

SCOUT, The Newsletter of the Fort West Owners' Association

September., 2017

HALLOWEEN PARTY. FWOA is planning a Halloween party for the little ones. We will have games, a parade or contest to show off the scary or pretty costumes, and there will be refreshments. There will be lots of candy and prizes. We will send a notice by e-mail soon, and a flyer with dates and more detailed information. We will need some folks to volunteer to help. Pat Jones on Sundown Road is the leader and she has lots of fun things planned.

ORIGIN OF HALLOWEEN. It is thought to have originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, when people lit bonfires and wore costumes to ward off roaming ghosts. In the eighth century, Pope Gregory III designated November 1 as a time to honor all saints and martyrs; the holiday, All Saints Day, incorporated some of the traditions of Samhain. The evening before was known as All Hallows Eve and later Halloween.

PLAYGROUND. We have a couple more improvements at the FWOA Playground to report: Jim Jones of Sundown Rd., who also serves on the FWOA Board, has refurbished the picnic tables. He replaced numerous pieces of lumber that had aged badly, and will be painting the tables to make them look like new. The heavy tables had slowly sunk a few inches into the ground, so Jim raised them and levelled them and now the tables should be comfortable and attractive again, for use.

Jim also has stabilized the children's playhouse/tower and re-built the sliding board. The tower had become a little rickety, but now the mothers of little children can have confidence in the integrity of the structure. Thanks to Jim for doing this volunteer work in the hot summer sun. The costs to the neighborhood for lumber and parts amounted to a little over \$200.

A FUTURE IMPROVEMENT. The FWOA Board hopes to improve the playground further by building a picnic shelter between the playground and the volley ball area. The shelter will provide shade and cover for mothers watching their children at the playground, and also will provide a space for picnics, birthday parties, neighborhood socials, casual meetings and such. We are looking now estimates on the shelter.

FWOA five years ago planted a couple of shade trees at the Playground, as the afternoon summer sun sometimes is just about unbearable there, but they are slow-growing so the shelter will help to make the area more useable.

What other improvements of the common areas would our neighbors like? Send ideas to Mike Singletary at singleta@utk.edu.

LAWTON/LONG BOW ENTRANCES. As this is being written, the flower beds at the entrances are looking very colorful. We have the loropetalum, kaleidoscope, roses, and crepes, and one other little red plant whose name escapes us, and the crepes are dropping their little pink blossoms all across the beds...and then when we added the flags it was an impressive display. It took some planning and some patience. We have to keep the beds looking good since our neighborhood competes so-to-speak with other neighborhoods in the realm of prestige and property values.

The Board is getting a little concerned about the Bradford pear trees at the Long Bow entrance, and will be looking for someone to trim them back. Arborists usually say topping the trees is not necessary, but that they should be trimmed to remain as vertical as possible to prevent heavy branches from splitting.

LANDSCAPING. FWOA pays a landscaping company \$6,000 per year for mowing, weeding, mulching, trimming, leaf removal and such; is everyone happy with the service we are getting? Mail ideas and observations to Mike at the above address.

MEMBERSHIP. About 176 of our neighbors paid their \$90 membership assessment again this year. FWOA has not raised the assessment in 5 years, so the dues are a real bargain. Thankfully, 40 or more residents have voluntarily rounded off their contribution at \$100, and some gave even more. We hope more and owners more will do that so that we can keep the official assessment low. The success of our annual dues/membership drive really is extraordinary. We are getting 80% voluntary participation among our 222 properties, so we can be very proud of that. But truthfully EVERYONE should participate because the money benefits EVERYONE, whether they pay or not. Participating in FWOA is simply the fair and responsible thing to do.

SPEEDING. FWOA continues to hear complaints about individuals speeding through the neighborhood. It's a big problem that doesn't go away. Ultimately, drivers have to police themselves. FWOA has looked into every anti-speeding device that we are aware of. We looked into additional speed signs: The city doesn't allow them. We looked into speed bumps/humps; they are extreme measures that the city does not recommend and that would cause residents to complain loudly.

We looked into the installation of radar type signs that remind drivers how fast they are going; but we found that the Highway Dept. has NO EVIDENCE that the signs are of any value. And they are expensive. We have talked to the police but there is little they can do. Drivers simply have to police themselves. The speed limit is 25 mph, so remind yourself every time you enter your car. Watch for children and think how horrible it would be if you hit a child or a pet -- or an adult too!

THE SUBDIVISION RESTRICTIONS. We can't emphasize too much how important the restrictions are. Home owners must observe them strictly. The restrictions are available on line at fortwest.net. Please take time to read them carefully, and renters should read them as well. Owners will be contacted if there are issues.

OTHER. Thanks to our residents for their support and cooperation! If you have an issue or an idea for improvement, send it to the Board, via singleta@utk.edu.

VOLUNTEERS. We need to fill 2-3 positions on the Board. Being a Board member involves 3-4 short meetings a year. When we call on you to help please say YES.

THE CURRENT BOARD: Deb Sturm, Deb Pinchok, Melissa North (treasurer), Henrik Liljenfeldt, Mark Holder (liaison to the pool), Teresa Keenan, Jim Jones, Mike Singletary (president). TWO NEW MEMBERS ARE NEEDED. VOLUNTEERS TO HELP OUT. Mail mike at singleta@utk.edu.