

Volente Voice

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

March 2009

ANNUAL VNA MEETING & DINNER
SATURDAY - APRIL 4th @ 4:00 PM

On behalf of the VNA Board, we would like to extend a big invitation to all of you to join us for our annual meeting at the Volente Fire Station on Saturday, April 4th, starting at 4:00 pm in the afternoon and ending with a catered dinner from Fajita Warehouse from 6 to 7:30. We have a full schedule for our meeting.



First and foremost Travis County Precinct 3's newest Commissioner, Karen Huber, will be joining us as our guest for the meeting. This will be a terrific opportunity for all of you to meet Karen and to hear from her where her priorities lie during this, her first, year in office. Karen will address the gathering for 30 to 45 minutes and then we will move into a question and answer period that I will help moderate. This will give you a chance to bring up your specific concerns about Lake Travis, the BCRUA, the LCRA, and traffic. We will also be prepared to talk about upcoming plans for the construction of Water Treatment Plant #4 near the intersection of 620 and Bullick Hollow Road. We have a lot to talk about and you will not want to miss this opportunity.

The VNA will be collecting annual membership payments at the meeting and anyone with a membership can share in our dinner for free. The fee for dinner if you don't have a membership will be \$15 per family / \$30 per business.

After Karen's presentation and the Q&A session, the VNA board will hold a meeting of all members to elect the board members for this coming year. All current board members are running for an additional term, but we are still looking for two additional members to join us. If you are interested please call Ken Beck at 512-917-5188. See you on Saturday April 4th at 4:00pm.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR VNA PRESIDENT

It is rapidly moving into Spring in central Texas – temperatures in the 90's and it isn't even March yet, but more troublesome is the lack of rain and the level of Lake Travis. Our normal spring fill is not occurring and our drought continues to worsen. We will all continue to follow this I know.

Speaking of water, the saga of the BCRUA continues. You will find an update on this issue later in the newsletter from Judy Graci but in a nutshell – the three cities continue their work, but the schedule has slowed. Work continues on an effort to get the three cities to respond to a list of questions from the Village of Volente. One meeting has been held and we are waiting for a second one to be scheduled. BCRUA has delayed Phase I of the project due to the economy, the drought, and the severe drop in new home starts in Leander, primarily. We'll keep you informed on what transpires. In the midst of all of this dialogue and work with the BCRUA regarding taking water out of Lake Travis, another issue has just popped up its head. The LCRA has decided that this is the time to begin to demand that all property owners along Lake Travis who take their water supply out of the lake must now have a permit and a contract to do so. Please see an article by David Gavenda summarizing LCRA's position. I am anticipating that this is going to cause a great amount of concern and discussion as we go forward. The VNA board will attempt to connect to the LCRA on this issue and will keep you all informed as much as possible.

Lastly, there is a lot of activity going on with our road system. There is a lot of obvious surveying going on at and near the intersection of Volente Road and Highway 620. It is possible that the Texas DOT may be planning to start the widening of this last piece of 2769 / Anderson Mill Road. At the same time, at and near the intersection of Bullick Hollow Road and Highway 620 the City of Austin is beginning construction on Water Treatment Plant #4, and recently received approval from the city council for funding to improve and widen Bullick Hollow Road to accommodate the increasing truck traffic.

Finally please mark Saturday, April 4th on your calendars. The VNA annual meeting will take place starting at 4:00 pm at the Fire Station and will include dinner. Our guest speaker will be our newly elected Travis County Precinct 3 Commissioner Karen Huber. She will have the opportunity to present her issues agenda to all of us, and will allow us to ask questions as well to make clear our concerns over many of the issues mentioned above. Finally, take note of our new village news lighted sign installed across from VJ's.

Beyond that, I continue to ask for and invite your participation in the VNA process. We need more board members to ensure that we stay 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. I am ready to sponsor a rain dance in the near future. Anyone wanting to help me will be welcome.

~ Ken Beck, President ~ Volente Neighborhood Association

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

For almost two years we have been requesting an independent review of the Lake Travis and Simsboro Aquifer water sources for the Williamson County Regional Water Supply Project (BCRUA). The Simsboro Aquifer is one of the largest, virtually untapped reservoirs of water in Texas. It could provide Leander and Cedar Park a long range, second source of water. Private water companies can deliver treated aquifer water to Highways 79&130, just east of Round Rock. Why with this huge, available water source do these Brazos Basin Cities need inter-basin transfers to use Lake Travis?

The drought of record for Lake Travis brought the level of the lake to 614msl, but the LCRA's simulated drought level is much lower at 578msl. How can Lake Travis supply all the firm water that the LCRA is selling? Is Lake Travis a reliable water source for the \$500M BCRUA project? With over \$25M in engineering fees for just Phase 1, the BCRUA cannot answer what water will be available at the proposed deep-water intake's curtailment levels. Their plan is to supply the new treatment plant, and the two existing facilities, but with what water? The LCRA now states it will require 25% more water than the 2007 State Water Plan projections, with additional water required as early as 2010. Does the Lower Colorado River have enough water to supply the needs of this basin for the next 50 years?

Leander's request for an increased inter-basin permit for 17,600af of water is pending at TCEQ with over 65 letters requesting contested case hearings and public meetings including the Village of Volente, the VNA, and DELTA. Leander needs the permit for its Williamson County/Brazos Basin growth corridor of capital metro developments on Hwy 183 & 183A, and Parmer Lane. Will the Texas Water Development Board require this permit for funding the construction of BCRUA's Phase 1? If not how will they get around it?

The BCRUA project has been delayed because of the Leander permit issues, economy, bond market, and changes in the project. The BCRUA has until May 1 to "pull out" of receiving funds July 1. Current schedule is to begin construction of Phase 1 in the summer of 2009. Please go to www.draininglaketravis.org and the Volente websites for updates.

~ Judy Graci, Membership ~ Volente Neighborhood Association

THINK YOUR LAKE FROM LAKE TRAVIS IS FREE? THINK AGAIN ...

As a newly-appointed member of the LCRA Travis/Austin Regional Council, I have received notice that LCRA plans to enforce the requirement that everyone drawing water from Lake Travis, including home owners, must have a contract and pay for the amount used. I am sure that this will be a surprise to most people in our community; my wife and I have been drawing lake water for more than 40 years and did not realize that we were breaking the law. Since few, if

any, individuals have a water meter, the usage is estimated from the number of square feet of irrigated yard, the number of people living in the house, and whether you have a pool which is filled from the lake. LCRA says, "The average amount under current contracts is 0.94 acre-feet, with a cost of \$129.72 per year." More details are available at <http://www.lcra.org/water/supply/contracts/> under the heading "DOMESTIC USERS". If you wish, I can email to you the details plus a packet of materials for applying for a contract.

On the Regional Council, I plan to press LCRA for more information regarding how they make their projections of "available firm water supply". I suspect that they are ignoring the now well-documented change in the climate of the southwestern part of our country; it has been becoming hotter and drier, leading to less run-off from rainfall. Please let me know if you have other issues to bring to their attention. I can be contacted either by phone or by email: **258-1035**, Gavenda@physics.utexas.edu.

~ David Gavenda ~ VNA Newsletter Contributor ~ LCRA Travis / Austin Regional Council

ANDERSON MILL & MUSEUM UPDATES

Saturday, March 21: 8 am-2 pm GARAGE SALE
Sunday, March 22: 2-5 pm OPEN HOUSE, TOURS OF MILL AND MUSEUM, PLANT & GARAGE SALE
Sunday, March 22: 2-3 pm ANTIQUE CARS (prior to 1930's) - Members of "Road Relics" will be attending open house and displaying cars.

Anderson Mill Gardeners maintain a replica of old Anderson Mill and host open houses and tours to educate the public about the history of the mill and the Volente community. These are held each 4th Sunday March to October with various themes. April 26 is a Mothers' Day Photo Shoot and June 26 is 2nd Annual Market Days, etc. Membership meetings of the club are the 2nd Thursday of each month. They include speakers on various topics including gardening, attracting wildlife, etc. April 9 will be featuring "History of Volente & the Anderson Family." For information on attending meetings or on membership call Dorothy Wilhelm @ 258-1530.

~ Dorothy Wilhelm ~ Anderson Mill Garden Club

VNA BOARD NEWS AND UPCOMING ELECTION

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 2009, we encourage you to be a vital part of serving your community. The new VNA board election will be held by proclamation immediately following the annual meeting on 4/4. **If you are interested in joining the VNA Board please contact Ken Beck at 331-0298.**

VNA BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION

The contact information for the 2009 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@gmail.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.

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 in need of the following items:** sneakers for both men and women, warm jackets for both men and women, men's underwear, SOCKS, and easy reading books. **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.

EMERGENCIES: CALL 911

NON-EMERGENCY: 258-1114 15406 FM 2769, Volente, 78641

Board Meetings: Second Monday at 7:00 P.M.

CONTROLLED BURNS: 258-1114Web site: vvfd.net**Fire Chief: Walter Groman****2009 Board of Directors**

Scott Spurlin, President
Gary Potts, Vice President
Jennifer Zufelt, Secretary
Jean Shull, Treasurer

Members-at-Large

Ann Anderson	John Torres
David Gordon	Mike Vandenack
Robert Nelson	

VVFD Acquires Reserve Fire Engine



Emergency Services District #14, working with Volente Volunteer Fire Department, has acquired a second fire engine for use by VVFD. This engine had previously been used by Jollyville Fire Department at their Anderson Mill Road station. The engine, designated E-1402, is a 1993 Pierce Lance with a 1,250 GPM pump and 750 gallon water storage tank. It provides a complete backup for our primary fire engine (E-1401) as well as providing capacity for relay pumping of water up and down long driveways. It also provides additional training opportunities for our personnel. Its purchase represents a continuing shift towards a focus on structure fires as our district becomes more urbanized. When you come by the fire station on Friday to vote and/or join in the Potluck Dinner, please take a look at this latest addition to our department.

(VVFD) VOLENTE VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT NEEDS YOU!

All of us have watched the old Westerns and the "bucket brigade" made up of the entire townsfolk coming together to put out the fire. Everyone realized they had a job to do. The men, women, and children worked hard to get the fire out quickly. After all it was their community. Here at Volente our VOLUNTEER fire department has come a long way in the last few years. We have four full time fire fighters, and we have upgraded our fire fighting equipment significantly, anchored by our two beautiful fire engines.

As your new VVFD board finds their footing and continues to guide the VVFD in how our financial resources are applied, it has become obvious that the highest priority issue is staffing. We need volunteers! We have adequate equipment and a core group of professional fire fighters, but without additional volunteer staffing the fire department's ability to fight fires, limit physical damage, and ability to save lives can be hampered.

If a trained volunteer or professional fire fighter is used in a support activity such as driving the tanker truck, directing traffic, operating the water pump on the engine, or other less demanding tasks instead of fighting the fire, the VVFD cannot attack the fire at maximum capability. The reality is that our fire department may not be able to address situations that the fire fighters are trained to address, as they will be understaffed. Entering buildings to save lives are one example. 2 can enter, with 2 outside as backup. If just 1 fire fighter cannot be part of the 2 in/2out team as they are required to operate a truck or other necessary support activity then our fire fighters are compromised in their ability to apply their best effort to address an emergency situation.

To address this need your board will work with the VVFD Auxiliary and Chief Groman to host a volunteer orientation night. We will bring this topic up at our next board meeting in February with the goal of having an orientation one night prior to May 30th. In the meantime there is a brief intro to volunteering at <http://www.vvfd.net/vol.htm>

Although the web site information is focused on the many hours required to become certified as an EMT or fire fighter there are many ways to volunteer with a much lower time commitment. These include driving the tanker truck, traffic control, etc. All much needed functions that require very little training and free up the personnel to do what they need to do to best protect our property and citizens. There are jobs open to men and women, young and old. Besides the equipment we have to operate is much more fun than the old wooden buckets! With our equipment you may get to run the siren and operate the flashing lights! I hope you think about this community need and are able to come and learn more. Please do encourage your friends and neighbors to think about this topic as well.



VOLENTE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

FISH FRY

SATURDAY – APRIL 25th, 2009

Please join us on Saturday, April 25th, for the annual **fish fry and dance**. Each spring the VVFD Auxiliary hosts a fish fry, raffle drawing, and dance to raise funds to assist the fire department. Several projects funded by the Auxiliary include the illuminated message sign, the kitchen remodel, a bathroom addition, a covered patio, landscaping, a phone and paging system, a storage shed, and the preservation of the fire department's historical documents. This year we'll eat fish from 4:00 - 8:00 PM and dance to the Charlie Hurtin Band from 7:00 - 11:00 PM. Meals include catfish, cole slaw, fries, beans, bread, tea, coffee, and lemonade. Beer, soda and desserts will also be available.

Want to get involved with this fun-filled event? Just call Nancy Carufel at 335-3596 or Jacque Potts at 468-7685.



~ **Jacque Potts ~ VVFD Auxiliary**

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT: A LITTLE HISTORY

The neighborhood you live in is serviced by a unique fire department, with a long history in the area and quite a few traditions for such a small department. First of all, we must explain a little known fact: we are not just a fire department. We are MUCH more than that! Like all fire departments in the central Texas area, we are a multi-function emergency response organization. We respond to fires (grass, house, car, trash, etc.), medical calls, hazardous materials calls, animal rescues, water rescues, people rescues, flooding, natural disasters, weather emergencies and any other type of call that people need us for. If no one else can do it, call the fire department!

We are also a community education department. We go to schools, day care centers, businesses, scout troops or any other groups that request us and help educate them on fire safety. The best thing we can do is prevent a fire from happening and we do that by teaching you to be safe. When we're not running calls or educating the community, we are out doing inspections and preplans to hopefully help prevent fires and to be prepared if one does occur. We inspect all of the schools, day cares, foster homes, and businesses in the area. We also inspect all of the fire hydrants to make sure they will work if we need them. We always try our best to be out in the community as much as possible, just so you know we are there if you ever need us. If you see us driving around in one of the big, red or white trucks, give us a wave. And, if you happen to be passing by our station feel free to stop by and ask questions or just take up-close look at the station and trucks.

The department is always looking for new volunteer members; we have many ways to that you can serve the community. These include: members of our auxiliary, a support member that assist the fire fighters on the emergency scene, but does not actually fight fire, they direct traffic, operate our tanker, provide logistical support, etc. We also have opportunities to be a fire fighter and an EMT. You can learn more about the Volente Fire Department at our website: www.vvfd.net Be Safe!

~ Walter Groman, Fire Chief ~ Volente Volunteer Fire Department

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 or bring this form along with your membership fee to the annual meeting on Saturday, April 4th, starting at 4:00 pm:



2008 Volente Neighborhood Association (VNA) Membership Form

Yearly Dues: **Name** _____

\$15 / Household **Address** _____

\$30 / Business **City** _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Phone _____ **Alt Phone** _____

Mail To: **Email** _____

VNA - Membership **Comments & Suggestions:**

15406 FM 2769
Volente, TX 78641



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

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