



# In the Meadows

Our Purpose: To create a diverse community that focuses on beauty, education, safety and family values as a foundation for growth, to make McDowell Meadows, the "Gem" of Charlotte.

Summer 2005

<http://www.geocities.com/mcdowellmeadowshoa>

## All About McDowell

### Community Update

You've already seen some of the initiatives we've started to make this a stronger community. We have many more.

We have a brand new website which provides information about the community news alerts, and useful links for living in Charlotte. Check us out at: <http://www.geocities.com/mcdowellmeadowshoa/>

Another new initiative is the Yard of the Month award. The Beautification Committee will chose a home every month that exhibits the care, upkeep, and beauty that we expect in our community.

In August, the neighborhood block captains will be going door-to-door collecting the telephone numbers of our residents for a *Phone Tree*. A phone tree is used when we need to alert each other about an emergency, an important event that affects the community, or to prevent crime. Phone trees have worked successfully in many communities to build strong neighbor relationships and to prevent crime, which is on the increase in Charlotte.

In May, there were a couple of youths wandering our streets testing car door handles. One of our residents drove the streets blowing her car horn in an attempt to get neighbors to look out their windows and thereby thwart the youths from stealing a car. If we had a phone tree in place at the time, it would have been easy to notify each other about suspicious activity. The phone tree will help us to look out for and protect each other. You will receive more details before the canvassing begins.

Another initiative to build strength in our area, is a joint website with communities neighboring McDowell Meadows. The South Tryon Collaborative has been established so that we can share information between communities, trade services, and advertise goods for sale. There is no fee to join: all you need is Yahoo ID (free). The rules for participating are available at the website. Please visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SouthTryonCollaborative/> to join.

Finally, we hope that you will use our new email address. We hope in the future to send our newsletter electronically to help defray printing costs. Email is another way that we can stay in touch without requiring higher yearly dues.

When we work together, we can make this the most desirable community to live in.

### MM Contacts

*President: Elizabeth Stroud*

Community Correspondence:

McDowell Meadows  
P.O. Box 242016  
Charlotte, NC 28224-2016  
[mcdowellmeadowshoa@yahoo.com](mailto:mcdowellmeadowshoa@yahoo.com)

Bulk Pick Up:

704.336.2673



### City Contacts

Community Police Officer:

Donna Burgess [dburgess@cmpd.org](mailto:dburgess@cmpd.org)  
704.581-0349

Our Voting Districts

Charlotte City Council District 3:

Warren Turner  
[district3\\_turner@yahoo.com](mailto:district3_turner@yahoo.com)  
704-713-0452

Mecklenburg County Commissioner District 2:

Norman A. Mitchell, Sr., (D)  
704-399-3061  
[normanam@aol.com](mailto:normanam@aol.com)



### Mark Your Calendar

Save the following dates for important events in our community.

McDowell Meadows Meetings:

July 26, 2005  
October 13, 2005  
January 12, 2006

Home Owners meetings are at 6:45 at Steele Creek AME Zion Church. The church is on Shopton Road just off Tryon.

### Community Events

McDowell Dues Due (\$50): June 15  
Block Party: tbd  
Community Yard Sale: tbd  
MORE TO COME!!!

### In This Issue

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## Dues Reminder

You should have received your notice from Brawley for your annual \$50 dues. If you haven't paid them already, please do so as soon as possible. Your contribution helps us to keep this neighborhood presentable.

## Poisonous Plants

Curious children are sometimes known to put everything but the kitchen sink in their mouths. I purportedly once ingested perfume, and maybe even lighter fluid. Most indoor plants are harmless, but be watchful around busy hands and these common indoor plants that may be poisonous (according to the Carolinas Poison Center): English Ivy, Peace Lily, Philodendron. For first aid call:

**Carolinas Poison Center**  
704.355.4000 (Charlotte)  
800-848-6946

## Car Seat Safety

According to a study by the Partners for Child Passenger Safety, in 2002, 62% of 4-to 8-year olds were inappropriately restrained in only a seat belt.



Using a belt-positioning booster (BPB) seat can reduce your child's risk of injury. On Thursdays and one Saturday per month, you can get a free inspection and learn proper safety seat rules. For more information about child safety, please call 704.336-SAFE (7233) or visit <http://safekidscharmeck.org>.

## City Notes

### *Water Smart*

Water pressure is an issue for the city in the summer. You can help by watering your lawn between 9 pm and 4 am instead of during daylight hours and by running your dishwasher at night after 9pm.

### *Keep Idle Teens Busy*

Teach your child the joys of volunteering by having them volunteer to mark storm drains for the city. Call 704-336-5500 for more info.

Or, encourage your teen to sign up for the Mayor's Youth Employment Program to get valuable job experience, in addition to earning income. Call 704.336.3380 for more info.

### *Parenting Assistance*

Raising children is a lot of work. You have to be a junior psychologist, chef, care-giver, housemaid, and mind-reader. If you need help with the pressures of raising a child, call the Parent Stress Line 704-376-7244.

### *Flooding*

If your property backs up to Little Sugar Creek and you have trouble with flooding, consider having your lot re-graded to raise it above the flood level. You should ensure that all electrical panel boxes, furnaces, water heaters and washer/dryers are above any flood area. You may also consider flood insurance as standard homeowner's/renters insurance does not cover flood damage.

### *Become a Mentor*

If you are a responsible adult, consider being a friend to a youth who needs a role model. You can tutor, coach a team, set a positive example, and more! Call (704) 343-9934 for volunteer info.

## McDowell Committees

We need your help in keeping this a great place to live. Following is a description of the committees in our neighborhood that need volunteers. Most time commitments are minimal. Take a look to see where you can help:

### *Welcoming Committee*

The Welcoming Committee greets new neighbors and gives them an orientation about McDowell Meadows. We need help not only with putting together welcome baskets, but with keeping track of which houses get sold so that we know when we have new neighbors.

### *Inspector*

Inspectors help keep the neighborhood beautiful by making sure that all houses in the community are being maintained to the standards of our covenants and restrictions.

### *Block Captains*

Block captains help communicate news to the residents when necessary. We have approximately 250 homes in our subdivision. Dividing responsibility among several block captains who are responsible for a small section of homes is the easiest way to communicate with our residents.

### *Translators*

We need those fluent in Spanish to help translate the newsletter.

## Summer Recipe: Chocolate Cherry Jiggler Cups

Here's a fun recipe to make with your kids.

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup boiling water
- 2 pkg (4 oz each) Jell-O Brand Cherry Flavor Gelatin
- ½ cup ice cubes
- 12 marashino cherries
- 12 Oreo Cookies
- paper liners

### Directions

1. Place paper liners in 12 muffin cups. Spray lightly with cooking spray.
2. Place 1 cup liquid measure in the microwave on HIGH 2 minutes or until the water boils.
3. Pour gelatin into small bowl. Pour boiling liquid water over gelatin. Stir 2 minutes until dissolved.
4. Fill ½ cup dry measure with ice cubes. Add to gelatin mixture, stir until melted.
5. Scoop gelatin using ¼ dry measure, into prepared muffin cups. Refrigerate 10 minutes.
6. Push 1 cherry into each muffin cup. Top each with 1 cookie. Refrigerate one hour or until firm.
7. Peel off paper gently. Invert onto serving plate.

## Gang of One: Tuning into Your Child

At our last community meeting in April, we had guest speakers from the Gang of One, a division of the Charlotte Mecklenburg police department dedicated to eradicating and preventing gangs. While it was discouraging to hear about the increase in gang participation and violence in Charlotte, it was very educational to learn about gang indicators, many of which parents are not aware. The violent photos of victims of gang violence were chilling and disturbing enough that they would serve as a good deterrent to anyone considering joining a gang.

Children in gangs may try to conceal their involvement from their parents. Initiation in a gang may involve beatings on a part of the body that is easily hidden with clothing (commonly on the chest). The detectives from the Gang of One provided the following list of common gang indicators. If you have children, please familiarize yourself with these. Please note that one sign or symbol does not mean that your child is in a gang. A combination of factors may be cause for concern. If you have questions, please contact the Gang of One hotline, 704.432.GANG (4264).

### Behavior Indicators

- Poor academic progress in school and lack of interest in school activities.
- Withdraws from family with an accompanying change in demeanor.
- Associates with undesirables and breaks parental rules consistently.
- Develops an unusual desire for privacy and secrecy and may completely rearrange living quarters to create more privacy.
- Possible use of alcohol and drugs along with an attitude change.
- Unexplained cash or goods, i.e. clothing, and jewelry.
- Obsessed with a one color of clothing or preference for one particular logo over and over.
- Obsessed with gangster-influenced music, videos and movies to the point of imitation.
- Wears excessive jewelry with distinctive designs and may wear it only on either the right or left side of the body.
- Frequent contact with police.
- Frequent disciplinary problems at home and at school.

### Clothing

Different gangs have different "uniforms." The following clothing may indicate gang interest.

- Baggy pants and shirts commonly known as "sagging" or Dickey style pants.
- May have numbers, symbols, and writing on jeans. Inside of pants pocket may be colored so that when turned inside out it shows the gang's colors.

### Shoes

- Tongues may be colored or worn with one tongue sticking up and one down or marked with initials.
- Shoelaces not laced properly (only lacing the shoes up a certain number of holes). Different color shoelaces than what the shoes originally came in the shoes.
- Certain parts of logos colored over to attempt to make the logo similar to the gang logo.
- Unusual writings, markings, numbers, symbols, or street names on or inside the Shoe.

### Hats

- May be worn backwards or worn off to one particular side.
- Altering logos on the hat to match gang logos.
- Unusual writings, markings, numbers, symbols, or street names on or inside the hat.

### Bandanas

Matches the color of the gang and is generally worn on the head or placed in a pocket with it being partially exposed.

## Dear Ms. McManners

Ms. McManners offers advice on how to deal with sticky neighbor situations. Ms. McManners answers the letters that residents have written or wanted to write, or thought about writing.

*Dear Ms. McManners:*

*Since school let out, I've been seeing a lot of young men walking around without a shirt on. What makes them think I want to see not only their bare-chest but their drawers hanging out of their baggy pants? In my day, children were taught to look respectful and show some modesty.*

**- Keep It On**

Dear Keep It On

This is a hard situation. When you see one of the youths, you can tell them to refer to our neighborhood etiquette section.

Sometimes a joke is a positive way to deal with a situation, like maybe a gentle tease about seeing their tighty whiteys might make the youths think about keeping those drawers hidden. Or maybe ask them if they need help getting the laundry done so that they can have a clean shirt to wear. Make sure you practice your delivery though so that the humor comes through. We certainly don't want any confrontations in the neighborhood over some unsightly chest hairs.

Good luck!

## MM...Good Neighbor Etiquette

Here are some tips about good neighborhood etiquette:

- Leave the house fully clothed.
- Keep your car stereo volume low.
- Keep your lawn trimmed and presentable.
- Clean up any trash you see.
- Help your neighbor when you can.
- Watch out for suspicious strangers and tell your neighbor about suspicious activity.
- Call for Bulk Pick Up to schedule a pick-up date for large unwanted items instead of creating an eyesore and leaving your trash at the curb for everyone to hate for weeks: 704.336.2673.
- Observe the City Code

## (Gang of One continued)

### Sport Teams

Gangs have a tendency to adopt sports teams that use similar colors of the gang or similar logos of the gang. Be particularly aware if your child begins to wear sports related clothes if he/she has never expressed interest in sports previously. Another indicator is if all the child's friends are wearing the same team. Gang members will also alter or color over certain parts of a team's logos to match their gang's logo.

### Belts

Most commonly used by Hispanic gangs, will often have writing or numbers on them with that area left hanging longer to display the writings.

### Tattoos/Drawings (Graffiti)

- Common Tattoos/Drawings (Graffiti)
- Three Dots "Mi Vida Loca"
- Spider Webs
- Tear Drops
- Pachuco Cross
- 4 or 5 dots or T's - Tinh (Love), Tien (Money), Tu (Prison), Tai (Crime), Thu (Revenge)
- Words with the #13 or #14 in them, which is mostly associated with some ethnic gangs.
- Pitchforks, crosses or 5 or 6-point stars, and crowns are also common.
- Two Masks, one happy face, one sad.
- Tattoos may appear as drawings or burns (branding).

Engaging in certain hand-shakes between friends may also be a gang indicator. Sign language type signals with the hands is also an indicator, newer members of gangs may practice these when they are alone.

This list was provided by the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department. If you have any questions, or want to get help call the Gang of One hotline.

## Portion Distortion

According to the April 2005 issue of Taking Care, more Americans are fatter than ever and the one thing that's contributing to the problem is portion distortion. If you cut back 100 calories a day, you could prevent weight gain. Twenty years ago a dish of spaghetti and meatballs contained a cup of pasta, three small meatballs. Today that meal averages more than double those amounts. Depending on your age and activity level, we should be consuming between 100 to 2800 calories per day.

We often don't think 100 calories is much, but if you add 100 calories a day to your diet, in a year's time, you would gain 11 pounds. Consider how much weight that is over three years.

Try these tips to control portion:

- Read food labels to see how many servings are in the package. It may contain more than one serving.
- Use smaller plates. They look fuller.
- Store leftovers first. Before eating the meal, set aside a portion to be taken for tomorrow's lunch and put it away.
- Get a doggie bag when eating out. Ask to have some of your meal packaged before you start eating.
- Take a friend to lunch. Share that oversized deli sandwich. Add a small salad, cup of soup, or piece of fruit to round out the meal.
- Stop at the sigh. That involuntary sound can signal that you're full. Skipping three bites of fast-food hamburger could save about 100 calories.

## Call 311 to Get the 411 on Charlotte Services

On July 5, you will be able to call one local number 311, to get access to all services offered by the City of Charlotte.

## CMS Ranks in Top 100

Newsweek magazine released the list of top 100 high schools. The following Charlotte schools made the list:

- Harding University High (25<sup>th</sup>)
- Myers Park High School (37<sup>th</sup>)
- North Mecklenburg (56<sup>th</sup>)
- Butler (88<sup>th</sup>)

In the top 900 were the following:

- Olympic (104)
- Providence (113)
- East Mecklenburg (161)
- South Mecklenburg (162)

The complete article can be found at [www.newsweek.com](http://www.newsweek.com).

## \$2500 Reward

For any information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the fire at 7112 Midlothian Court, contact:

**Crime Stoppers**  
704-334-1600

## Health Tips

It's no news that fruits and vegetables contain vitamins, minerals, and fibers. To learn how to have a healthier diet, look at the 5 A Day Web site at [www.5aday.com](http://www.5aday.com).



## Slowing Down

Do you ever wonder how you can squeeze anymore time out of the day? The number one concern among swing voters in the 2004 election was the lack of free time, according to the Utne Reader (January/February 2005). The issue of time matters to people more than anything else. Americans now work more and vacation less any other industrialized nation (even Japan). Marketers have figured out how to instill in us a sense of scarcity and insecurity that convinces us that we need things, lots of them, "we're taught from birth that there's always more to have, more to need." This is what causes us to work continuously and to become disengaged from our communities and spend less time with our children. Many of us also feel an implicit or explicit threat to work overtime or to be fired. The Utne Reader gives these suggestions for slowing down from the harried pace:

- Embrace Solitude—Solitude is when we can decompress, and in those quiet moments daydream, stare out a window, talk to ourselves or engage in random thoughts.
- Cultivate Your Inner Dilbert—Use all of your vacation and sick time.
- Focus on the moment—Grate a radish, rub your dog's belly, or savor your morning coffee. Be in the moment and pay attention to every sensation, touch, taste in the moment.
- Engage in proactive television watching—Television is one big reason we feel crunched for time. We intend to watch maybe one or two shows, but then hours later we're still on the couch.
- Learn to say no—Be selective in choosing the engagements you participate in, except for those to help our community, of course!
- Set aside a time for email—Train people to not expect an immediate response from email and tackle it all at once instead of lingering on the computer all night.
- Work part time if you can afford it—Are your spending habits keeping you working full-time? Sometimes we work so much that we don't have the time or energy to cook, buying restaurant or fast-food that costs us more than if we were working fewer hours and had the time to make healthier food.

For more information, visit [www.timeday.org](http://www.timeday.org) and <http://www.simpleliving.net/resources/default.asp>.

Do the following exercise from O magazine to re-evaluate your time:

- 1) List three ways that you misuse your time (for example, excessive TV watching, obsessive email checking, net surfing, shopping, snacking, worrying, gossiping). Write down actions you can take to reclaim your time.
- 2) Note four instances in which your time is consumed or misused by others, including situations beyond your control, such as managing difficult clients or coworkers, attending meetings, waiting in traffic snarls, dealing with high maintenance friends. Then write down actions you can take to fix these problems.
- 3) Jot down three areas where you might be able to save, make, or optimize time. For example, you might be able to consolidate all your errands on one day or group them together.
- 4) Write down three ways that you would like to use your time for a future reward. Then note which steps you might take to ensure you get there. For example, study French with the goal of spending a month in Paris (wouldn't that be nice!).

## Beat the Clutter: Step 1

Does unexpected company make your heart flutter? If you're like most people, things seem to multiply in your house when you're not looking. Sometimes keeping up with all the things and finding a place to put them seems like a never-ending task. As many of us face this challenge, with so many things to consume, and so little time to keep life in order, in every newsletter we will feature tips on de-cluttering. Some come from years of personal experience with letting go and others from sources like "30 Days to a Simpler Life" by Connie Cox and Cris Evatt and <http://www.simpleliving.net/simplicityforum/answer.asp>.

Are you ready? Here's step 1:

Gather a bag of things you no longer love and use. First, find a shopping bag, trash bag, or cardboard box. Fill it with giveaways or throwaways from around the house. Gather from everywhere in your house and garage. Look under sinks, in closets, into drawers, and under the bed. Put the stuff in your car's trunk to be recycled. Fill as many bags as you can in one hour. If you do this weekly for a year, you'll clear at least 52 bags of stuff you no longer need from your home.

More steps will be included in future newsletters.

## Your Junk, Their Treasure

To give away things you no longer need or use, consider joining the free Yahoo group in Charlotte. You notify other members what items you have and give them to the taker of your choice. Visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Freecycle-Charlotte/> for more information.

Or consider the following:

- Goodwill (provides job training to people with special needs).
- Dress for Success (assists low-income women looking for jobs). [www.dressforsuccess.org](http://www.dressforsuccess.org)
- Glass Slipper Project (provides financially needy girls with prom dresses). [www.glassslipperproject.org](http://www.glassslipperproject.org)
- New Eyes for the Needy (glasses for the poor). [www.neweyesfortheneedy.org](http://www.neweyesfortheneedy.org).