



## The Worst Volunteer Position in America

*Raymond Dickey, Publisher, AssociationHelpNow Newsletters*

I have volunteered with many organizations. I've been a soccer and baseball coach, scout leader, a Lions Club president and even an EMT with my town's first aid squad. I've helped many different kinds of people, in many different kinds of situations. In these positions, the vast majority of people I helped appreciated it. I assume thousands, actually hundreds of thousands of other volunteers have had similar experiences.

But there is one group of unpaid volunteers, numbering in the millions who are not only unappreciated, but many times hated by those they help. They routinely read complicated legal documents, spend hours meeting among themselves and with their groups' members and have the pressure of knowing their decisions will have great impact. They are volunteer homeowner association (HOA) board members.

It could be argued that they are the most despised volunteers in America.

Even the most calm, polite and unassuming people can turn into mommy grizzly bears when you get between them and either their money, children or, heaven forbid, both. One day, for example, your neighbor is exchanging pleasantries with you at the clubhouse. She is a lovely woman. But you see her the next night at your community's HOA board meeting, and she is ready to burn an effigy of you because you informed her she cannot paint her house red with white polka dots.

I've never been an HOA volunteer, but I'm a publisher in the HOA industry. I've heard it all. Most HOA board members are not power hungry dictators. Many took the job because no one else did. Board members have to deal with everything from landscaping to "slip and fall" lawsuits. On top of that they have the responsibility to tell their neighbors things like how high their grass or fence can be.

When I coached sports, people said "Thanks for teaching my kid how to throw." In Boy Scouts I would hear "Thanks for setting up the camping trip." At the Lions Club I'd get "Thanks for the

fundraising," and the First Aid Squad "Thanks for the ride to the hospital." People understood they were receiving help. But HOAs are different because the average resident doesn't really understand how the association board members protect their property values. They don't see that efforts are being made to collect dues from delinquent homeowners. This is money that everyone else would need to make up the difference on if uncollected. They don't understand that there are timetables that need to be organized for building money in reserves to maintain their common elements such as pools, parking lots, signage, trees and more. The beneficiaries of these volunteer efforts either take them for granted, or they assume since they pay dues, they are entitled to live unaware of what goes on to maintain their properties. After all, the community was sold to them as "maintenance-free living." They don't understand that it's maintenance free because volunteers are overseeing the management of the community. The aspect of management and oversight are completely overlooked.

The best analogy I can make about this misunderstanding is to use government as an example. We all pay taxes; however, we know that this money can be used in a variety of ways depending on who is in charge. Just because we pay taxes, we don't assume we can all live like children in their parents' houses - completely free of responsibility. If the schools are falling apart or people are speeding down local roads, we expect local government to take action - make decisions and plan so "our town" doesn't become Armageddon. It's basically the same with these communities. The HOA board can hire a management company, but it's up to residents, those who actually have a stake in the real estate and the heart of the neighborhood, to steer management in the right direction.

Here's the main reason why being an HOA board member could be the worst volunteer job in America. When I was a soccer coach

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Willowbridge - Stonebridge

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

All Emergencies.....	911
Harris County Sheriff.....	713-221-6000
Harris County Animal Control .....	281-999-3191
Cy-Fair Hospital.....	281-890-4285
Street Lights & Outages - CenterPoint Energy	713-207-2222
CenterPoint Energy.....	713-659-2111
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Poison Control Center .....	800-222-1222
AT&T - Repair .....	800-246-8464
Billing .....	800-585-7928
Best Trash.....	281-313-2378
Vacation Watch - Harris County District 5 ....	281-290-2100
W. Harris County MUD #11 .....	281-807-9500
Willow Place Post Office .....	281-890-2392
Willowbridge Website .....	www.willowbridgehoa.com

## ASSOCIATION DIRECTORY

### Beautification Committee

Jennifer Y'Barbo .....	jhybarbo@att.net
Homeowners Association .....	713-334-8000
Graham Mgmt - Tracy Graham	
.....	grahammanagement@sbcglobal.net

### Clubhouse/Reservations

Adrienne DelGiorno .....	713-334-8000
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### Pool Parties/Tags

Sweetwater Pool Co. ....	281-988-8480
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### Marquee Coordinator

Barbara Lallinger.....	281-890-8464
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### Newsletter Coordinator

Barbara Lallinger & Krystina Cotton	
.....	willowbridgenews@gmail.com

### Soccer Field Coordinator.....

Jay Guarino .....	jvguarino@hotmail.com
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### Website Coordinator

Angela Doray.....	willowbridgehoa@live.com
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### Yard of the Month Committee

Nominate your favorite at: willowbridgehoa.com or Contact	
Jennifer Y'Barbo .....	jhybarbo@subhou.com

### Lost Pet Coordinator

Sonia Moore .....	msrco@aol.com, 281-955-8068
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### Welcoming Committee

Gracie Galvan .....	281-732-0009
.....	galvangracie@hotmail.com

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brian Fisher .....	President
Jennifer Y'Barbo .....	Secretary
Leah Protz .....	Treasurer
Barbara Lallinger .....	Director
Rebecca Peters .....	Director

## HOA INFORMATION

Willowbridge Homeowners Association Inc. - Graham Mgmt	
Tracy Graham .....	713-334-8000
E-Mail .....	grahammanagement@sbcglobal.net
Fax .....	713-334-5055

2825 Wilcrest Dr., #600 Houston, Tx. 77042

*If you have any questions or comments regarding the neighborhood please contact the numbers above.*

## HOA MEETINGS

### Willowbridge/Stonebridge Homeowner's Association

Meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each quarter (Jan, Apr, Jul, & Oct) at the community clubhouse at 7:00 pm.

## WELCOMING COMMITTEE

The Welcoming Committee meetings are the last Monday of each month.

## HARRIS COUNTY ROAD AND BRIDGE

To report street or curb damage, missing/damaged street signs and street flooding: (281) 353-8424 or [www.hcp4.net](http://www.hcp4.net).

If a resident wants to request a new sign or replace a damaged one, they have to go online and fill out a request.

## STREET LIGHT OUT?

If you notice a street light out PLEASE report it to CenterPoint Energy. We pay for all of the street lights in our subdivision... every month...regardless if they are illuminated or not!! This is also a serious safety issue. To report an outage, follow these steps:

By Phone: During normal business hours (7 am – 7 pm)

- Call (713) 207-2222
- Give the Customer Service Representative the 6 digit pole number (located approximately 6 feet up the pole), the street name and closest address.
- Online (anytime): [centerpointenergy.com](http://centerpointenergy.com)

## NEWSLETTER ARTICLE SUBMISSION

Newsletter Article submission Deadline is 3rd of each month. Please give a 2 month advance notice.

(Continued from Cover)

of eight-year-olds, I had to deal with a player's dad who was insane. He never volunteered. He just showed up every now and then and would berate the team and myself from the sidelines like a crazy person. I got though it for two reasons. First, everyone else knew he was nuts. And second, perhaps most importantly, I could go home and be done with him after the game. Unfortunately for HOA board members, they need to live side-by-side with their antagonists. The soccer dad could only scream from the sidelines. He was not entitled to speak his peace or "take the floor" at meetings on a monthly basis. I didn't have to see him every time I pulled into my driveway. He couldn't approach me while I was walking my dog.

There's more going on at your HOA than people letting their dogs poop all over, or residents who can't park their cars within the lines. For most people the investment in their home is the most critical investment in their lives. Yet, many people spend more time investigating which model of car to purchase, compared to what they are getting into with a HOA.

That is a big mistake, because whether you are a HOA board fan, or antagonist, or something in between, that lack of knowledge can hurt. HOAs do run into major financial issues, some even go bankrupt. What is your home value going to be if your pool has algae in it, or the clubhouse is falling apart?

My suggestion is get to know your board members outside of the "public meeting" sessions. These meetings are important to attend but many times attract the more vocal residents, whose hobby in life are to attend these meetings and "yell from the sidelines" like my soccer friend. This way you can simply ask "how is the HOA doing" in a cordial environment, and hopefully get answers to your questions, and stay up to date on how your largest investment is doing.

Next month WillowTalk will start a series of articles profiling VOLUNTEER services your HOA board and members of the community are involved in. If you would like to highlight a resident's volunteer efforts, please submit to WillowTalk following Newsletter Article Submission guidelines on page 2.

## POOL RULES - RULE

There has been a lot of confusion this year regarding the pool rules. This article's aim is to hopefully clarify some of these rules. The rules comply with HOA Rules, Sweetwater Pool (SWP) Rules and State Laws. Most remain the same as in the past with a few updates, most notably the number of guests allowed per wrist band. Last year residents were allowed 2 for the first time. It was noted in the June 2015 issue of WillowTalk that this would be evaluated for the 2016 season to see if it reverted to 1. Please refer to May's issue of WillowTalk for the original article on Pool Rules. Don't still have the issue? Go online to [www.peelinc.com](http://www.peelinc.com) and choose: Newsletter; choose: Houston; choose: Willowbridge. You can access approximately 14 years of the newsletter on this site.

SWP considers everyone their guests (residents and their guests). They need to know everyone that is in the pool enclosure for safety/emergency reasons. SWP provides a sign-in sheet at the desk in front of pool gate enclosure. The sign-in sheet asks for name, address and telephone number. It also has a place to check if the named person is a resident or guest. To properly complete this form and comply with SWP's requirement, each person's individual name entering the pool enclosure must be listed with the address (guests use the resident's address) and the correct box checked as to status of that person. Several guests have been shortcutting by putting the family's last name and showing the number of residents/guests only, not individual names. This defeats the purpose of knowing who is in the enclosure as the lifeguards (LGs) do not know every family member's name and certainly not their guests names in most instances. Our pool is a 2 LG pool, with a 25 to 1 ratio for LGs. If more than 50 people (51st person) are in the pool enclosure, regardless if they are swimming, sitting on the side of the pool, sitting at a table or laying in a lounge chair, they are counted in the 50 people in the pool enclosure. The 51st person requires another LG on duty. Usually our pool's supervisor is called from their rounds at other area pools they are also assigned to, to sit in until the situation abates. If it continues throughout the day an additional LG will be called in. This requirement and calculation of number of guests in

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(Continued from Page 3)

next paragraph are important to LG requirements and pool parties (Private and Unscheduled).

**CALCULATING THE NUMBER OF GUESTS YOU MAY BRING TO POOL** – Rule: As noted above, 1 Guest per Resident Wrist Band (residents and children, but not in all instances). Children's tags may only be used for a guest when adult residents (host) of the same residence is there with a valid wrist band. **HOST MUST REMAIN** for the duration of time guests are there. A child may not bring a sibling to the pool. Minimum age for a child to come to the pool alone is 13. At Wrist Band pick up parents were asked if their 12 year olds could come to the pool alone. Some said yes, some no. If yes, the child was issued a Green Adult Wrist Band (until we ran out) or a Blue one with hearts punched in it.

**POOL PARTIES:** Private Pool Parties may not be booked during the Regular Pool Season Hours, Mondays (pool cleaning day) or on Holidays. If you are having a Pool Party during regular pool hours; have enough valid wrist bands for attendees as calculated above; have 14 attendees or less, you are ok. If your gathering has 15+ attendees, you are considered to be having a Private Pool Party which requires an extra LG on site. This is a SWP Rule (see [sweetwaterpools.com](http://sweetwaterpools.com) for further explanation).

## OTHER RULES:

- \*Wrist Bands must be worn at all times while in pool enclosure.
- \*Reiterate: All persons must sign in.
- \*No one over the age of 6 is allowed in the Baby Pool.
- \*No roughhousing is allowed in Baby Pool (same as big pool).
- \*Bikes **MAY NOT** be parked in the clubhouse patio or chained/ attached in any manner to the wrought iron fence. The HOA has provided bike racks near the tennis court.

Most of these rules are listed on the two **LARGE** Pool Rules signs by the pool enclosure entry gate (back to back). Also, on [willowbridgehoa.com](http://willowbridgehoa.com) website and in the May 2016 issue of WillowTalk. **THIS IS NOT A COMPLETE LIST OF ANY NAMED ENTITY'S RULES.** Not all rules are purported to be listed.

\*\*For purposes of this article, Wrist Band and Pool Tag are considered interchangeable.



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## YARD OF THE MONTH (YOM)

It seems just as everyone was finally able to get out and start getting their yards spruced up, possibly in anticipation of being named YOM, the rains came AGAIN! YOM will start in August and continue through October this year. Don't forget you may nominate someone (even yourself) for this award at: [willowbridgehoa.com](http://willowbridgehoa.com) or [jhybarbo@att.net](mailto:jhybarbo@att.net).



## Summer Sun Safety Tips

1oz. of sunscreen should be applied to entire body  
Only broad-spectrum SPF 15+ should be used  
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You still need sunscreen on a cloudy day



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## Willowbridge - Stonebridge

# Texting and Cell Phone Use during Driving

*By the National Highway Safety Administration (edited for space)*

In 2014, 3,179 people were killed in crashes involving a distracted driver. One of the most alarming and widespread forms of distracted driving is cell phone usage. According to a study by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI), sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes off the road for an average of 5 seconds, the equivalent of driving blind at 55-mph for the length of an entire football field. And a 2014 special article in the New England Journal of Medicine found that the risk of a crash or near-crash among novice drivers increased with the performance of many secondary tasks, including texting and dialing cell phones.

Text messaging is of heightened concern because it combines three types of distraction – visual, manual and cognitive. In other words, texting involves taking your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel, and your mind off the task of driving.

NHTSA's message is simple – “One Text or Call Could Wreck it All.” Legislation is being passed across the nation to

discourage distracted driving. We hope drivers get the message loud and clear.

So the next time you are pressed for time, and it seems like multitasking in the car is the best decision, remember those 3,179 lives that were taken because someone decided they could do two things at once. A text or call is not worth your life, or anyone else's.



An advertisement for TexasDirectAuto.com. It features a dog's head (a pit bull mix) sitting on a large pile of grey gravel. The dog is looking directly at the camera. The background is white. The text "WE PAY MORE." is on the left and "WE PAY TODAY." is on the right, both in large, bold, black letters. Below the dog, the text "SELL US YOUR CAR!™" is in large, bold, black letters. At the bottom, the website "TEXASDIRECTAUTO.COM" is written in white, bold, sans-serif letters on a dark grey background. There is a small Texas state flag icon to the left of the website name.



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