

Laurel Park News



October 2011

The Quintessential Laurel Park Resident

When you meet Stephanie on the street, there are always a few people around her chatting away. And you *will* meet Stephanie on the street in Laurel Park, because she is the quintessential neighbor of Laurel Park.

And what is that quintessential neighbor like? Well, first of all, she's a friend to everyone. Her kindnesses extend beyond her friends and family; to new neighbors, the homeless and the random person in a restaurant or store. Engaging and charming, sincere and helpful, she makes everyone feel special.

Her home, which sits opposite Laurel Park and which she shares with her gifted and beautiful daughter Raven and their dog Noche, is inviting and open. The front porch, adorned with flowing white curtains and cozy seating, always seems to be occupied and rarely can one pass by without being invited up.

(See Steffie, page 2)



Raven and Steffie

Al, My Cat and Yours *by Ellen McKeefe*



He was always on my front porch or hiding under the sea grapes or dozing on the deck railing. Perhaps you did not see him but I know he saw you. Al didn't miss much in his small universe and, like all outdoor cats, he had tales to tell.

One of his adventures ended his life in mid-August when he was attacked by another animal, presumably a raccoon. That Saturday morning he was not waiting on the doormat when I put out his food. I thought it strange as, since mid-2005, Al was there nearly every morning. But I was not alarmed; I figured he was sleeping off a late night. When I returned home a few hours later, there was still no Al and the food was untouched. Now I was more than alarmed. I called his name and heard a soft, single meow from the bushes.

Al was lying prone and when I approached him he did not move. Something was very wrong. As I picked him up his hindquarters and back legs fell limp. He did not cry out. Al was partially paralyzed. He had open wounds on his rear legs and feet. Fearing and knowing the worst, I called Betsy Sublette who is a big Al fan and knows pet care. She immediately came over, called the emergency veterinary clinic and helped me get Al into a transport crate. All the way to the clinic I talked to Al and he responded with quiet mewing.

The expressions on the faces of the extraordinary veterinarians and technicians at the clinic confirmed my fears. Within a few minutes I held Al, wrapped in a towel, seeing only his handsome grey head and intact upper body. We held one another's gaze as he was euthanized.

Later that day I learned from my next door neighbors that Al had dragged himself across their parking area toward his porch. When they tried to help him he hissed and snarled at them; they feared rabies (correctly so, according to the vets *(See Al, page 6)*)

Dates to Remember

Tunes in the Park

November 19

5-9:00 PM

(bring a dish to share)

Holiday Party

December 11

5-8:00 PM

(please bring a dessert or fruit to share)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Neighbors,

I hope you have had a good summer – have survived the hot and humid weather.

Our yards have grown lush with the rains. I trust you used the Neighborhood Clean Up weekend to spruce up your own front yard & sidewalk. We're fortunate to have a walkable neighborhood and many use our sidewalks to enjoy strolling through the neighborhood. However, many of the sidewalks have become overgrown and hard to use. As a community, let's all keep the way clear.

Thanks to all those who organized the Clean Up day (especially **Kasy Kane** and graphic artist **Shani Thimm**) and all those who participated! The **Word of Mouth restaurant Chef/Proprietor Shannon Luganani** has been especially generous - giving us gift certificates to raffle, as well as warm right out-of-the-oven, cookies for the Clean Up workers. He also showed up with his wife and children to help clean up the park and neighborhood! Other families, who don't live in Laurel Park, also came to pitch in during the Clean Up. What a great place this is to live. Special thanks also go to the organizers of our movie nights, **Jolie McInnis**, **Alan Kranach** and **Steffie Peters** and volunteer **Katherine Orenic**.

Please note the articles on bioswales and rain plants in this issue. Perhaps you can create one in your yard, containing the rainwater so it can percolate and cleanse before reaching the creek and bay. We will see one in action as part of the MURT Trail on Brother Geenen. – construction commencing (hopefully) late next summer.

We have several special autumn social events – TUNES on Saturday, November 19 and a HOLIDAY PARTY on Sunday, December 11. These are welcome social gatherings which bring the whole of Laurel Park together in the park. Circle your calendars now.

Hope to see you soon! If you have issues or concerns, please call me, 953-5025.

Jude Levy

Laurel Park is open
7:00AM – 11:00PM

Please take advantage of our park by using it often. Even a quick stroll through the park is not only pleasant but puts "eyes on the park" for everybody. If you see anyone behaving inappropriately, call the police non-emergency number:

316-1201



Happenings
Classes

Watercolor 1, 2, 3 besins 9/26
Collage a la Carte besins 10/3
Teen Bangles & Polymer Beads 10/22
Rocking Chair Tuesdays
besins 10/11 10-12 *The fit of Mandala's*

FAMILY MASK DAY SAT 10/29
Artists on the Court
1943 Merrill St. Towles Court
706-4805
artistsonthecourt@yahoo.com

Steffie, cont. from page 1

Inside is a cornucopia of eclectic treasures where creativity abounds. It feels a bit like San Francisco in the 60's; the scent of incense pervades the air, brightly patterned pillows on colorful couches, rainbow glass vases, hand-sewn curtains and art by both Steffie and Raven hang on the wall. Raven's room has a ballet barre and if you are lucky, she may even perform an impromptu dance for you.

Born in Peoria and raised here and in Illinois, Stephanie has a large and supportive family. Raven stays with and talks about Tay-Tay, one of her aunts, and her Grandma all the time. Stephanie always cites her Grandmother's wit and wisdom on the farm back in Illinois. If asked where she was brought up, she says, "in the best of both worlds."

Raven

Raven, her talented daughter, is also someone you can count on connecting with the neighborhood kids and adults alike. Super-curious and conscious, she is studying several languages, surfs and is a wonderful chef – having eaten her eggplant parmesan, I can attest to this fact. Raven is mostly vegetarian and calls herself a "conscientious eater"

On a recent trip we all took to Costa Rica, Raven armed herself with not only Spanish vocabulary, but also Costa Rican expressions that she found on the web, and which she actually used. Both mother and daughter are intrepid travelers; climbing slippery waterfalls, dangerously close to giant spiders in our cabin, traveling in an old Jeep named Carmencita, and at one point, both working to fix the very primitive plumbing on the farm where we stayed!

When Steffie is not out taking care of her flock or dodging spiders, she is making many of us look beautiful at the salon on Pineapple Avenue, *Salon Salon*. She is an accomplished stylist, but has that extra special gift of making you feel beautiful inside and out.

Nina Royal

TUNES

in the park

November 19th

5:00 - 9:00 PM

featuring

NATURAL VIBES



POTLUCK DINNER

Bring a dish to share

Desserts & Water
Provided



Event sponsored by The Laurel Park Neighborhood Association and The City of Sarasota



Chalk Festival Needs Hosts for Artists

The Sarasota Chalk Festival is looking for area residents to host artists during the week of November 1 – 7. The Chalk Festival will be bringing over 150 artists from all over the world to participate in this year's event celebrating the theme "Pavement Art Through the Ages."

Many of the artists will be making their first trip to the U.S., and Laurel Park is the perfect location for the artists to trek back and forth to their works of art and to enjoy our beautiful downtown area by foot. Artist's visits will vary in length. If you have an extra room or two to share, please contact **Jolie McInnis at 951-2468 or email Brianmcinnis@msn.com** (put "Chalk Festival" on the subject line).

As past hosts of five Italian artists, Brian and Jolie are happy to share their experience with you and will be acting as housing liaison between Laurel Park and The Chalk Festival this year.

The 2011 Sarasota Chalk Festival will explore the evolution of this ephemeral art form from its thinly documented ancient roots to today's diverse contemporary movements. A gallery show featuring and curated by Kurt Wenner, whose work appears above, will be hosted by the Ringling College of Art and Design.

See www.chalkfestival.com for the broad 2011 schedule and volunteer opportunities.

Hudson Bayou Watershed Receives National Attention

Many of us recognize Laurel Park as a wonderful enclave in downtown Sarasota, an area with historic and residential integrity – the result of the many personalities that have worked to enhance the neighborhood.

What some may not recognize about Laurel Park is that we are an important part of the Hudson Bayou watershed and are in fact a *waterfront* neighborhood. Laurel Park has some very attractive waterfront sites right on the Hudson Bayou with tidal water running north to Oak Street. As part of the Hudson Bayou watershed, Laurel Park directly contributes to the bayou’s health. In a way, we are the filter that cleans the water before it enters the Hudson Bayou and Sarasota Bay. Unfortunately, too often our streets serve as a direct stormwater “dump” into the bayou. While this helps prevent flooding, it also puts far too many pollutants directly into our bay.



Bioswale example: before & after

New Efforts

Things are about to change for the better. Those who wish to be good stewards of the Sarasota Bay are focusing on this beautiful but often neglected Sarasota asset.

Rob Wright and Kelly Westover (both environmental specialists with Sarasota County government) have been busy here in Laurel Park. Rob is Sarasota County’s NEST program coordinator and is inviting us to explore ways we can make our neighborhood a better place for people, wildlife and our water resources. Kelly has applied for and received a \$1 million federal grant to research the health of our Hudson Bayou watershed (including all of Laurel Park) and to design features that will bring it back to being a vibrant waterway. Information about the NEST program and NEST projects that other communities have done can be found at:

www.sarasota.wateratlas.usf.edu.

Both Rob and Kelly have assisted the city in designing our upcoming Brother Geenen multi-use-recreation-trail (MURT) using state of the art “low impact development” concepts. One aspect of the MURT is the inclusion of a bioswale, a shallow planted depression that captures and filters some of the stormwater running down the street, thereby reducing the amount of contaminants and trash that reach the bay and providing bird and butterfly habitat. The bioswale serves an environmental purpose and also makes an attractive addition to the neighborhood.

Water Quality Management Plan

Rob and Kelly have been working on the Sarasota Bay Water Quality Management Plan – currently under development through a partnership between Sarasota County, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program. Neighborhood participation is vital to the success of the plan, and you will hear more about it as development progresses. Components of the plan include:

- assessment and characterization of the natural resources and the communities that depend upon them;
- goal setting and identification of environmental objectives based on the condition of resources and the needs of the aquatic ecosystem;
- identification of priority problems and opportunities;
- development of specific management action plans;
- implementation; and
- evaluation of effectiveness and revision of plans.

This is the beginning of a new and exciting chapter for Laurel Park, its residents and connecting with Sarasota’s waterway – The Hudson Bayou Watershed. Even with our sleepy economy, Laurel Park still pursues exciting projects that are fun, enhance Hudson Bayou, the neighborhood and continue to make Sarasota “One of America’s Best Cities to Live In”.

Steve Long & Kelly Westover

Word of Mouth

711 South Osprey
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Rain Garden 101

Soil types and slight changes in elevation can significantly improve the way water is conserved on your property. We all know water runs downhill but in most of our yards there is little noticeable change in elevation. It's hard to tell where "downhill" actually is until a hard rain.

Notice how water runs off or collects in your yard and around the house foundation, drives and pathways during a thunderstorm. High volumes of water from the roof downspouts can be directed away from foundations or walkways and caught in rain barrels or larger cisterns for later use. Once filled, the overflow, with careful soil grading, can be directed into irrigation channels around plant beds and into "rain gardens" or ponds.

"Rain gardens" are low, slow-draining beds of moisture loving plants which are designed to make use of excess water. You can research this by googling and reading magazines specifically about ponds and water gardens. Even if you hire a qualified designer, it is wise to be more familiar with how these features work.

To control mosquito larvae in a pond, call Sarasota County Mosquito Control at 861-9740 and ask for the "Mosquito Fish" minnows to be delivered to your home - FREE! This great program is already paid for out of our property taxes. You can pick them up if you prefer but call first. They get along well with Goldfish and Koi which are algae eaters and won't eat mosquito larvae.

"Well" Aged Rainwater

There are times when fresh rainwater can be scarce and if you have plantings that require more regular watering than a cistern can provide, or need to keep a pond filled, the best option is to use well water.

This neighborhood sits on fast-draining, sandy soils built-up over several million years above an ancient seabed. I got a chance to see this "soil profile" in detail

during the installation (jetting-in) of a shallow well in our neighborhood many years ago.

Sharks' Teeth

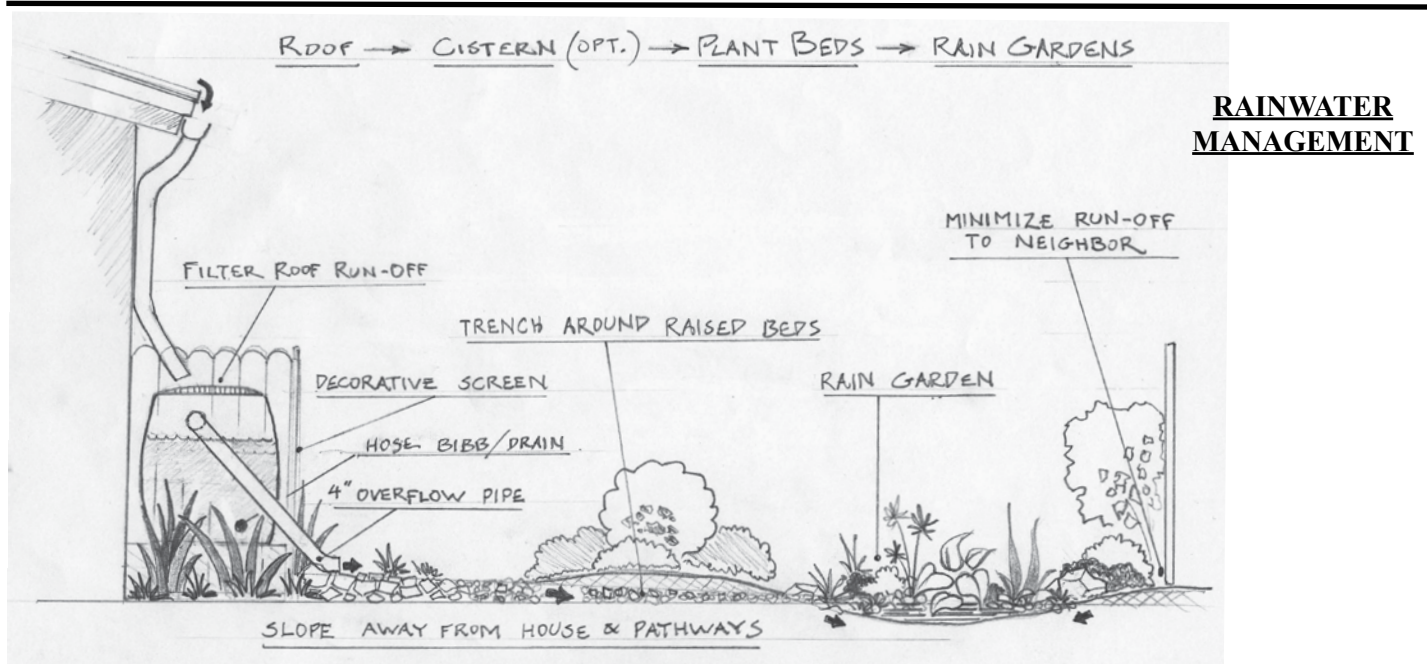
After initially going through 3 to 4 feet of sandy surface soil and about 8 inches of a dense, dark brown layer called "hardpan", the pipe went quickly down through about 16 feet of white "beach" sand and stopped above a hard layer of sedimentary rock. Just above this rocky layer were bits of small, black gravel and tiny sharks' teeth. The almost pure white sand above the rock holds vast amounts of vintage rain water mixed with various organic materials gathered from and filtered over dozens of square miles and decades of time.

This surface water aquifer is constantly being replenished and is therefore a very dependable water source. Jetting-in a well takes a few hours using city water pressure with a hose attached to progressively larger diameters of PVC pipe to bore its way down. The cost for materials can range from \$300.00 to \$600.00, plus the permit and testing fee. Homeowners interested in more details should call Sarasota County Health Department at 861-6133.

To obtain a well permit (for irrigation only) along with information such as where you may locate the well on your property will cost \$150.00. An independent analysis of your well water costs about \$50.00, according to Sanders Labs in Nokomis. It will test for dissolved solids, chlorides, tannins and minerals such as iron. The well pays for itself after 2 to 3 years, depending on your use, compared to the same amount of city water. After that, you only pay for electricity to run the pump.

Use water wisely, no matter what the source, by grouping plants with similar water requirements into areas that can most efficiently serve those needs.

Jack Notestein



Al, continued from Page 1

who said he could have been infected by the killer raccoon) so they backed away. I returned home shortly after their encounter and they pointed toward the bushes as I first heard his mewing.

Had Al not managed to get himself back to my front yard I would still be knocking on your doors looking for him. So his last gift to me was allowing me to help him, to hold him as he gently relaxed and stopped breathing.

Cat 101

Oh, the gifts he gave me. He taught me Cat 101. Before Al, I never knew a cat, never knew what was missing from my animal-populated life. For the first couple of years he taught me to respect his independence. His vocal range made me laugh and let me know when breakfast was served too late. The red front door of my house has cat-level scratches; made when the food bowl was empty. Al had friends who partook of the free buffet. There was a feisty, scruffy black and white; a dappled tiger I called Fatty for obvious reasons, a skinny yellow timid fellow, among others. They came and went. Al always stayed. Then last year a clumsy brown tiger with a nick out of one ear started showing up every day and ate after Al was finished. Then the two napped on the deck. This was around the time the Gores announced their divorce so I named him/her Tipper. Soon Tipper had his/her own food dish.

As someone who never had a cat, never knew a cat,

how did I become a cat lady? It all started when this silky, lean, all-grey cat escaped from his owner as she was moving from the four-plex next door. He hid under my grasses and bushes when she returned in an unsuccessful attempt to take him to her new home. Another four-plex resident fed him on her porch for several months. When she was out of town, I fed him. We called him Psycho-kitty because of his skittish behavior and refusal to have anything to do with either one of us. He divided his time between her porch and mine; he slept on the director's chair on my porch. Still, he ran and hid if either of us attempted any kind of contact.

That neighbor moved away in 2005. I swear that Al (still Psycho-kitty) watched her load the U-Haul, trotted over to my porch and never looked back. Soon after, a guy who did some work on my house started calling him Al because he reminded him of another Al cat. It stuck.

He had me at Purr

Perhaps a year later Al first rubbed against my legs as I put the key in the front door. I stood very still, then leaned down to stroke his back. That was the first time he allowed me to touch him. Soon Al demanded affection and would bat at me if I didn't stop to pat him or scratch his ears. Meanwhile, he continued to run and hide from anyone else who approached. Last year I picked him up and held him for the first time. He purred. He had me at purr.

Many, many times I offered Al the opportunity to come inside, to become a house cat. But even on the coldest January nights, he opted to stay outside, snuggled in towels in his crate on the porch. The one and only time I picked him up and carried him into the house, he bolted and stayed clear of me for two days.

Al is now dozing peacefully on a porch in good-dog-and-cat heaven along with other Laurel Park pets who enriched our lives. Walter and Elphie and Midnight, Middie to her friends. Pepper and Pete, the two best looking guys on Madison Court. Aja and Edie Sue. Charlie(s.) Scout. Ken, who emigrated from France. And my own Bo, Frank and Hobie.

Today give a hug and an extra treat to the pets that own you. Bailey and Tigger. Chia, Henry and Yeshe. Sophie and Lana. Eva. Shasta and Felix. Maggie, Aurelia, Daisy and Vinya. Harry, Oliver, Andy and Timmy. Anya and Felix. Jack, Bella, Sneakers and JJ. Lilly and Henry. Lucy and Ruby and Jake. Bridget, Penny, Noche and Einstein. Lola, Romeo and Gus. Kelsey. Nelson and Napoleon. Matt and Misty. Sammy and Girl.

And I need to hug my Bella-dog; she misses Al too. And Tipper? I've only seen him once since Al died. He ate some cat food from my hand, nodded thanks and ran down the steps. He was wearing a flea collar so someone has given him a home.

"If man could be crossed with a cat it would improve man but it would deteriorate the cat."

Mark Twain

No Contracts!

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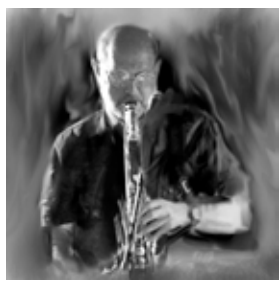
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Creative Ferment on Laurel Street



Maureen E. Mulvihill & Daniel R. Harris

After thirty years in New York City, two new neighbors **Maureen E. Mulvihill & Daniel R. Harris** are homeowners on Laurel Street, where they are continuing their focus on literature, music, and painting.

Maureen is a scholar and writer with The Princeton Research Forum. A broadly published author, she is presently at work on a new book on Irish women's political writings and response pre-1800. She has published on a broad range of subjects, including early English and Irish literary culture, rare book collectors, the Abbey Theatre Dublin, Ireland and the early slave trade, the last weeks of Virginia Woolf, chess genius Bobby Fischer, the 'Ephelia' poetess of 1670s London, and other subjects.

A former Detroitier, she studied at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, with post-docs at the Columbia University Rare Book School, Yale Center for British Art, and (as NEH Fellow) Johns Hopkins. A new member of the Florida Bibliophile Society, she'll be giving a talk on her rare book collection at the University of Tampa's MacDonald-Kelce Library, October 16th, 1:30PM, with a display table of selected rarities (books, prints, & programs from Joe Papp's famous 'Shakespeare In The Park' series). Maureen initiated and hosted a revival of Sarasota's 'Bloomsday' event, honoring James Joyce's *Ulysses*, at Bookstore1Sarasota, June 16th, 2011.

Maureen's husband, Dan Harris (chief acoustical engineer for Sync Sound, NYC, 1988-April 2011) is a composer-musician-painter, and a graduate of The Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY, and of Yale University. He is a multiple-reed artist with a specialty in bass clarinet. He founded the Electronic Music Studio at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he was voted a 'Most Popular Professor' in the early 1980s. He is also a book illustrator, most recently of Ann M. Bogle's *Country Without A Name* (spring, 2011). You will find more information on both people by googling the web, but will no doubt meet them personally at a Laurel Park event in the near future.

LPNA Members 2010 and new

Thanks to our new and renewing members, listed below. If you have not yet joined or renewed, please send in the attached membership form. All contributions will count for your 2012 membership – we are now on a calendar year renewal system. Although we appreciate and need your monetary support, it is not required to be a member.

- Marie Antinore
- Bill and Ellen Cornelius
- Arlena Dominick
- Ann and Lyle Hepburn
- Kathleen Power Johnson
- Cher Knasel and Dee Slotke
- Jeannie Kruidenier
- Scylla Liscombe

- Steve and Nancy Long
- Sara Malone and Baird Juckett
- Ellen McKeefe
- Carl and Bonnie Mittlestadt
- Juliette Reynolds & Billy Hasson
- Corey Roscoe
- Nina Royal
- Peter and Mary Jane Underwood.

Many thanks to Shannon Lugannan (**Word of Mouth**), a new Friend of Laurel Park. Not only did he join as a friend, but also contributed cookies and gift certificates to the neighborhood for our Clean-Up day. This is greatly appreciated!



Support Your Neighborhood

Become a Member
or Friend of the LPNA!

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Contribution
\$25 _____ \$35 _____ \$50 _____
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PLEASE MAIL FORM AND CONTRIBUTION TO:
LPNA
P.O. BOX 1485
SARASOTA, FL 34230

The State of Real Estate

There are currently 2 residential properties listed for sale in Laurel Park. Eight properties have sold since the last newsletter was published in April, 2011.

| | | |
|---------------------|------------|-----------|
| 1816 Morrill Street | List Price | \$100,000 |
| | Sold Price | \$100,000 |
| 1676 Oak Street | List Price | \$147,500 |
| | Sold Price | \$147,500 |
| 1842 Hawkins Court | List Price | \$149,000 |
| | Sold Price | \$125,000 |
| 612 Ohio Place | List Price | \$335,000 |
| | Sold Price | \$314,540 |
| 1630 Laurel Street | List Price | \$395,000 |
| | Sold Price | \$365,000 |
| 1866 Hawkins Court | List Price | \$415,000 |
| | Sold Price | \$415,000 |
| 1855 Oak Street | List Price | \$580,000 |
| | Sold Price | \$525,000 |
| 1647 Laurel Street | List Price | \$695,000 |
| | Sold Price | \$630,000 |

Currently there are 5 sales pending:

| | | |
|--------------------|------------|------------|
| 640 Madison Court | List Price | \$120,000 |
| 643 Ohio Place | List Price | \$191,000 |
| 610 Madison Court | List Price | \$209,000 |
| 1831 Hawkins Court | List Price | \$249,000 |
| 602 Ohio Place | List Price | \$649,000 |
| 1680 Oak Street | List price | \$299,000) |

One property has seen a price adjustment since the April newsletter:

329 S. Osprey Ave. \$695,000 to \$599,000

*Information Provided by Betsy Sublette, Realtor
Signature Sotheby's International Realty*

Special thanks to Laurel Park residents Bob and Teresa Stone, who own Minuteman Press on the corner of Fruitville Road and Lime Avenue. They are registered with the City as an authorized Neighborhood Association Newsletter printer and they always do a great job with printing our newsletters.



President: Jude Levy
Vice Pres.: Juliette Reynolds
Treasurer: Betsy Sublette
Secretary: Sheila Zachowski

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and
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