

FROM THE EDITOR: A VISION FOR TANASBROOK

I've now completed a full calendar year as *The Tanasbrook Times'* editor-in-chief, and I wanted to take a moment to communicate what a pleasure it has been to serve my community this way. Pulling together and publishing the newsletter each month has largely been a labor of love, and some months have proved decidedly easier than others.

I had initially hoped to do more to foster community building in our Tanasbrook neighborhood, and I have endeavored to build neighborly connections through newsletter features such as the "Pet of the Month" and articles celebrating diversity. Though my calls to the community for submissions and article ideas have gone mostly unanswered, I still did my best each month to put together a newsletter worthy of our potential as a community.

In recent months, I have sensed deepening disconnects and a drop in our neighborhood morale. We've had increasing problems with vandalism on our grounds; there have been rumors of THOA board conspiracies; and there is a seeming epidemic of dog owners refusing to pick up after their pets. I have heard grumbling from homeowners and renters alike on a wide range of issues, but only a few have contacted the THOA office or

any of our board members with their complaints and concerns.

So now it's time for me to climb up onto my soapbox and to pull out my pom-poms.

As with life, your community is what you make of it. If you want to live in an anonymous neighborhood where people keep to themselves, where no one looks out for each other, and where neighbors don't even recognize each other on sight, you can find such an environment in nearly any large city. These are the areas that invite vandalism and crime—because there are no personal bonds between neighbors, no one recognizes who lives in the neighborhood and who doesn't, and few if any people concern themselves with anyone else's well-being or safety. In these areas of little or no community involvement, there are no neighborhood activities, no revitalization or beautification projects, and no idea of to whom to turn when there is a problem. Living only yards apart, residents remain isolated from one another, with children and the elderly the loneliest and most vulnerable of all. New regulations are passed with no input from owners—simply because no one shows up at meetings, nor does anyone even know who their board members are.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

HOA COMMITTEES

ACTIVITIES
SPONSORED BY
CLARINDA

LANDSCAPE
SPONSORED BY
CLARINDA

FINANCE
SPONSORED BY
CYNTHIA

ARCHITECTURE & CONSTRUCTION
SPONSORED BY KRIS

POLICY AND PROCEDURES
SPONSORED BY GAY
CHAired BY
SHARON LAUNT

COMMUNICATIONS
SPONSORED BY
CYNTHIA



JIMMY & NANCY SHEPPARD'S HOME

PHOTO BY DAVE SEIDEMAN

FARMER'S ALMANAC

FORECAST FOR THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

January 2006

Temperature: 49.5° (7.5° above average).
Precipitation: 7.5"

- January 1-11: Rain, windy, mild.
- January 12-16: Sunny, mild, then cool.
- January 17-21: Rain, then sunny, mild.
- January 22-31: Rain, mild.

February 2006

Temperature: 46° (2° above average).
Precipitation: 10" (5" above average).

- February 1-5: Stormy; heavy rain.
- February 6-12: Rain, seasonable.
- February 13-15: Rain, windy.
- February 16-22: Sunny, then heavy rain.
- February 23-28: Cold, rain and snow.

From *The Old Farmers Almanac, 2006*.
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IF YOU ARE A NEW NEIGHBOR (HAVING MOVED TO TANASBROOK WITHIN THE LAST YEAR) AND WOULD LIKE TO BE FEATURED IN AN UPCOMING ISSUE, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH!
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UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL ARTICLES WRITTEN BY JEN WILLIS

A VISION FOR TANASBROOK

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

A chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and neighborhoods with no community links keep enacting stricter measures to keep out "undesirable elements," never recognizing that so many security gates and bars on windows only serve to imprison residents in their own homes.

Is this a vision of Tanasbrook's future?

Not if I can help it. Although I am just one person—one of many homeowners and residents here at Tanasbrook—I can use this forum to at least try to reach out to my neighbors every month, to inspire real community involvement and concern, and to take both small and large steps toward rebuilding a community that is vibrant and strong. But I absolutely cannot do it alone. I need your help—every single one of you.

A true community is a strong network of neighbors who care about keeping their neighborhood safe and who are genuinely concerned about the welfare of their neighbors. These are residents who take into their own hands the responsibility for creating the best neighborhood possible, rather than waiting for someone else to step up. These are people who go the extra distance every day to connect with their board members, to build lasting relationships with their neighbors, and to make the neighborhood a place that is an honest pleasure and joy in which to live. It doesn't require a huge effort to build and sustain such a cohesive community, but it does take a conscious commitment to make it happen.

If not now, when? If not you, who?

What can you do? Ah, that's the exciting part: anything and everything you can think of! Here are a few easy ideas, to help get us started:

- Say hello to the neighbors you pass on the way to the mailbox.
- Get to know the people who live on either side of you, and up and down your street.
- When you see someone you don't recognize, introduce yourself and offer your assistance—you might be meeting a new neighbor or helping a neighbor's

friend locate the right house, or you might be deterring imminent property crime.

- Take soup to a neighbor who is ill.
- Attend the monthly board meetings, and ask questions.
- Take a walk around the neighborhood and get to know our many winding pathways.
- If you see litter on the grounds, pick it up and throw it away.
- Volunteer to participate in a neighborhood watch program.
- Make play dates for your kids with other children in the neighborhood.
- Befriend neighbors who live alone—you may be making a life-long friend while also reassuring residents who may feel more vulnerable.
- Share your favorite recipe in *The Tanasbrook Times*.
- When you're picking up after your own dog, clean up any surrounding piles as well.
- Invite an elderly neighbor over for tea.
- Volunteer for a neighborhood committee.
- Have lunch with a board member to share your ideas for bettering our community, or consider running for the board yourself.
- Write a letter to the editor of the newsletter to let your neighbors know who you are and what is important to you.
- Exchange spare house keys with a neighbor, in case you get locked out of your own place or have an emergency.

There is so much we can do to strengthen our community. Each one of us can make a real difference.

This year, let's all pitch in to make our Tanasbrook community a true priority in our lives. We all deserve to live in the best and brightest community, and Tanasbrook has that potential and more. When you see or think of something you would like to have addressed—from asking for a new trash receptacle along the walkways, to having a neighborhood meet-and-greet party—don't wait for someone else to pick up the ball. This year, I'll ask you to keep one very important idea in mind: If not now, when? If not you, who?