



zone 3 newsletter spring 2009

ZONE 3 BORDERS:

Harlem, Chicago, Austin, and North Blvd.

ZONE 3 MEETINGS

The 4th Wednesday of every month at 7:00pm in the Main Oak Park Public Library.

MCGRUFF HOMES

McGruff Houses provide safe locations in neighborhoods where children can seek nearby assistance if they feel threatened or scared. Please consider making your home a McGruff House. For more information, please contact Officer Murphy, and attend your regular monthly zone meeting.

Resident Beat Officer Raphael Murphy / 708.358.5580 / rmurphy@oak-park.us

Bring Out the Bicycles

Residents of Oak Park are lucky to have a remarkably bikable, bicycle friendly town. Oak park is not too big, not too small, and though possibly not hilly enough for some, a comfortable and safe community for bicycling. The season is upon us for the cyclists to start showing up in force, so let's take this opportunity to remember a few points to maximize safety.

First, it's important to remember that bicycles on the streets are subject to the same traffic rules as motor vehicles as laid down by the State of Illinois. Cyclists are expected to obey traffic signs and signals, right of way, and the like just as if they were driving a car.

Oak Park also has a variety of Local Ordinances pertaining to cycling. A few of the most important for safe riding include:

Bicycles may not be ridden on the sidewalk by any person aged 15 years or older.

No person is permitted to ride a bicycle on the sidewalks in a business district.

Cyclists on the roadway need to ride as close to the right side of the street as practicable.

Groups of cyclists on the roadway must ride in single file.

Bicycles cannot be used to carry more people than the number for which the bike is designed or equipped.

Also important to consider is protecting your bicycle from theft. Remember to secure your bike when it is not in use.

Remind your children to not to leave their bikes unsecured in yards and parks, or anywhere they can be easily stolen.

Further advise kids not to let people they do not know "borrow" or "try" their bikes, and to avoid persons or groups who try to bully their bikes from them. Many bicycles are stolen this way each year.

Finally, if you have not done so, **register your family's bicycles with the Village of Oak Park.**

When a bicycle is registered the Village has a record of the bike's serial number and description, as well as the owner's name and contact information. Police officers have immediate access to this information on the street, which greatly improves the likelihood of recovering stolen bikes. Consider requesting an officer to attend your block party, who can then register bicycles for everyone on your block. There's no charge for registering bicycles.

OPPD Sponsored Community Art Wall

Oak Park Police
123 Madison, Oak
Park

PHONE:
708.386.3800

**For Emergencies
Dial
911**

RBO Murphy
708-305-9779
rmurphy@oak-park.us



There are illegible black scrawls, scratches, and meaningless multicolor symbols adorning nearly every park bench, trash can, newspaper box, train stop, and mailbox in town. There are spray painted slogans and random nicknames popping up overnight on garage doors and fences. There are elaborate murals on train cars, water towers, and brick walls. Graffiti has been with us for a long time, been more and more legitimized by popular culture, and even begun to reach into the world of fine art. Graffiti artists have started to become celebrities, and some celebrities have become graffiti artists.

And so we are faced with a growing number of young men and women, from every part of our community, who for one reason or another have adopted graffiti as a past time. It's perceived as creative and artistic, rebellious, and outlaw. It's associated with music groups and professional skateboarders you've never heard of. It's self-centered and narcissistic.

Block Parties

The Village of Oak Park encourages block parties as a way to build community spirit, meet neighbors, and have fun. Petitions for block parties are available at Village Hall and online on the Village's website.

Unsurprisingly, it's rather popular.

The Village and the Police Department continue to use a number of methods to try to curb the amount of graffiti in Oak Park. In the course of our efforts it became apparent to us that within the graffiti artist subculture it is generally unacceptable to deface the work of other artists.

Oak Park is blessed with numerous public artworks, including sculpture and murals, and they are rarely victimized by graffiti. It occurred to us that we might be able to co-opt and co-operate with a little bit of the creativity that finds its way onto the blank spaces within our town. We could add more public artworks to Oak Park, provide a creative opportunity for some young residents, and mitigate a little of the graffiti in the process.

So, do you want your art on the side of a building? In cooperation with a local business, the Oak Park Police are sponsoring a 40 foot by 20 foot

collaborative mural at 411 Harrison St.

Drawings may be dropped off at the police booth during ***What's Blooming on Harrison, Saturday, May 16th***. They can also be e-mailed to policeart@oak-park.us. Local artist Steve Fisher and a panel of judges will choose the winning drawings. Winning entrants will help create the wall and have their name on the dedication plaque. The primary medium will be spray paint provided by Montana Art Gallery.

We also ask that parents talk to their kids about graffiti vandalism. Tell them that it is not a victimless crime, that it costs the village and homeowners a lot of money and time. Remind them that graffiti is illegal, and that if they're caught there will be consequences.

Approved petitions allow the neighborhood to close off a street to vehicle traffic for an entire day. The Village delivers barricades, and picks them up afterward. Each block may sponsor two block parties per year.

When petitioning for a block party, it is possible to request a visit from an Oak Park police officer. This is a good opportunity to get to know your Beat Officer, and have bicycles registered with the Village.