

Volente Voice

A Joint Newsletter between the Volente Neighborhood Association (VNA) & the Volente Volunteer Fire Department (VVFD)

September 2008

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR VNA PRESIDENT

It always amazes me how quickly time passes and the seasons move on. It seems like such a short time ago when we had severe rains and the lake filled to the limit and stayed full for months on end. Now we are back in drought conditions and the lake continues to drop each day – it is the beauty and the beast of living on Lake Travis – it is always filling or emptying and our lives are very connected to water.

Speaking of water, the saga of the BCRUA continues. The three cities continue to push for their water line and deep water intake to be installed somewhere in Volente. After a long reevaluation of options, the BCRUA came back with a change – instead of building off Booth Circle, they now have determined that a better location would be on Sandy Creek where a private land owner was willing to sell them land on which to build the intake and pumping station. This announcement activated a new set of Volente residents - those now affected by this selection and the path of the pipeline to get there. I would just like all of you to know that the VNA is ready and willing to help in any way to escalate concerns and to help find solutions, if at all possible.

This past month Volente Mayor Jan Jenawine and I traveled down to the State Capitol Building and met with Commissioner Gerald Daugherty, Rep. Donna Howard, and members of Sen. Kirk Watson's office. Our intent was to ensure that our elected officials heard directly from Volente on our experiences, perceptions, and plans regarding the proposed pipeline and intake. All three offices demonstrated a very healthy awareness of the situation and a desire to ensure that the residents of Volente are heard and served as much as possible. It was agreed that a crucial meeting needed to take place and take place soon – a meeting between the Volente Council and the mayors of the three other cities along with one or more members of their city councils. With the assistance of Rep. Donna Howard, the chairman of the board of the BCRUA personally came to Volente and met with our mayor and other council members. As a result a meeting is scheduled for August 26th. I hope that many of you attended. It is a start and its intent is to open direct and honest communications between the cities and Volente and for all three cities to understand that Volente is demanding to be heard and demanding to be involved in any and all decisions made by this group. Beyond that, I continue to ask for and invite your participation in the VNA process. We need more board members to ensure that we are connected in all areas of our community. The time commitment is low, but the communication link that you could provide is invaluable to all of us.

Here's to a wonderful labor day, to the end of the drought, wonderful rains, and joy to all of you.

~ **Ken Beck, President ~ Volente Neighborhood Association**

CEDAR PARK, ROUND ROCK AND LEANDER INTAKE FACILITY AND PIPELINE THROUGH VOLENTE UPDATE

Leander's increased water supply contract has not been approved by TCEQ. Our State Representative Donna Howard and Representative Valinda Bolton (Lakeway area) can contest the permit because of the effects on the lake communities and the Lower Colorado Basin. Lake Travis is the single, most important economic and environmental driver of their districts. Please ask the Representatives to champion the Lake Travis issues.

The LCRA "guarantees firm water" to the drought of record at 614msl. The BCRUA deep-water intake targets water 45' lower. There has been no answer from the LCRA or the BCRUA on how much of the project's water supply contracts will be curtailed at this level. The LCRA and the BCRUA each say the other is responsible for studies on the economic and environmental effects to the Highland Lakes.

Considering the BCRUA's eminent domain problem and the Village's zoning restrictions, is Phase 1 of the project building a pipeline to nowhere? The BCRUA needs 11 permits from the Village. The proposed 84" pipeline is constructed by open-cut trenching through a neighborhood and down Lime Creek, the single access road for Volente.

The Simsboro Aquifer, in their basin, is drought-proof and prolific. This aquifer would provide the BCRUA cities conjunctive use in a drought and a long-range water supply that they need. Aquifer water is available just east of Round Rock. This is the time for all the Williamson County cities to estimate the cost of a regional aquifer plan.

The City of Austin proposed pump station on 12 acres at Bullick Hollow and Oasis Bluff will be the site of the 40' wide x 400' deep shaft to remove all the rocks and debris from the mile long tunnel for the 9 foot pipeline. Over 2000 dump trucks will be needed to carry the debris up the steep incline on Bullick Hollow. Trucks loaded with the 9 foot pipe, etc. will come down the hill to the site. 40 foot deep excavation of 2 acres only 8 feet off the ROW is planned for 2009. Only a turn lane is planned at present. (Beau Theriot was paid \$7,225,000 for this 12 acre site!) and there's much, much more... The www.DrainingLakeTravis.org website is being re-launched shortly. Join DELTA and be on our email list.

~ Judy Graci, Membership ~ Volente Neighborhood Association

VOLENTE FIRE DEPARTMENT - REPORT FROM ESD 14

Emergency Services District 14 continues to work closely with Volente VFD to plan for the department's future needs. Now that the 5-acre tract adjoining the fire hall has been purchased, the ESD will participate in a long range planning committee whose task will be to look at the best uses of the land over the next five years and beyond. The ESD has already had some of the brush cleared to provide public parking for large meetings and events, and the Auxiliary has located its new storage building on the land.

Speaking of planning, it is also the time of year that both the ESD and VVFD adopt budgets for the coming year and that ESD 14 determines what the property tax rate will be for 2008. The maximum tax rate for an ESD is \$0.10 per \$100 valuation, or \$100 for a \$100,000 home, and ESD 14 has been at this rate for some time. Fire fighting and emergency medical response are very expensive enterprises. Major cities, such as Austin, spend more than twice as much of their tax rate on these items than the maximum ESDs are allowed to charge. ESD 14 thanks our many hardworking volunteers, both on the front line and behind the scenes at VVFD, who make it possible for us to have excellent emergency response in Volente.

A positive development in Travis County has been the creation of the ESD Commissioners Council. The Council consists of representatives from each Travis County ESD and a County representative. The Council works on improving communication and achieving standardization between departments and with the County. County Commissioner Gerald Daugherty has been instrumental in organizing and supporting the Council's efforts.

~ Lonnie Moore, Vice-President ~ ESD 14 (Volente Fire Department)

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

The Fire Department will be hosting our second National Night Program on October 7th at 6:00. This is a great opportunity to meet your neighbors, learn about the Fire Department and meet your local fire fighters. We will be serving hot dogs, soda and ice cream. We hope that you can join us for this nationwide community event. Last year was the first year that Volente participated and it was a resounding success.

Although the Department has a small on duty staff of paid fire fighters 24 / 7, we are also looking for new volunteer members. The Department needs help from community members like you. Stop down and learn how you can help your neighbors by becoming a member of the Fire Department.

CONTROLLED BURNS

In order to burn natural vegetation in the Volente Fire District, you must contact the Department prior to commencing your burn. The purpose of this contact is to confirm that weather conditions are favorable for burning on a particular day. Several factors are reviewed in a burn / no burn determination for each day. They include: Red Flag Warning, high winds, low humidity, and Ozone Action Days.

A number of residents have asked for guidance in helping them make better decisions on the items they propose to burn, the actual site of their proposed burn, the clearing from other vegetation, topography etc. To facilitate these requests and enhance the fire safety in our community, the Village of Volente and the Volente Fire Department have implemented an Open Burning Permit process. This process will involve the fire fighters coming out to your residence and reviewing your proposed burn. There is no cost for this permit. All we ask is that you call the Fire Department a few days ahead of your desired burn date so that we can inspect the site. You will be given a permit that outlines the guidelines. The permits are generally valid for 30 days and can be extended. We have implemented a Controlled Burn Message Center where you can leave your information. This recording will be updated daily and will reflect whether Controlled Burns are approved for the day. If you have a current permit all you need to do is leave your name, address and phone number, otherwise you can leave your contact information and the duty crew will contact you as soon as they are back in the station. All you need to do is call the station. The number is **258-1114 ext 303**. In addition, this information is available on our web site: www.vvfd.net.

Please stop by our website and review the latest information. We appreciate your assistance as we transition to this new program to enhance the fire safety in our community. This program will be implemented when the current burn ban is lifted.

~ Walter Groman, Fire Chief ~ ESD 14 (Volente Fire Department)

ANNUAL PANCAKE BREAKFAST & COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVE

Sponsored by the VVFD Auxiliary

SATURDAY - NOVEMBER 15, 8:00 - 11:00 A.M.

(Pancakes, Sausage, Orange Juice & Coffee)

Come visit with your neighbors and enjoy a hearty breakfast!

The fire department's Auxiliary group is once again hosting the annual pancake breakfast and community blood drive. Please join us on Saturday, November 15 to eat pancakes, share laughter, and save lives. Pancakes, juice, coffee, and sausage will be served from 8:00 – 11:00 AM. All proceeds go to support our community's fire fighters.

After finishing pancakes, consider stopping by the Central Texas Blood Bank's bus and donating blood. Did you know that every three seconds someone needs blood? And that 4.5 million Americans would die each year without life saving blood transfusions? But did you also know that **a single donation of your blood could save two lives?**

Call Jacque Potts at (512) 468-7685 for additional details or to schedule an appointment. Blood donors must be at least 17 years of age and weigh at least 110 pounds. Anyone who would like to help during either of these two events may contact Nancy Carufel at (512) 335-3596.

~ Jacque Potts, President ~ VVFD Auxiliary

FEELING OUT OF THE VOLENTE LOOP?

Want to know more about what's happening in the Volente area? To receive updates on local news and events via email subscribe to the Volente Neighborhood Association / Volente Fire Department distribution list. Send an email to news@volente.org with the word SUBSCRIBE in the subject line or go to www.volente.org and follow the directions there.

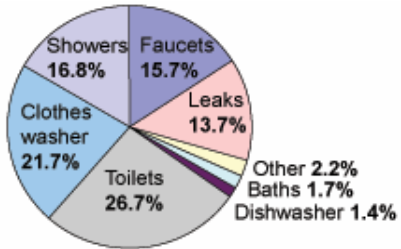
~ Lonnie Moore, Secretary ~ VVFD Auxiliary

VOLENTE WOMAN'S LUNCH GROUP

The Volente Women's Lunch Group meets for lunch at 12:30 p.m. on the 4th Tuesday of each month at a nearby restaurant. All residents of Volente are invited and are welcome. Call for reservations to Barbara Gay at 249-6553, 659-3457, or email to barbarag@austin.rr.com or to Nancy Carufel at 335-3596, 587-7969 or email to njccar@msn.com. Can you join us?

~ Barbara Gay, Contributor ~ Volente Neighborhood Association Newsletter

WATER CONSERVATION TIPS



Because we live in a lake community, we are adherently more aware of drought conditions as we witness Lake Travis drop with every passing week. Regardless of where we live or whether or not we are in a severe drought, it's very important to conserve and preserve our most valuable self sustaining resource - water. It's also vital that we pass this way of life down to our children and grandchildren. With just a little effort, we can save a lot of water inside our home. Paying attention to how we use water can also make a big difference in our energy bills. Take a look at these ideas below and see what you, too, could be doing in your home.

Bathroom - Bathroom use accounts for about 75 percent of the water used inside the home.

- Check regularly for any leaks in your toilet, faucets and water hose bibs and fix them. Water saved: up to 200 gallons per day.
- Install a low-flow showerhead. Water saved: about 2 gallons per minute.
- Replace older, larger-use toilets with the newer higher efficiency toilets. Water saved: 0.5 to 5 gallons per flush.
- Take short showers and fewer baths. Water saved: 2 to 5 gallons per minute.

Kitchen - About 8 percent of in-home water use takes place in the kitchen.

- Don't rinse dishes before loading dishwasher. Water saved: 20 gallons per load.
- Wash only full loads in the dishwasher. An efficient dishwasher usually uses much less water than washing dishes by hand.
- Install a low-flow faucet aerator, which can cut water use in half. Water saved: 1 to 2 gallons per minute.
- When buying a new dishwasher, consider purchasing a water-saving model. (New models use up to 25 percent less water than older ones.) Water saved: 3 gallons per load.

Around the house

- Wash only full loads in the clothes washer. Washing small loads uses more than twice as much water per pound of laundry.
- When buying a new clothes washer, consider purchasing a water-saving model. Water saved: up to 40 gallons per load.
- Insulate hot water pipes where possible to avoid long delays (and wasted water) while waiting for the water to "run hot." When building a new home, keep the distance short between the hot water heater and showers and other places that hot water is used.

HOT WEATHER GETTING TO YOUR WALLET? SAVE ENERGY!!

Keeping your home comfortable can cost plenty, especially in the hot Texas weather. Try these tested tips to save money and stay comfortable.

Air conditioning

- Give "old faithful" a checkup. Have a licensed air conditioning contractor check to make sure your AC unit is in good condition for the hot weather. If necessary, replace the unit with a newer, more efficient model.
- Set the air conditioning thermostat at 78 degrees or higher. Save more by raising the setting to 85 degrees when you're out for at least four hours.
- Install a programmable thermostat, and set it to cool the house before you get there.
- Ventilate the attic. Proper ventilation reduces temperature and prevents moisture buildup, so the air conditioner does not have to work as hard.
- Stop leaks into and out of the home. Check your ducts for leaks, and seal them with mastic tape if needed. Caulk and weatherstrip windows, doors and pipe clearances. Combined with increased insulation levels, you may save as much as 20 percent on cooling bills.

Move air

- Use ceiling or portable fans. Moving air feels four to six degrees cooler.

- Let air flow. Clean or replace air filters regularly for efficient air exchange.

Don't generate heat

- Turn off or replace lights. Most energy from incandescent bulbs becomes heat. Compact fluorescent bulbs use 75 to 80 percent less energy and produce less heat. Save \$7 per bulb per year. Almost a quarter of energy used in our homes is to keep the lights on.
- Block the sun. Save on cooling costs by closing drapes during the day or adding energy-efficient windows. Solar screens on west-facing windows also keep the sun at bay.
- Zap it. Use the microwave rather than the oven when you cook. Consider chilled foods, too.

Add shade

- Add trees and shrubs on the east, west and south sides of your home to cut cooling costs. Shade air conditioning units, but leave room for air to flow. Don't plant near power lines.

SAFE HAVEN

Four years ago the VNA adopted **Safe Haven**, a local 24 hour a day low demand shelter for persons who are homeless and are living with symptoms of a mental illness. The goal of Safe Haven is to ensure a safe and accepting living environment, while providing qualified staff to establish a trusting relationship, and to guide each resident to review the choices in their lives. Safe Haven offers sixteen beds and eight semi-private rooms, three meals a day, and laundry facilities to all of their residents. It also provides a place for residents to heal and prepare for re-entry into society. **Safe Haven is currently in need of a large industrial size maker that holds between 20 and 30 cups (similar to the one we have at the Fire Station). If this is something you can donate please contact Al Blunt at 336-1260 for more information on the coffee maker. Safe Haven is always in need of the following items:** new pillows or blankets (twin size), socks, backpacks, clock radios, cooking pots and pans (starter sets), dishes and silverware, bath towels, wash cloths, umbrellas, plastic clothes hangers, lotions (sunscreens, aloe vera, and antibiotic ointment), paper notebooks (school rule and pocket size), art supplies (paint brushes and markers), large zip-lock bags, small sewing kits, and first aid kits. **If you have any of the items listed above and are willing to donate them please drop them off at the Fire Hall in the white basket marked "Safe Haven".** We will make sure they get delivered to Safe Haven.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

We have several posts to be filled on the VNA Board. The VNA Board meets once a month on the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00pm at the Volente Fire Station. Please consider volunteering as a member of the VNA Board. Because of all the new growth expected and all of the exciting changes coming in 2008, we encourage you to be a vital part of serving your community. **If you are interested in joining the VNA Board please contact either of the following board members:**

- * Ken Beck, President
- * Al Blunt, Vice President

- Ph. 331-0298
- Ph. 336-1260

VNA BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION

The contact information for the 2008 VNA Board officers and members along with their respective areas of responsibility can be found below:

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| * Ken Beck, President | Ph. 331-0298 |
| * Al Blunt, Vice President | Ph. 336-1260 |
| * Connie Curtiss, Secretary | Ph. 258-7646 |
| * Anthony DeMichielli, Treasurer | Ph. 250-1857 |
| * Judy Graci, Membership | Ph. 257-8626 |
| * Jessica Janda, Newsletter & Community Relations | Ph. 577-1148 |
| * Al Graci, Lake Travis | Ph. 257-8626 |
| * John Scholtzhauer, Business & Development | Ph. 258-8136 |
| * Ryan Janda, Roadways & Safety | Ph. 789-0260 |

Feel free to contact any of the VNA Board Members with your thoughts and suggestions as many people in the community have already done. **Questions, comments or concerns can also be directed to the VNA board e-mail inbox at: VNAFeedback@yahoo.com.** This email address is a convenient way of letting us know your thoughts. If you would prefer, write your comments on the feedback form provided at the end of this newsletter and mail or drop it off to the Fire Department. The Board invites you to attend our monthly meetings, held on the first Tuesday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at the Fire Hall. **Our meetings are open to the public.** Feel free to come share your thoughts and **TELL US** what we can do to help. Our role is to serve our community and all of you who live here.

~ Jessica Janda ~ Newsletter & Community Relations ~ Volente Neighborhood Association

VNA MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Interested in joining the **Volente Neighborhood Association**? Benefits include an annual dinner, a quarterly newsletter, monthly board meetings, and a great opportunity to be involved in community issues that affect us all. The annual membership fee is \$15 per household / \$30 per business. Please make checks payable to the Volente Neighborhood Association and send your contact information (including your mailing and email addresses) and payment to the following address:

Volente Neighborhood Association (Attention: Membership)
15406 FM 2769
Volente, Texas 78641

TELL US! Give us your comments, suggestions via this form or by e-mail at: VnaFeedback@yahoo.com
If you use this form, please give to any board member or mail to the Fire Department, Attn: VNA Board
Comments: _____

Name(s) _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____ **Work Phone** _____

E-Mail Address _____

Please provide us with your phone number so that we can call you to address any concerns and answer any questions you may have. We are here to serve you!

Volente Neighborhood Association
Anthony DeMichielli, Treasurer
15406 FM 2769
Volente, Texas 78641

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