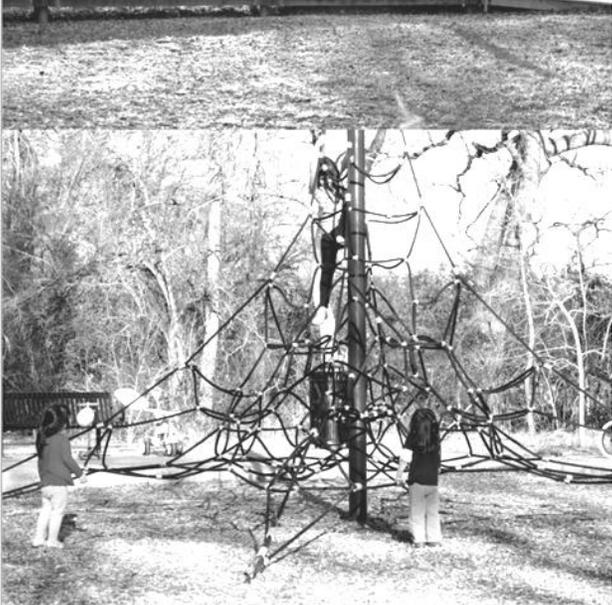


A UNIQUE PLAYGROUND IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

by Karla Contreras



Eastwood is lucky to have in our territory a non-traditional playground that offers great shade and a beautiful and natural environment seldom seen in the Dallas Area. The park was inaugurated in 2009, and the kids and adults in our neighborhood have enjoyed it for the last 5 years; it took almost 9 years of hard, time-consuming work and lobbying from some outstanding members of our the community for us to enjoy this privilege. Last year, the playground committee installed ramps on the deck path going to the bridge which makes it accessible to parents with kids in strollers and people on wheelchairs. Kudos to Mark Sullivan. This year, the new *Playground Committee* submitted a request to the city to repair and secure the bench that was bent, as well as making sure they keep up with the ongoing maintenance, like leaf blowing and replenishing of the moisture-saving mulch.

Also, a survey was posted on *Nextdoor* to get a better idea of how members of our community felt about the park and to measure what needs and projects to give priority; thanks to all of you who participated in the survey. You can find responses at www.tinyurl.com/dixonParkResults. (The results of the study will be provided to the city, as per request of the director of the Parks and Recreation Dept. who visited us at our last general meeting.)

*You can contact Karla Contreras,
Chairman Playground Committee
at kcontrer@gmail.com*

WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT THE PARK THROUGH THE SURVEY.

- * Nature is its best feature.
- * Lack of equipment for certain age groups may be missing: slide, monkey bars, etc.
- * Dog bag receptacle
- * Exercise equipment for adults
- * Some stressed the desire for appropriate equipment fitting the natural landscape of the park

A DITCH RUNS THROUGH IT

THE HISTORY BEHIND THE VINEMONT CHANNEL IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

by Michael Parkey, AOSLA

The Vinemont Channel is possibly the least liked feature of our otherwise wonderful neighborhood. The Channel is also known as the culvert, the drainage way, and most often just “the ditch”.

Before our homes were built in the 1950s and 1960s, Vinemont Channel was a natural stream that drained what would become the Eastwood and Dixon Branch neighborhoods. With development, the stream was put in concrete pipes on the northeast side of Easton, and in a concrete channel in Eastwood. If the stream had a name, I have not been able to discover it. Just on the southwest side of Peavy, the concrete channel ends, and the stream becomes semi-natural until it joins Dixon Branch Creek a few hundred yards downstream. I say “semi-natural” because none of the streams in our urban environment are truly natural anymore; they have all been greatly altered by human activity.

In about 2000, part of the Vinemont Channel was widened and deepened to better accommodate storm runoff. If you walk the channel, you can clearly see the boundary between the old work and the new between the 900 blocks of Sylvania and Forest Grove. Engineers call this a concrete armored open trapezoidal channel, an efficient (if ugly and unnatural) way to move water. Unfortunately, it does not completely protect our homes from flooding, as we saw in 2006. The Channel also has another function. It is access for all the utilities that serve our homes: water, sewer, gas, electricity, and communications lines all run in or next to it.

Like the Deep Tributary between Creekmere and Sinclair, the Channel flows directly into Dixon Branch and then into White Rock Lake, less than a mile away. This brings me to one of the main points of this article. Anything you put in the Channel (and the storm drains on adjacent streets) goes straight into White Rock Lake. Dirt, rock, and concrete debris wash into the lake, causing it to silt up and requiring extremely expensive dredging by the city. And in case you were wondering, the lake is overdue for dredging. Landscape waste (lawn clippings, leaves, and pruned branches from your trees and shrubs) puts excess organic matter into the lake. This organic matter causes a process called eutrophication. Rapidly decomposing vegetation depletes oxygen in the water, killing fish and other aquatic life.

Most of us probably do not need to be told to avoid dumping chemicals into the lake, but some of us still do it. Did you know that if your swimming pool filter backwashes into the Channel, all the pool chemicals wind up in White Rock Lake? And those of us who throw dog feces into the Channel should know that pet feces are one of the largest sources of dangerous bacterial contamination in urban streams and lakes. Would you flush your toilet into White Rock Lake?

The other reason that the Channel is unloved is crime. Sometimes this is just annoying or unsightly, like noise, littering, or graffiti. Sometimes it is much more serious. Because the Channel must be accessible to utility trucks, it is also accessible to a burglar’s vehicle. Because we avoid looking at the Channel if we can, criminals can work unobserved. The crime problems associated with the Channel have declined in recent years. Volunteers in Patrol, prompt graffiti removal, and the closure of Whitehaven have all helped greatly. But it is reasonable to remain vigilant.

So, you may be wondering what does all this have to do with the Riparian Committee. Remember, “riparian” means “stream-side”, and like it or not, the Channel is a stream with flowing water 365 days a year. And the problems with the Channel are largely under our control! We can avoid dumping trash, and clean up the no man’s land behind our houses next to the Channel. And believe it or not, when the Channel is clean after a big rainstorm, it is rather pleasant. It will never be the garden spot of Eastwood, but it is a shady, quiet place to ride a bike or walk your dog. Kids love it especially, since it looks rather dangerous and forbidden but is actually neither. And the more we neighbors look at it, and use it, and take care of it, the better it becomes for us, and for the jewel of east Dallas, White Rock Lake

My apologies go to Norman Maclean for the title.

OUR CANINE NEIGHBORHOOD PATROL: JUD HUMAN AND HIS "GIRLS", XENA AND FIONA



No doubt you've seen a "masked stranger "and his two "girls" walking around our neighborhood while keeping an eye out for any suspicious activity. Jud is a member of Eastwood's Neighborhood Board and serves as Chairman of our Crime Watch Committee; among his many contributions is the *Crime Report* for Eastwood through *Nextdoor*.

His beautiful companions are Xena, who has the deepest bark of the two and loves curry chicken; she was adopted 12 years ago from a lady who had rescued her and was moving somewhere where pets were not allowed; and Fiona, whose bark is higher-pitched and will eat anything; she was adopted about a year and a half ago from a rescue organization that had her and dozens of other dogs at an adoption event at the Green Spot.

Xena has slowed down somewhat at her advanced age, so she can't cover as much of the 'hood as she used to, but we're still grateful to her and her human and canine companions for helping keep our neighborhood safe for so long.

WATER CONSERVATION ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS

(Courtesy of the City of Dallas Water Utilities)



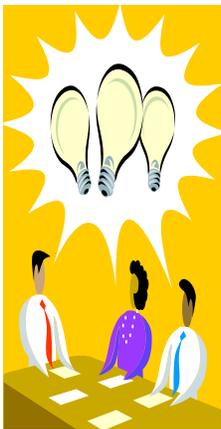
- ^ *Water before 10 a.m. or after 6 p.m. from April 1 to October 31*
- ^ *Observe the maximum twice per week watering schedule*
- ^ *Don't water during any form of precipitation. All automatic sprinkler systems are required to have rain and freeze sensors*
- ^ *Repair any broken, missing or misdirected sprinkler heads*
- ^ *Watering driveways, sidewalks or streets is prohibited*
- ^ *Watering resulting in runoff onto streets, sidewalks or drainage area is prohibited*
- ^ *Watering by hand, drip irrigation or the use of soaker hoses will be permitted at any time*

Experts agree that if you give your lawn one inch of water every 5 to 7 days, the water will sink in and encourage the roots to grow stronger. Deep and infrequent watering is key to keeping your lawn healthy and your water costs under control

Important Dates for our Neighborhood

July 4th Parade—9 am @ Lippitt Park

VIP Training July 14 & 15 (See Pg. 2)



NEIGHBORHOOD IDEAS = BOARD DECISIONS

In order to avoid confusion, the Eastwood Homeowners Assoc. annual fee for new members and membership renewals will be \$20.