



# Brook Meadows Messenger

*The Official Publication of the Brook Meadows Homeowner's Association*

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[www.brookmeadows.org](http://www.brookmeadows.org)

March 2009

## Last Tuesday Report

January's Last Tuesday came complete with an Ice Storm to cool the beverages at Lupe's in Bedford. While attendance was sparse (something about living to see Wednesday), those that made it had a gay ole' time, no doubt due to Shelley's buying for the entire neighborhood that showed. Thanks Shelley!

February's Cafe Italia event was strongly attended by 23, and no complaints were heard from anyone, but especially Nick, who was given an attendance estimate of "between 5 and 30". Food and service were impeccable as usual.

Lots of good neighborhood bonding; geesh, we're really nice people after all. Who'd a thunk it?

## Social Calendar

### MARCH TBD - SPECIAL SESSION BOARD MEETING

Open invitation to all via us mail

### MARCH 31 - LAST TUESDAY

Texas bbq on hwy 121 north of glade

### APRIL TBD - BMHA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Colleyville Community Center

### APRIL 25 - GARAGE SALE

Bhma will take out newspaper ads and post road signs - all you have to do hang balloons on your mailbox and sell sell sell!

### APRIL 28 - LAST TUESDAY

Amore on check-sparger

### MAY 28 - LAST TUESDAY

Flips on hwy 114

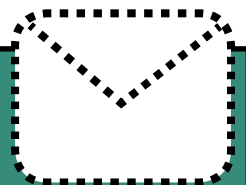


## BMHA Neighborhood Garage Sale

Brook Meadow, BMHA will be sponsoring a Neighborhood Garage Sale. Mark your calendars for Saturday April 25. Ads have been placed in the Star Telegram and local papers. "Neighborhood Garage Sale Sat. April 25, 8 - 2. Multi family, look for balloons. Brook Meadow subdivision, Colleyville, SE corner Glade & Pool Rds" Signs and balloons will be at the entrances to Brook Meadow, courtesy of your homeowners Association. All you have to do is put a balloon on your mailbox and sell, sell, sell. Get together with a few of your neighbors if you don't have enough "stuff" on your own.

**Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**8 am - 2 pm**

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# Brook Meadows

## Brook Meadows Homeowners Association, Inc.

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Please visit our website often:  
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*If you have any ideas to make our newsletter better, please contact the editor. We want your input, ideas, and even your articles.*

## Alternatives to Microsoft Office

*Submitted by Laurie Scott*

Anyone who works in an office and with a computer probably has Microsoft Office installed on it. Word, PowerPoint and Excel are found in almost every corporate environment. But when it comes time to buy software for your home computer, most people don't realize there are free and low-cost alternatives.

To start, Microsoft does offer an Office 2007 "Home and Student" edition that I've seen online for as low as \$80. This edition includes Word, PowerPoint, Excel and OneNote, but not Outlook, which is what many Office users expect with their "office" suite.

The most popular free option is probably Sun's Open Office 3 (available at [www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org)). It has powerful word processing, presentation and spreadsheet programs that are compatible with Microsoft Office, and also includes a graphics program and database (but again, no e-mail program.)

Another free alternative is a surprising name from the past. Lotus (owned by IBM) has resurrected its Symphony suite and is closer to Open Office than Microsoft Office. Its programs are IBM Lotus Symphony Documents, IBM Lotus Symphony Presentations and IBM Lotus Symphony Spreadsheets and also offer Microsoft Office compatibility.

Google has recently entered the office application fray with their own product (which are still in "beta" – a Google trademark), Google Docs. It offers Microsoft Office compatibility for Word and Excel with a twist, everything is stored online. You can access and share your files with anyone from anywhere. Some consider this the future, known as "cloud computing" (the internet is the cloud in computer network diagrams.)

Corel offers an \$89 alternative that is compatible with Office Word, PowerPoint and Excel, but includes VideoStudio LE for editing your home videos, and MediaOne SE for enhancing and organizing your photos.

At the time of this writing, the most popular (non-Microsoft) email client, Eudora is undergoing a rewrite but the older versions are still available at [www.eudora.com](http://www.eudora.com). If you're already using hotmail, yahoo mail, Gmail, or your Internet Service Provider's (ISP) web-based mail, then you don't need an e-mail client to run on your computer anyway.

So don't automatically feel like you have to fork out a couple hundred dollars just to have Office functionality at home. There are affordable and even FREE alternatives out there for you.

*Happy Computing!*



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## Don't Become a Statistic!

*Submitted by Allison Weaver*

Statistics tell us that the number of new gym memberships skyrocket in January and plummet by the end of March. The same holds true for some who go it alone and start a brand new regimen with their family, friends, or private trainers/classes.....do NOT become a statistic!! You can do this – you can keep it going! Restart, take a different tact, try a new food, start getting outside again and be rejuvenated when the sun comes out – whatever it takes. It is never over when you make a mistake, fall off the horse, eat a pan of brownies, or otherwise bring to a halt your journey toward a full, vital, healthy lifestyle. It is also never too late to begin again.

**Re-check your fitness routine.** Is it realistic? What is your schedule really like? Do you need to get yourself to bed 15 mins earlier so you can wake up earlier to get a jump start on your day? 15 minutes of stretching, jumping jacks, pushups, and crunches will do wonders to start those endorphins rushing and really begin your day with a bang! How about lunch? Can you eat a salad at work and go for a walk after? How about the stairs? Are they accessible? Ask your “pod buddy” if they want to see how many more flights you can climb in one week.

*After Work:* Play softball with the kids in the yard. Throw a few sprints in between pitches. Pitch/hit 3 times – 5 sprints....great

together time, practice time and great cardio!

Split training such as this is proven to be at least as effective as, if not more so for some, than a straight hour or two of non-stop training.

**Re-check your goals:** Are they attainable? How much time have you allowed for planning your groceries, lunches, family dinners? How about your work out routine? Is it written down? Is your routine in bite-sized pieces (pun intended!) or is it more broad spectrum? Remember to be specific in your goals. If your goal is to add 2 minutes to your run tomorrow; that's great! It's a specific goal, time measured, and attainable. But don't stop there.....once you reach that one, set a higher goal, larger than the last, loftier each time. Before you know it – you're hiking in the Rockies!!! It really is doable. You really can do this!!

**Are you bored with what you're doing?** Shake things up a bit; get some roller blades, a bike (with a helmet), find a fitness class that can be your “night out” with friends. You'll be surprised at how much fun you really can have in the name of exercise!

**Are you bored with what you're eating??** Salad does not have to be your main course everyday. How about some grilled chicken with mango salsa? Try adding chipotle sauce to a dish (like broccoli)–

*(Continued on Page 5)*



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## Don't Become a Statistic - (Continued from Page 4)

incredible roasted, smoky flavor with a great kick! No time for fish? There are great frozen Salmon and Tilapia filets, add a little lemon pepper sprinkle, maybe even a light Italian dressing, keep it going with steamed asparagus, and Voila! A beautiful, healthy, and tasty almost instant meal. We are aesthetic creatures, so "eating the rainbow" will add pleasure to the eyes as it adds nutrition to the body. Incorporating red bell peppers, yellow bell peppers, maybe some portabella mushrooms to brighten up and change a dish in color, flavor and texture. Just a spray of Olive oil in a pan and a few minutes on the stove, and you're in business. Remember: Always keep your food as "close to the tree" as possible. That means eat it as God made it; not after it's been processed. This will keep you healthy for life. If you have to wonder – it's probably processed!

You do not have to re-invent the wheel – just keep healthy cookbooks handy, save your favorite fitness websites on your "bookmark" tab, so with a quick turn of the page, or click of the mouse you will add new dimensions to your personal and fitness and nutrition! You can do this – yes you can!!!

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## Carey & David Ebert returned from D.C. urging changes in bankruptcy law that would help stem foreclosures

WASHINGTON, D.C. - February 17th 2009: Hurst attorney and current President of The National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys (NACBA) along with fellow attorney and husband David Ebert joined fellow members from around the country as they met in Washington D.C. on Feb. 9 and 10 for discussions with legislators about the "Helping Families Save Their Homes in Bankruptcy Act of 2009" and companion bills that have been introduced in the House of Representatives and Senate. David Ebert said: "We went to our Nation's Capitol to promote the one solution to the mortgage foreclosure crisis that we know will work, keep families in their homes, preserve neighborhoods, and costs taxpayers nothing."

Carey Ebert, President of NACBA, noted: "Our members, who came from around the country to meet with their elected officials, represented the interests of the families we see every day, for whom bankruptcy could be a way out of crisis. We need court supervised loan modifications that are feasible for the homeowner, but at the same time fair to the banks and investors of the securitized trusts that hold the bundles of residential mortgages."

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## TAX TIPS

*Submitted by John Harris*

Its tax time and there are many new tax provisions relating to your 2008 return. Let me go over just a few of these.

1.) For the first time, you can deduct up to \$1000.00 of your real estate taxes even if you do not itemize your deductions.

2.) There is another huge change in casualty losses. Having come from Florida, I am very familiar with hurricane losses. For the first time, you can deduct a casualty loss in federally declared disaster areas, even if you do not itemize, and if you do, it is not subject to the previous 10% of adjusted gross income threshold. In other words, if you had damage from hurricane Ike, and most people had some damage or loss, you may get a tax deduction for your loss. These losses may include anything from roof and fence damage to loss of food in your freezer.

3.) You may also qualify for last year's stimulus rebate check this year, even if you

did not qualify last year. (A note on this, last year's check is NOT taxable this year, contrary to some rumors I have heard.)

4) They also raised the IRA contribution limit to \$5000.00, \$6000.00 if you are 50 years of age or older. I know many people lost much of their retirement values in 2008, but it is still a good idea to invest in your retirement accounts. You may want to consider investing in a more conservative investment, but you still should invest! Talk to your financial advisor.

5) If you own your own business, it is still not too late to set up a SEP retirement plan for your business and get a deduction up to \$46,000.00 for 2008.

6) Lastly, the standard mileage rate for 2008 is broken down into two parts. From January 1 to June 30, it is 50.5 cents per mile and 58.5 cents per mile driven during the rest of 2008.

## Jalapeno Corn Bread Recipe



- 1½ Cups Corn meal
- 2/3 C. Vegetable oil
- 2 eggs
- 3 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 can cream corn
- 3 small jalapeno peppers
- 1 C. sour cream
- 1 C. cheddar cheese (grated)

Mix all ingredients except the cheese. Pour half into greased pan. Sprinkle on half of the grated cheese. Pour rest of batter over the cheese, then top with remainder of cheese.

Bake at 450° for 30 minutes.

*If you would like to submit YOUR recipe, email it to [articles@peelinc.com](mailto:articles@peelinc.com).*



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