identify themselves. If you’d prefer not to socialize with your neighbors, that’s ok – just let your block captain know. But in the event of an emergency, you will be part of the community’s effort to make sure you are OK.

If your block does not have a block captain, consider becoming one – perhaps you and another resident in your block if that makes sense for your block.

We will have a block captain meeting during the summer, for the block captains in each section to meet each other, select a section chief, and exchange best practices. We salute those residents who have stepped up to form our neighborhood block watch community. We hope you have a desire to learn more about getting involved.

Good Neighbors—More Quotes

There are plenty of “good neighbor” quotes and sayings that couldn’t make it into our “Lost Art” article. Please find below a selection of some favorites.

“Good fences make good neighbors.”
Robert Frost

“Nothing makes you more tolerant of a neighbor’s noisy party than being there.”
Franklin P. Jones

“A good neighbor is a fellow who smiles at you over the back fence, but doesn't climb over it.”
Arthur Baer

“You can be a good neighbor only if you have good neighbors.”
Howard E. Koch

“Be a good neighbor, and leave me alone.”
Ashleigh Brilliant

A man is called selfish not for pursuing his own good, but for neglecting his neighbor’s.
Richard Whately
In April, the Barkers Ridge Homeowners’ Association (HOA) will adopt changes to the Association’s governing documents, including the Articles of Association and the By-Laws. These changes were recommended in mid-2017, when a member of the HOA Board of Directors moved out of the neighborhood, but elected to finish out his volunteer service on the Board.

This decision was met with surprise by many of our residents, who felt that board members were required to be residents of the community that they served. However, it was learned that the governing documents, which define the rules for how the Association will operate, including the process for appointing directors, were originally drafted and approved when the Association was formed in 1986, and allowed for non-residents (at that time, the developers tasked with building out the community) to be members of the Board of Directors. Such a change required the consent of 75% of Barkers Ridge homeowners, and a group of homeowners embarked upon a door to door campaign to gain this consent. The legal support for this effort was funded by the Homeowners Association, with unanimous support from the Board of Directors.

In the consent process, the members of the HOA were presented with the proposed changes that considered the constraints of some newer state laws. In February, this consent process was completed, and the signatures of nearly 600 homeowners were presented to the Board, confirming that the proposal had been approved and the measure passed.

Despite initial differences about how this issue should have been resolved, the community came together and organized to find and execute what is, ultimately, the right solution.

The amended language for the Articles of Incorporation for the Barkers Ridge Homeowners Association will read the following:

*The affairs of this Association shall be managed by a Board of Directors in accordance with the Bylaws of the Association. The number of Directors may increase or decrease by amendment of the Bylaws of the Association.*

Further, some sections of the Bylaws for the Barkers Ridge Homeowners Association have to be changed to align with state law and the amended wording of the Articles of Incorporation to read as follows:

*Section 1. Board of Directors. The affairs of the Association shall be managed by a Board of Directors of not less than five (5) Directors who are Members of the Association, of which at least four (4) Directors shall reside within the Subdivision. The number of Directors may be increased or decreased from time to time by amendment of the Bylaws in accordance with Article XII hereof.*

*Section 3. Nomination. Nomination for election to the Board of Directors shall be made by a Nominating Committee. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the annual meeting. The Nominating Committee shall consist of a Chairman, who shall be a member of the Board of Directors, and two or more persons who may, by not need be, Members of the Association. The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Board of Directors prior to each annual meeting of the Members, to serve from the close of such annual meeting until the close of the next annual meeting. The Nominating Committee shall make as many nominations for election to the Board of Directors as it shall in its discretion determine, but not less than the number of vacancies that are to be filled. Such nominations may only be from among Members.*

*Section 5. Removal. No member of the Board of Directors shall be removed from office except for 1) malfeasance in the conduct of his duties; 2) more than one (1) Director resides outside the Association; or 3) in accordance with Texas Property Code 209.00591(b) and its progeny. Removal from the Board of Directors shall require a majority vote of the Board of Directors. In the event of death, resignation or removal of a director, his successor shall be selected by the remaining members of the Board of Directors and shall serve for the unexpired term of the predecessor.*

The new language has been provided to the HOA attorneys, who will update the governing documents and send back to the Board for their adoption. Once adopted, the attorneys will file the updated documents with the Secretary of State’s office, as required by state law.
Barkers Ridge Community Events Calendar

Thursday, March 22, 2018 at 6:45 p.m.
WHCRWA –West Harris County Regional Water Authority Meeting
**Topic: Why is the Cost of Water Going Up? (and other frequently asked questions)**
Two WHCRWA Board Members will be present to answer questions: Mike Thornhill and Gary Struzick.
Westlake Volunteer Fire Department Station
19636 Saums Road, Houston, TX 77084 (Conference Room)
http://www.whcrwa.com/

Tuesday, March 27, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.
**Barkers Ridge Annual HOA Meeting**
The Annual Meeting will include a review of the Association’s operations and financials in 2017, as well as the election of two board members.
Mayde Creek Junior High School
2700 Greenhouse Road, Houston, TX 77084 (Cafeteria)
http://www.barkersridge.org/

Saturday, March 31, 2018 at 9:30 a.m.
**Barkers Ridge Annual Easter Egg Hunt**
Barkers Ridge Recreation Area
http://www.barkersridge.org/
Thursday, April 12 6:30 at 6:30 p.m.

**Stop Greenhouse Road Landfill Expansion Meeting**
Updates from Gary Brown of the Rolling Green subdivision and others regarding the pending permit for the expansion and increase in height of the landfill. The Greenhouse Landfill is located at 3510 Greenhouse Road, Houston, TX 77084.
Westlake Volunteer Fire Department Station
19636 Saums Road, Houston, TX 77084 (Conference Room)
http://stopgreenhouselandfill.com/

Saturday, May 5, 2018 at 11:00 a.m. to 2 p.m.
**Katy Community “Chip Clinic”**
$10 Microchips for Pets with FREE Lifetime Registration
Woof Gang Bakery & Grooming
9711 S. Mason Road
Richmond, TX 77407

Saturday, May 19, 2018 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
**Barkers Ridge 2018 Pool Tag Distribution**
Barkers Ridge Recreation Area
http://www.barkersridge.org/

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March/April/May 2018

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Easter Carnival

DATE: MARCH 31, 2018
TIME: 9:30—NOON.
Location: Barkers Ridge Recreational Area

Featuring:
⇒ Easter Egg Hunt
⇒ Easter Bunny
⇒ Bouncy House
⇒ Games
⇒ More to come..

Parents: There will be three separate Easter Egg Hunts, based on age group:

Ages 0-3, Ages 4-6, Ages 7 and up.

The first hunt starts at 10:00 a.m.

Don’t miss the fun! Be sure to have your kids at the rec area by 10 a.m.
With this issue of the “Ridge Runner”, we introduce you to the metrics we use to understand changes to the level of security in Barkers Ridge. These data reflect calls made by Barkers Ridge residents to the Precinct 5 Constable’s Office. For many years, the Barkers Ridge HOA has contracted the services of a dedicated law enforcement officer, Deputy Wilkerson.

“Security” includes not only calls related to criminal and traffic incidents – but also include domestic disputes, disturbances, and the largest category, calls related to “community service”. In fact, of the nearly 800 calls made to the constable in 2017, 60% were related to community service – largely, personal interactions between the constable and Barkers Ridge residents. This interaction is the core of “community policing”, which focuses on building ties and working closely with members of the community.

Criminal incidents make up a small part of the calls made to the constable. Included in this category are reports of suspicious activity, rather than the activity itself – which shows the strong focus we have on prevention. In 2017, there were 35 criminal incidents reported, 10 of which were related to vehicular burglaries (largely vehicles left on the street) and stolen vehicles (3 in total). By contract, there were 84 calls for either suspicious persons or vehicles, and 81 vacation watches – in addition to the hundreds of “meet the citizen” calls – all of which create a visible, frequent presence in the neighborhood, both during the dedicated constable’s on-duty hours, and when she is off-duty.

It should be noted that there are many reports of suspicious activity posted on the Barkers Ridge Facebook page, as well as the “Next Door Neighbor” portal. These reports are not monitored by the Constable’s Office, so the benefit of having the physical presence of a patrol officer and vehicle when such suspicious activity is witnessed does not occur. If you post such activity on social media, you are strongly encouraged to call the constable’s office at the same time. Only you know when something is suspicious, and having a patrol call in the area at the time of the suspicious activity is the real deterrent to a criminal incident.

If you presently subscribe to an alarm service, the constable also urges that you update your contact information with the service provider. In many cases, when the constable is called to check a homeowners’ alarm that has been activated, she finds that the alarm company has a home phone number (if the resident were home, the alarm would not likely not be activated) or the contact information is outdated.
You’re here! You’ve bought a house. You’ve planted some flowers. You got your pool tags. You are a homeowner! For many the next step is to get a pet. Barkers Ridge has many dog and cat owners. Dogs need a lot of attention but they do encourage us to exercise. With our great dog trails, this is also a great way to meet neighbors. But dogs aren’t for everyone. They need a lot of care and exercise or they make us become not so good neighbors. Cats are also a good pet choice but they need exercise and stimulation also or your furniture will become a scratching post. Inside cats need litter boxes and outside cats can make neighbors flower beds a litter box.

So, what can you do if you want a pet who can actually be “petted”, that doesn’t bark or whine, and who doesn’t mind a little alone time? It’s Easter time—so nothing says cute like a bunny! Rabbits make wonderful indoor pets. They are adorable and brimming with personality. You can purchase one from a breeder or from an animal shelter. But there are a few things you should know to ensure a rabbit is right for you and your family.

**Finances:** Owning a pet rabbit comes with added financial responsibility. Be prepared to spend money on housing/food/bunny proofing supplies. In addition, be sure you’ll be able to afford ongoing costs for a bunny on food, litter, and vet bills (including spay/neuter fees if the bunny didn’t get the surgery while at the shelter/rescue).

**Bunny Housing:** Rabbits are social animals. The location of a rabbit’s housing area within your home (which can take the form of a puppy pen, bunny condo, large cage, or just an area with the food, litter boxes, and cardboard castles if the bunny is free reign) is an extremely important consideration. You’ll have to make sure the rabbit has a place to relax by himself but is not completely secluded from the family. We did keep our rabbit in an outside pen at times but let him run around the yard and the house. In the summer we froze water in 2 liter bottles to put in his pen during the day since rabbits don’t do like our Texas summers.

**Bunny Proofing:** If the bunny will have free reign in the house/apartment/room, you will absolutely need to bunny proof the area. Even if you keep the bunny in a cage you still will need to safeguard your home when you let the rabbit out for supervised exercise. Rabbits are very curious and persistent creatures. They will find a way to get into your computer cables, wires, molding, couch piping, slightly frayed rug, etc. Ours ended up eating a hole in the mattress on our trundle bed! Rabbits will get into trouble if they’re bored. A great diversion for rabbits is a cardboard castle filled with empty toilet paper rolls, old phone books, and other paper products you find around the house.

**Litter Box Training:** Our boy was litter box trained but sometimes rabbits forget their good habits once they move into their new home. This is natural because the drastic change in environment can be very stressful.

**Nutrition:** It’s important to have a good understanding of a rabbit’s nutritional needs throughout his/her life. Proper nutrition (and in the correct amounts) is vital for a rabbit’s well-being. The staple of a rabbit’s diet is fiber. Rabbits must have access to unlimited grass hays at all times.

**Bonding with a Bunny:** Rabbits can be quite affectionate animals, but personalities definitely vary from individual to individual. Most rabbits don’t particularly like being held/picked up, and some bunnies are more aloof than others.

Rabbits aren’t for everyone but our rabbit, Rascal, was a fun and much loved family member for almost 8 years. And as stress relief stroking a rabbit’s fur is wonderfully calming.

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**Barkers Ridge “Pet Place”**

*By Diane Garcia*
**Tips from Harris County Animal Shelter on Responsible Pet Ownership**

Your pets will thank you for being a responsible pet owner when you follow these steps:

1) Spay, neuter and microchip your pets.
2) Keep a license tag and pet identification tag on them at all times.
3) Frequently walk your fence line to check for loose/missing fence boards, holes under the fence, and open gates.
4) Commit to the relationship for the life of your cat or dog. Recognize that pet ownership requires an investment of time, money and love.
5) Exercise, train and socialize your pets. Provide veterinary care (preventive and when ill).
6) Don’t allow them to run loose – keep them safely confined.
7) Clean up after them.
8) Include your pet in your emergency or disaster plans.
9) Adopt homeless pets from the Harris County Animal Shelter, Special Pals Animal Shelter, Citizens for Animal Protection (CAP), or from any pet rescue in town! Check out [www.PetFinder.com](http://www.PetFinder.com) for your next pet member of the family.

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**Don’t Forget Your HOA Dues are Due!**

If you have not sent your check to Crest Management for your 2018 annual dues, please be sure to do so.

Starting March 1, Crest began sending to our slow-paying homeowners a certified letter, which costs money to send, and will be added to the initial payment (along with the $10 fee for the reminder letters sent out on February 1). The fees and letters add up quickly, so get your checkbook out now (yes, now!) so you don’t forget.

*Crest Management’s address is P.O. Box 219320, Houston, TX 77218.*

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**HOA Request for Volunteers**

By Marcia Thomas

I need 2 residents to join the Yard of the Month Team. This team selects an outstanding yard in each of the four sections of Barkers Ridge to award the coveted and very much appreciated Barkers Ridge Yard of the Month Sign. We lost a couple of team members when they sadly had to move away. We have a couple of openings on the team now. The team picks an overall winner and an honorable mention from each section each month during the Spring, Summer, and Fall of the year.

I need an awesome photographer to take pictures of our Barkers Ridge social events such as the Easter Egg Hunt, the 4th of July Bicycle Parade, National Night Out parties, Christmas Decorating Team, etc. It really helps to have photos for our newsletter, the Ridge Runner. Perhaps you have an interest in building the community but cannot devote the time needed for an HOA Board position, here is your chance to really make a tremendous impact while the tasks are not as time intensive as a Board position.

If you have an interest in either capacity, send your contact information to me at marcia_thomas@sbcglobal.net. Thanks and looking forward to working with you!
Barkers Ridge Swim Team—Home of the Marlins!

By James Matthews

Barkers Ridge Swim Team or BRST provides our youth with a community-based, family-oriented recreational, yet competitive swim team experience, to further educate children and parents in competitive swimming, by providing a positive enjoyable environment. We entrench good sportsmanship and encourage each swimmer to achieve his/her highest individual potential. We depend on dedicated swimmers, family volunteers, and parent leaders, along with a caring and experienced coaching staff to promote confidence, camaraderie, health, dedication and respect, while we never forget that the swim team experience is enjoyable and fun!

BRST was first formed in 1992, by two Barkers Ridge parents Denise Allen and Linda Hendrickson. It’s hard to believe that 26 years later, we are gearing up for another great swim season! Back in 1992, we had 40 swimmers, and, by 2012, that number had grown to 156! However, our goal remains the same - to promote personal growth, self-esteem, fun, and instruction in the sport of swimming.

We are excited to say that the 2018 BRST Swim Season Registration is now OPEN through May 11th! Come help us celebrate over 25 years of summer fun. An on-site registration will be held during our parent meeting on April 29th at 6pm, however; please try and register online at https://brmarlins.swimtopia.com.

BRST accepts corporate, as well as individual sponsorships. We are hosts to two home meets and have four away meets (includes Meet of Champions & All Stars) each season. Each team represents between approximately 100 to 200 swimmers and their families. This accompanied with our fantastic community and far reaching word of mouth will give you and your business a large amount of public display within the West Houston and Katy area. See our website https://brmarlins.swimtopia.com/sponsors for more information.

Practices:
April 30th Practice Begins
(Monday - Friday)

6 & under (4:45-5:15 pm)
7 thru 8 (5:15-6:00 pm)
9 thru 11 elementary age (6:00-6:45 pm)
11 thru 18-6th gr. thru High School (3:45-4:45 pm)

May 29th - Morning Practices Begin
(Monday - Friday)

7 thru 8 (7:00-7:45 am)
9 thru 10 (7:45-8:30 am)
6 & under (8:30-9:00 am)
11 thru 18 (9:00-10:00 am)

Important Dates:
June 2nd Away Meet - at North Lake
June 9th Away Meet – at Williamsburg Colony
June 15th Home Meet vs Tamarron
June 23rd Home Meet vs Lakemont
June 25th-26th Meet of Champions
June 29th All Star Meet
Totally Awesome!
By Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center

So, what am I referring to? I’m referring to the totally awesome opossum! Now some of you will disagree with me but let me tell you about the opossum and then see if you agree with me.

The first thing you should know is that the opossum is a hero in the fight against ticks. According to the National Wildlife Federation, an opossum can eat up to 4,000 ticks in one week helping to slow down the spread of Lyme disease. In addition to ticks, they eat cockroaches, rats, mice, snails and slugs—actually, they eat almost anything, keeping our environment free of all the nasty things we don’t like. Snakes? Yep. Opossums are immune to the venom of poisonous snakes.

Is rabies a concern of yours? Not to worry. Although any mammal can be a carrier of rabies, the chance of opossums being a carrier are very rare. The body temperature of the opossum is very low making it almost impossible for the virus to survive.

Dinosaurs roamed our earth 70 million years ago. Guess who roamed it with them? Opossums. Any animal that can survive for that long deserves my respect.

“Playing ‘possum” is a real thing but opossums don’t have any control over it. When frightened, some become paralyzed with fear. They drop, their lips draw back exposing their teeth and their anal glands secrete a bad smelling liquid which deters predators. They will recover in one to four hours. Some scientists believe that “playing ‘possum” evolved as a defense mechanism because opossums move so slowly and can’t outrun predators.

The opossum has 50 teeth—more than any other North American land mammal. The hairless tail is used for balance, grasping branches and carrying nesting materials but is not used to hang upside down. This is a common misconception. They also have opposable thumbs on their hind feet used for holding onto branches.

Are you now convinced that opossums are totally awesome? Even if you’re not, we encourage you to “live and let live.” They serve a purpose and deserve a place in our world.

If you find a dead opossum with babies in the pouch, please don’t remove them. Although difficult, we ask that you place the expired mom in a box and bring her to us. We will carefully remove the babies and care for them until they can be safely released back to the wild.

TWRC Wildlife Center can help you with all of your wildlife concerns. Answers to many of your questions can be found on our website at www.twrcwildlifecenter.org. If you can’t find the information you need, please call us at 713-468-TWRC.

Who is TWRC and why do they contribute articles to the Ridge Runner?
See page 12 for a fuller profile.
Over 5,000 animals pass through the doors of TWRC Wildlife Center every year brought to us by the public. Some are ill, some are injured and some are orphaned. Some are feathered, some are furry, some are as big as a house cat and some as small as your thumb from knuckle to tip. Staff and volunteers carefully evaluate, diagnose, and treat animals through proper diet, medication, physical therapy, exercise, and prerelease conditioning. Animals admitted to TWRC face one of three fates: successfully rehabilitating them for release back to the wild, natural death due to their condition, or euthanasia. In every case, the staff and volunteers strive to provide pain-free solutions to the many problems these animals face. Successful rehabilitation means that animals are physically and psychologically fit to be released and are able to truly function as wild animals. Knowing how to diagnose, treat and care for these animals takes time, patience, knowledge and most importantly, compassion.

Oil spills, loss of habitats due to urban expansion, injuries sustained daily from encounters with cats, vehicles, and windows, poisonings and gunshot wounds, are reasons why TWRC Wildlife Center continues to be needed by the community. TWRC provides animal care in two ways: (1) in-home by trained rehabilitators who specialize in one or more species and (2) the Onsite Animal Care Program where we care for baby birds, squirrels and opossums. In-home rehabilitation is usually reserved for neonates, critical care, and species that need months of care before they can be released. The onsite program offers a way for the community to become actively involved in the rehabilitation of wildlife under the guidance of trained rehabilitators.

TWRC Wildlife Center opened its doors in 1979 and provides the community with a centrally located wildlife emergency care and rehabilitation facility. We provide opportunities for community service hours, scouting badges and projects, volunteer service projects and volunteer awards, including being among the certified organizations approved to issue the prestigious U. S. President’s Volunteer Service Award. In addition, we offer internships fulfilling requirements for scholastic credit and career experience. TWRC’s wildlife and education programs help people of all ages understand more about the world around them, their impact on it, and its impact on them. TWRC’s community outreach programming focuses on fostering a love of the environment and good stewardship of our natural resources and Texas wildlife.

Now, more than ever, there is a global focus on the impact humans are having on our environment. We believe TWRC Wildlife Center plays an important role in teaching our citizens to live in harmony with wildlife and how to actively and purposefully support and protect animals. If you’d like to become involved in the important work that TWRC does or donate so we can continue to help wildlife, go to our website at www.twrcwildifecenter.org or call Paula at 713-468-8972.

**Helping Local Wildlife Since 1979**

Harris County Animal Cruelty Task-Force

This service is new in Harris County. You can now report animal cruelty online. The fastest and easiest way to report animal abuse is via www.927paws.org. The hotline at 832-927-PAWS is also available to file reports and is manned 24/7, officials said.

What is animal cruelty? Either deliberate abuse or simply the failure to take care of an animal.

What can be reported to 832-927-PAWS? Neglect, Abuse, Hoarding, Torture, Dog Fighting

For more detailed information, go to www.927paws.org.
SPRING has sprung, if not on the calendar yet, in the air and in our flower beds. Barkers Ridge is starting to sparkle and shine! The quote above sums it up: Don’t worry about your neighbor’s yard when doing your spring planting – plant what makes you happy! And, our part of town sure has come through a lot of dirt this last year, but Spring renews our hope that we can do anything! Many of our neighbors devastated by Harvey have made phenomenal strides in rebuilding their homes and their lives – very quickly. The human spirit is very strong. I hope you will join me in reaching out, personally, to our new neighbors who have moved here from flooded areas. It’s spring and a great time to knock on their door or start up a conversation while you are moving that dirt around.

With spring comes the beginning of the real estate selling season. This year, I expect it to be a FRENZY!! Many of the buyers who flooded rented for 6 months to a year. Those leases are up or coming to an end. They are out looking and buying. Our inventory is being outpaced by demand – it is low, low. If you are considering selling your home, this may be a great opportunity for you. Be prepared to also pay top dollar in many parts of Houston for your next home. And, interest rates have gone up. I am seeing 4.65% in many cases. They can move a bit from day-to-day.

Last quarter’s real estate article focused on why home X and home Y sell for different prices. Keep a couple of the major points in mind this season – GENERALLY (and there are exceptions):

⇒ Bigger sells for less per sq ft than smaller – sort of like buying your small box of cereal for $3.95 vs. a huge bag for $5 at Randall’s.

⇒ Two stories sell for less per sq ft than one stories: it is cheaper to go up.

⇒ The lower-end price range often rises quicker than the higher end: there is more demand.

⇒ Price points: $150K, $200K, $250K. Often a house priced at $199K or $200K, will sell quicker than if it were priced at $202K. Buyers have ‘emotional’ price points – they won’t even look at homes priced over that emotional amount.

The highest priced home in Barkers Ridge sold late last year for $270K ($82 sq ft). At almost 3,300 sq. ft., it was the LARGEST home sold, had a huge lot., a pool and 3 car garage - offering a lot of amenities and value for the price for this buyer. The seller posted the original list price at $295K, and that ended up being more than the market would bear. It took 50 days to go under contract and a few more weeks to close. The list price often has as much to do with the seller’s plans (motivation) as other market factors. When putting a home on the market, I always ask, “Why are you moving?” This way I can price it to fit the seller’s needs.

**Barkers Ridge Statistics (Total/F = Foreclosures)**

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<tr>
<td>Sold</td>
<td>31/6</td>
<td>37/7</td>
<td>31/4</td>
<td>27/2</td>
<td>48/3</td>
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<td>% Foreclosures Sold</td>
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<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<td>Mean $/sq ft Sold</td>
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<td>$61</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$63</td>
<td>$67</td>
<td>$73</td>
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<td>$89**</td>
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<td>$183K</td>
<td>$213K</td>
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(All sales data is per HAR MLS; deemed reliable but not guaranteed) **WITH ONLY 2 SALES, DATA COULD BE SKEWED.**
It's time to start to focus on the spring real estate market, if you will be selling your home in 2018, as the spring and summer market is typically the best time to sell. As a resident realtor/broker, I'd like to share some valuable tips that will help to secure the best possible offers for homes in Barkers Ridge:

Staging is the single most important concept that many Realtors and Homeowners may overlook when marketing residential real estate. I can't overemphasize the importance of this concept for a successful sales transaction. Staging can be quite simple, if you follow a few elementary rules prior to listing your property in the MLS.

* **Curb Appeal, Curb Appeal, Curb Appeal!**
  Take an objective look at the front of your house. Add some color, if needed. Flowers and flowering plants are not expensive and can really impress a potential Buyer. Mulch all flower beds. Pressure wash your driveway, sidewalks and brick. Windows should be sparkling, inside and out.

* **Declutter! Less is better.** Remove oversized furniture and personal items. Make sure that visitors can walk freely through the rooms without having to walk around furniture.

* **Touch up paint** and assess which rooms need to be touched up or painted.

* **Spring Clean!** Have your home meticulously cleaned prior to listing.

* **Renovate?** Discuss the advantages of minor and/or major renovations with your agent. Renovations and upgrades to kitchens and bathrooms can produce the highest net gains.

* And, finally, when your home is ready to show and is "dressed for success", leave the premises during scheduled showings after leaving accent lights on.

April 30th is the Deadline to File for Homestead Exemption

Submitted by Marcia Thomas

Many Barkers Ridge homeowners have not filed for Homestead Exemption on their property to save money on property taxes. (You must occupy the home to qualify for this exemption.)

A homestead exemption helps you save on taxes on your home. An exemption removes part of the value of your property from taxation and lowers your taxes. For example, if your home is valued at $100,000 and you qualify for a $20,000 exemption, you pay taxes on your home as if it was worth only $80,000.

An Application for Residential Homestead Exemption (same form for over-65, disability, over-55 surviving spouse, or 100% disabled veteran homestead exemptions) can be found at the Forms Page at www.hcad.org.

To check to see if your property has a homestead exemption, go to hcad.org, click on record search, then property address and fill in your address. Look about halfway down on the left under Exemption Type, this will show the type of exemption you have (or none if you do not have any exemptions). There are videos to watch for complete instructions to fill out the homestead exemption form and the documents you will need to send in with the application.

To file for the exemption, go to hcad.org.

- Go to the Forms tab.
- Click on Popular Forms.
- Click on Homestead Exemption: General Residential, Over-65, Disability, Over-55 Surviving Spouse.
- Fill out the appropriate portion of the form, sign, and enclose the required documents requested
- Mail to the Harris County Appraisal.
Support Your Neighborhood’s Small Businesses!

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Neighbors: please contact BarkersRidgeHOA@gmail.com to update or add to these listings.
SOLD IN BARKERS RIDGE 2017
By d. Diane Sanders

3310 Deeds Road 18514 Iron Lake Drive
18723 Buffalo River Way 19010 Canyon River
3307 Dobbin Stream 18803 Cherrytree Grove
3302 Barkers Forest 19003 Ridge Trail
3346 Autumn Bridge 19018 Canyon River
19022 Ridge Hill 19025 Ridge Hill Court
18719 Appletree Hill

All sales in Barkers Ridge Avg. $/sq. ft. = $84.86
Diane’s Sales in Barkers Ridge Avg. $/sq. ft. = $86.34
Difference $1.48 more per sq. ft. by Diane
Avg. sq. ft. of homes in BR 2431 sq. ft X $1.48 = $3,597 MORE by Diane

What could you do with $3,500 more … d. Diane Sanders 😊
… thank you for your business and trust.

Thank you for all of your support and business; I can’t believe it’s getting close to 25 years since I sold my first home in Barkers Ridge! This month, I have had the pleasure and honor of helping to sell two different homes in Barkers Ridge – each for the 3rd time they have sold!

‘LIKE’ our company Facebook page to receive updated Real Estate info.
https://www.facebook.com/SandersFamilyRealEstate/