



# Mackenzie Meadows

homeowners association

April 2007

Volume 2, Issue 4

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Last year has come and gone and now it time to spring forward to 2007 with respect to our Mackenzie Meadows Home Owner's Association. We started off the year by giving back a one time \$20 rebate toward the home owner's dues because of the strong financial shape our budget is in. Our annual Easter Extravaganza on March 31<sup>st</sup> was a success as usual and I would like to thank Hope Haywood for organizing and spearheading this event.

Please mark down on your calendars that our annual homeowner's association meeting will be April 21<sup>st</sup> at our neighborhood pool/playground at 4:00pm. Your HOA board will provide food and beverages in the form of a barbeque. Having the annual meeting on a Saturday and in our neighborhood should increase participation. We look forward to seeing you there! Also on April 21<sup>st</sup>, the pool re-opens. Along the lines of the pool, I would like to mention that we have upgraded our pool access system and that the children's pool has been just recently been re-plastered prior to the reopening. Everyone should have received a new pool access card with their most recent dues statement. If you have not received a new pool access card, please contact Pete Wilding our Premier Communities Management Representative at 214-451-5418.

As a reminder for all homeowners, that beginning this year, all elementary children from kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade will be changing schools from Stinson to Schell Elementary school. Registration and more information will be forthcoming as the year progresses.

Yours truly, Ken Hewes

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## MANAGER'S CORNER

Just a reminder that school will be out for the summer very soon and with that means more kids will be out playing during the day. We ask that you please drive slowly thru the alley ways and streets.

Now that spring is here, that means we will all be enjoying the use of the pool. Parents, we need your help... Last year we all remember wanting to use the pool only to find it chained up to due to a fecal contamination. Under Texas state code the pool must be closed for 24 hours and super chlorinated to kill any existing bacteria born from the contamination. We would ask that parents take precautions with our little people by using swim diapers and rubber pants to help prevent these accidents. Also, with our bigger little people, perhaps a mandatory bathroom break from swimming every now and then. This will go a long way in preserving the use of the pool for everyone and saving money in the association's pool budget. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and until next time... swim for the health of it!

Sincerely,  
Pete Wilding, 214-451-5418





# SPRING HAS FINALLY SPRUNG!

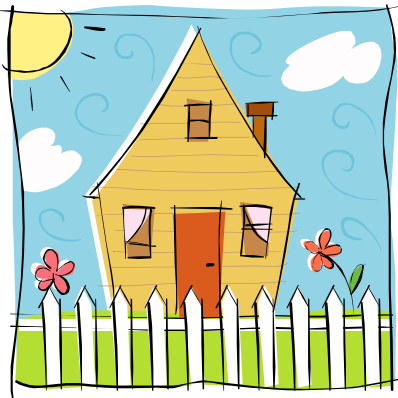
By Bill Hundley

The weather has now decided to be a bit more spring like and lawns are awakening, trees are beginning to sprout leaves and the flowers are starting to bloom. This spring is an important one for MacKenzie Meadows. It has now been seven years since the neighborhood was completed. With houses in MM that range from 7 to about 12 years, we are at the point where routine maintenance needs to have a little help.



The life of most paints that builders use is seven years, assuming that it was applied properly and there have been no undue climate related instances that would shorten the life of the paint. It is time that most of us should, myself included, take a good long look at our houses. On mine, the shutters and front door have faded dramatically and will soon be repainted. Yes, the form was submitted and has been approved.

In my travels around the neighborhood, my shutters seem to be average. I have noticed houses where the paint has faded, flaked and peeled from woodwork and some of the metal roofing has faded, as well. It appears that very few houses need total paint, but if you do it before it really needs it, you'll be dollars ahead in the prep work. By putting fresh, high quality paint on these items now, it can prevent further deterioration. Waiting longer will mean that the wood will need to be replaced. That adds to the expense and it is something that many homeowners don't feel comfortable doing on their own.



There are many quality painting firms that do exceptionally good work at very moderate prices. If all they have to do is prep and paint, it will cost less and be completed faster.

Take a good look at your home. Be critical. Fix any problems and you'll be the beneficiary of that by maintaining your property value and you'll also help MacKenzie Meadows look better. Don't forget that any painting, serious landscaping, fences, patios, pools, roofs and so on need to be approved in advance

by the Architectural Control Committee. It is a fairly painless process and it takes just a few days if the form is complete.



## Start of Termite Swarming Season

There are two subterranean termite genera that cause most of the structural damage in Texas. One genus, *Reticulitermes*, will become noticeable as the reproductives begin swarming during the day in the spring. Termites are social insects and have a caste system consisting of workers, soldiers, and winged reproductives. Each caste member within a termite colony has distinct physical and behavioral characteristics.

Termites feed on any cellulose material, such as roots, paper, and cardboard. They are important to our ecosystem since they decompose cellulose. However, subterranean termites become economic pests when they invade human dwellings and structures.

Subterranean termites live in colonies underground, in order to avoid sunshine and outside air. The workers build the shelter tubes from tiny pieces of soil, wood, and debris that are glued together using secretions and fecal material. Termites tend to have an extensive tunneling system underground that allows them to carry food resources back into the colony.

Termite damage may be detected by the presence of mud tubes, damaged wood, and the swarming of winged termites. Termite damage may also be apparent on door frames or window sills, or dead termites might be visible along window sills or baseboards.

### Some Control Options:

#### **Some Preventative Options:**

- 1)) Stumps, scrap wood, grade stakes, foam boards, cardboard boxes, and newspapers found around structures should be removed.
- 2) Firewood, landscape timbers, compost piles should not be stored around foundations.
- 3) Minimize moist areas by grading the soil and installing gutters to allow water to drain away from the building.
- 4) Do not allow shrubs, vines, tall grasses and other dense vegetation to grow against structures. Thick vegetation makes it hard to inspect for termite activity, and these plants tend to trap moisture.
- 5) Use mulch sparingly and do not allow the mulch to contact wood siding or framing of the doors/windows around the structure.

#### **Some Chemical Approaches to Termite Control:**

If termites are found around structures some measures, such as applying liquid termiticides and installing baiting systems, can be taken. Soil termiticides provide a continuous chemical barrier around the structure. There are both repellent and non-repellant liquid termiticides that can be applied around structures. The termites attempting to tunnel into the treated area will either be killed or repelled, thus preventing them from entering the structure. Termite baiting systems can also be installed around structures and in conducive conditions within the area. The stations will usually contain a piece of untreated wood initially until termite activity is detected. Once termite activity is observed, then the untreated wood is replaced with a plastic tube containing a termiticide. The termiticide in the bait systems is found within the cellulose matrix. The worker termites feed on the cellulose matrix and then take the material back to the colony to exchange this material with other members of the colony. This results in death of colony members.

Picture of a winged reproductive termite, *Reticulitermes* sp. (Isoptera: Rhinotermitidae).  
Photo by J. Hamer.



## Crafty Carpenter Ants

Carpenter ants tend to invade homes in Texas throughout the year. They are usually noticed in late winter and early spring, when winged reproductive ants begin looking for a suitable nesting site in a swarming flight. The winged reproductives usually are entirely black and  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length, but the worker carpenter ants are  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches in length with a red head and thorax and a black abdomen.

Carpenter ants do not eat wood, but they use protected areas in moist and dry wood as nesting sites. They usually construct two different kinds of nests, a parent nest that contains an egg-laying queen, brood and worker ants, and satellite colonies that usually contains worker ants. The carpenter ants found inside a home may have originated from the parent colony located in a tree stump or woodpile outdoors.

Indoor colonies may be located by looking for piles of sawdust, dead ants and pieces of other insects in such areas as the floor and in window sills. A moisture meter can also locate wet spots in order to find possible nesting sites indoors. Outdoor colonies can be located by examining tree trunks and stumps for trailing ants. Also carpenter ants may be seen traveling over such areas as tree branches or vines touching the roof, electrical and telephone wires in order to enter structures.

### Some Control Options for Carpenter Ants

#### **Some Preventive Actions:**

- 1) Reduce moisture problems by
- 2) fixing plumbing and roof leaks.
- 2) Trim tree limbs and vegetation touching the roof or side of structures.
- 3) Seal cracks and openings in the foundation.
- 4) Remove dead stumps that are close to structures.

#### **Some Chemical Control Options:**

Carpenter ants can be difficult to control, since all the nests must be located and treated. Carpenter ant nests can be located by looking for small piles of sawdust or frass and pieces of dead ants and other insects. Carpenter ant frass is usually pushed out of a small hole in the nest chamber. By locating the small hole, this will usually lead to the nesting chamber. Once located, treat wall voids and other hidden spaces where ants are entering by drilling small holes and injecting chemicals such as dusts in the area. These dusts may contain the active ingredients cyfluthrin, deltamethrin, or boric acid. The dust will disperse to contact and kill the ants.

If no effort is made to locate the outdoor nesting site, the carpenter ant population will most likely continue to exist. Once the outdoor nesting site is located, insecticides can be sprayed or drenched into the nest.

Sometimes it is difficult to locate and treat all carpenter ant nesting sites indoors and outdoors, so it is best to call a pest management professional.

Picture of a carpenter ant, *Camponotus* sp. (Hymenoptera: Formicidae). Photo by Bart Drees, Texas Cooperative Extension.



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## 2 EASY WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR ENERGY BILL



### 1. Replace Five Bulbs

Another easy way to save energy and the environment is to replace conventional bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). These ultra-efficient bulbs use only one-fourth the energy of normal bulbs and last up to ten times longer. Replacing five bulbs in your home with CFLs can save you up to 50 percent on your annual lighting bill. If every household in America replaced five bulbs, the waste-reducing effect would be equivalent to removing 8 million cars from our roads for one year. Although they are more expensive than conventional bulbs, many states offer price-incentive or rebate programs. Also, the nonprofit **Energy Federation** [www.energyfederation.com](http://www.energyfederation.com) sells CFLs at discounted prices.



2. **Programmable thermostats** can reduce energy wasted heating or cooling a house when no one is home or everyone's asleep.

According to the Home Energy Saver site, Energy Star programmable thermostats can save as much as 20% to 30% on your heating or cooling costs by allowing for multiple daily settings and automatically adjusting when the outside temperature changes. Participating manufacturers include Honeywell, Hunter Fan and Smart Systems International. Unfortunately, it's not easy to search for programmable thermostats by Energy Star status. Instead, keep an eye out for those with features typical of the Energy Star thermostats: temperature recovery systems, two programs and four temperature settings.

