



# Willow Creek Estates News & Views Winter 2014

Newsletter Editors: **WCHOA Board**

<http://wchoatx.com>

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## **Message from your WCHOA Board:**

It's been a very busy year and we appreciate what everyone has done to come together and help participate in renewal for our homeowners association. We are proud to serve as your HOA Board and as we ring in 2015 (and say good-bye to 2014), we ask for all of us to stay focused and committed to our neighbors and community. This commitment is an essential element of any successful HOA.

A few highlights of our accomplishments include the updating of our website (which is continuing to change); interactive and ongoing dialogue with community leaders about issues that are important to us; establishment of a committee to review the by-laws and covenants so that gaps or discrepancies can be repaired; a successful neighborhood garage sale with 29 residents signing up; a well-received neighborhood night-out; and ongoing resolution of neighborhood requests. We look forward to working with you over the next several months. Have a great holiday!

## **Christmas/Holiday Lighting Contest:**

Once again we will be judging your efforts to bring joy and happiness to yourselves and the entire neighborhood. Judges will begin their work on December 15 and complete the review on December 21. If you'd like to be a volunteer judge, please go the website and submit

your request <http://wchoatx.com/wchoa-volunteer-form>. There will be four (4) categories to judge this year: Children's Choice, Most Elegant, Best Theme, and Best Overall Display. Prizes will be a \$20 Target Gift Card for each category. The lights in our neighborhood are a joyous reminder of how we feel about the Holidays, so please participate—either as a judge or with a holiday lighting display.

## **WCHOA Website:**

What an exciting time we've had updating the website! This is a "Work in Progress" so your feedback is welcome. We are pleased with the new enhancements that have been put in place. Although we have had more setbacks than ever anticipated on this project, we are finally moving forward. There are several items that are not yet finished, but below are a few of our accomplishments that have already been implemented. Be sure to go the website and check them out.



- ❖ We have a new and shorter domain name. Be sure to bookmark our new domain name. It is <http://wchoatx.com>.
- ❖ We have a new look and are making our website a place where you can submit/request information as well as receive updates from us.
- ❖ We have a new "Events Calendar" where Willow Creek and community happenings will be posted. Residents will be able to submit information to be

added to the calendar which will include your garage sale, a fund raiser for your favorite nonprofit, school events, local governmental meetings, general reminders such as when the time changes, etc.

- ❖ You may submit/request things such **“Lost and Found”** items, **“Events Calendar”** items, **“Request for Architectural Control”** approval, contact members of the board, and even more enhancements are in the works.
- ❖ On our photo gallery you will see pictures taken last year of some of the beautiful holiday decorations. And this year’s contest winners will be announced on the website.
- ❖ The WCHOA Board has created a new **“Willow Creek Business Directory”** to provide our residents with a list of their neighbors who own a local business. Several of our residents have expressed a desire to learn about ways to support our local economy and we feel this is a way that we can help.
- ❖ Of course, you will still be able to pay your membership dues online and view all of the latest alerts, announcements, board updates, restrictions and covenants as well as our bylaws.

Don’t forget that many others go to the WCHOA website so anything that is posted is viewed by anyone who accesses the site. Again, this is a work in progress and we’ll be doing much, much more. Please send us your suggestions—we’ll take them! This website is designed for you.

### **Lost and Found:**

We’ve had 21 requests in 2014 for lost pets, some of them most urgent, and we have responded quickly to your needs. We post the information on the website immediately (with a picture if supplied) and send out urgent email messaging. Most of the pets are found very quickly thanks to the neighborhood rapid responses.



Also, when we know the outcome, we post an update to the website. This is a very important role that we play since our neighborhood pets are part of the WCHOA family. The winner of the **“lost the most times”** award is a very cute black and tan dog named Rebel. He loves to visit his neighbors with so much enthusiasm that he cannot resist leaving home. Since he cannot leave a note telling his owner that he is on “walkabout,” he often triggers the “I am lost to my family” WCHOA emergency button. But, not every animal is found and this causes anxiety and grief. If you see an animal that is injured or worse, please submit the

information using the “Lost and Found” form on the website or send an email to [wchoa99@gmail.com](mailto:wchoa99@gmail.com). We will preserve your anonymity if that is what you prefer.



### **Bylaws Committee:**

The Bylaw Committee continues its work with diligence and care. Much input has been received and all is being evaluated. We realize this is a sensitive issue and are proceeding with care. Updates will be posted on the website.

### **National Night Out:**

Once again, NNO was a huge success. Neighbors gathered together, ate hot dogs, popcorn, chips, and cookies. Many neighbors paid dues since it is so easy now that we have PayPal in place. Remember that you do not have to have a PayPal account to make a payment. PayPal takes credit or debit cards—so easy to do. If you prefer paying online instead of in person, the website is set up with PayPal to take your payment. (Remember that WCHOA Dues are payable in January for the calendar year 2015.) It’s outstanding value for \$20.

In addition, at NNO, there were many door prizes which were valued at \$2100 provided by the following supporters and donors:

- Dick’s Classic Car Museum
- McCoy’s Building Supply Center
- Conley Carwash & Express Lube
- Texas Roadhouse
- Blue Sky Mortgage
- The Damron Group Realtors
- L&S Automotive
- Sage Capital Bank
- Wendy Davis Campaign
- Becky Dobbins
- Jon Leonard
- Glass With Class
- San Marcos Corridor News
- Pioneer Bank
- Target

The variety of prizes ranged from gift cards to wine to free memberships to free advertising. This event gets better every year and its success depends on you and the hardworking volunteers. Our thanks go to all of the volunteers, sponsors, and donors, who made this an outstanding event.

## News from the HAYS COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE:



### Holiday Safety Tips

#### Check it Twice for a Safe Holiday Season!

When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles. Set up the tree away from fireplaces, radiators or portable heaters. Cut a few inches off the trunk of your tree to expose the fresh wood. This allows for better water absorption and will help keep your tree from drying out and becoming a fire hazard. Be sure to keep the stand filled with water.

Check your lights before decorating.

- Make sure all holiday lighting has a label that says it is "UL listed". If it doesn't have this label, the lighting is not safe to use.
- Use only light sets marked as "indoor" or indoor/outdoor" inside buildings.
- Make sure all light strings have bulbs in each socket.
- Keep all lights away from combustible materials such as fabrics or paper decorations.
- Don't connect more than three strands of lights to one extension cord.

Extension cords *can* be used with holiday decorations as long as the decorations are taken down within a few weeks.

Make sure all light strands and electrical cords are free of cuts, crimps, cracks or repairs. Never use a "three-prong-to-two-prong" plug adaptor to by-pass a grounded plug. Keep all electrical cords out of traffic areas, and not under rugs, through doorways or taped to the floor. Conserve electricity and prevent electrical fires. Turn off all lights, appliances and other electrical equipment when you go to bed or leave the house. Make sure all lit candles are in stable holders and placed where they cannot be easily knocked over or reached by children or animals. Do not leave the house with candles burning.

Never put wrapping paper in a fireplace. It can result in a flash fire, throwing off dangerous sparks and embers and may result in a chimney fire. Make sure your smoke detectors are working properly. Never remove batteries from a smoke detector to place them in children's toys. Test them monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help. Remember to practice your home escape plan.

**Have a safe and happy holiday season**

Hays County Fire Marshal's Office 2171 Yarrington Road

P.O. Box 988 San Marcos, Texas 78666

512.393.7339





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### **Loose Dog Alert!**

In either Hays County or the City of San Marcos this should never happen. A dog running loose in any part of Hays County is breaking the law – and so is its owner. Plainly said, if you own a dog in Willow Creek it must be restricted to a fenced area on your property or tethered appropriately to confine it on your property. And when walking your dog(s), they should always be on a leash and not allowed to roam freely. These same rules apply to the dogs of visitors in your home. No exceptions!

On a sad note, a little dog was struck by a car and killed on Summit Ridge recently. The dog was running loose. This is traumatic for the dog's family and also for the driver. We encourage all pet owners to keep your dogs safe in your yard or house or on leash when outside. We also encourage all drivers to observe the proper speed limits so that accidents might be averted.

### **Fireworks & Pets:**

We want to remind all residents that it is against city code to use fireworks within the city limits and also in the ETJ (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction) which includes all of the Willow Creek Estates subdivision. Not only do fireworks pose a serious danger to the safety of persons and property, it may be

very frightening to our pets. Residents are encouraged not to engage in this activity and to also make sure that their pets have a safe and secure indoor place on New Year's Eve so they don't become spooked and run away. We have had many violations over the last few years and it's a dangerous way to celebrate. Be considerate. If you must use them, go to a sanctioned location; please do not use your backyard.

### **E-mail Address – Stay in the Loop:**

**If you have an e-mail account**, it's in your best interest to let us know what it is so we can keep you aware of what is going on in the neighborhood in a more timely manner since email is our primary means of communicating with residents. We use your e-mail address to distribute the **Newsletter** and to put out alerts you need to know about such as vandalism, scam artists, thefts, and lost or found pets. We only use your e-mail address for neighborhood business and your e-mail address will NOT be shared. E-mail addresses should be e-mailed to the WCHOA Treasurer at [wchoa99@gmail.com](mailto:wchoa99@gmail.com). We are able to store more than one e-mail address in our database, so please let us know if more than person in your residence would like to be included on our e-mail distribution list.





**News from the City:**

**Looking Forward to an Eventful Year**

By Jared Miller  
San Marcos City Manager



This has been an eventful year full of both opportunities and challenges: We're rewriting our Land Development Code, finishing our Downtown Reconstruction Project and filling executive level positions that deal directly with issues of immediate concern to many people in the public.

As I approach my first year as City Manager, I want to thank the citizens and City Council for their active guidance and participation in our community—and the dedicated City employees who execute that guidance and make our visions for the community come to life. I wanted to touch on a couple of specific items and projects that may be of particular interest to you:

**Stagecoach Road**

The Stagecoach Road widening project in front of Hernandez Elementary that was scheduled to begin in December has been postponed for design changes to maximize water quality in the area of the project.

The project is now scheduled to begin in late spring or early summer of 2015 to coincide with San Marcos CISD summer break. For more information on this project, please call project manager David Rabago at 512.393.8140.

**Code SMTX**

Our Planning and Development Services Department is hard at work on Code SMTX, the citizen-driven rewrite of our land development code.

City planners and outside consultants received a great deal of resident comment and guidance during public sessions in October 2014 and are using that feedback to draft the new code.

A draft report will be presented to the public in January, and we expect to have the first full draft complete by March.

To find out more about the process and the progress we are making, visit [www.sanmarcostx.gov/codesmtx](http://www.sanmarcostx.gov/codesmtx).



**Downtown Reconstruction Wrapping Up**

The two-year, \$11 million Downtown Reconstruction Project is scheduled to be complete in January, weather permitting. Most recently, crews have taken out old traffic signals and completed the installation of foundations for new traffic signals at the intersection of LBJ and University Drives and are continuing work on driveways, sidewalks and drainage features.

The completed project will make Downtown a more pleasant experience for pedestrians—come visit the unique businesses and finish your Christmas shopping with local stores!

**New Leadership**

I'm proud to welcome Kristi Wyatt, our new Director of Communications and Intergovernmental Relations, to the City team. She takes the helm of our communications efforts on Jan. 12.

Kristi comes to us from League City, where she worked for seven years and served as the communications director for four. Before joining the Communications Department in League City, Kristi was a television news reporter and producer. In League City, she oversaw an innovative, new-media savvy communications department in a fast-growing city, and we're excited about the energy and experience she'll bring to San Marcos.



We have two more executive level positions to fill early in the coming year: Director of Planning and Development Services and Library Director.

Next year will be just as busy at 2014, if not more so. I look forward to the opportunities the coming year will bring and ask you to continue your support and guidance to us at the City of San Marcos.

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

## **Membership:**

**Your neighborhood HOA dues for the 2015 calendar year (January 1 - December 31) are due in January.** Please join your neighbors in keeping our community a great place to live. Membership in your HOA costs only \$20 a year – the best deal in town. It is okay to also pay next year's dues at this time. Dues are our primary source of income and you may pay your dues online at our website using the security of PayPal®. You may also mail your \$20 payment (checks payable to "WCHOA") to the address listed below. Be sure to include your email address with your check.

WCHOA Treasurer  
2442 Great Oaks Dr  
San Marcos, TX 78666

Don't recall if you have paid your dues? Well, just go online to our dues inquiry form (<http://wchoatx.com/membership/dues-inquiry>) and send us a message. Our Treasurer will check your payment status and respond back to you via email.

## **Want to Volunteer?**

We are always looking for help to plan our events. Just use the link below to our website and submit your information on the new WCHOA Volunteer Form. Tell us what you are interested in and we will welcome your assistance. <http://wchoatx.com/wchoa-volunteer-form>.

## **Extra Bush or Yard Waste?**

Don't forget that if you have extra brush or excess yard waste that does not fit inside your compost cart, city residents can take all yard waste to the drop off at 750 River Road (behind the Animal Shelter) 8 am to 1 pm on the second

Saturday of every month. Bring your utility bill for proof of residence and unload your material. Mulch is also available.

## **Take Me Home Pet Adoption:**

For just \$20 the "Take Me Home Pet Adoption" is available from the Animal Shelter at 750 River Road through December 31<sup>st</sup>. The reduced adoption fees will include sterilization, rabies vaccination, de-worming, general health check, microchipping, and testing for Felv/FIV for cats or testing for heartworms for dogs. Best of all, the cats and dogs adopted during the Take Me Home Adoptions will be able to go home immediately with their new families.

## **Watering Restrictions Continue:**

- The City of San Marcos is still under Stage 3 water restrictions. If you have a question, please refer to <http://www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us/index.aspx?page=542> for specifics on Drought restrictions.
- Crystal Clear Water Supply Corporation is still under Stage 4 water restrictions. If you have a question, please refer to <http://www.crystalclearsud.org> for specifics or call 830.372.1031.

## **Annual Spring Garage Sale:**

The 2015 annual WCHOA neighborhood garage sale will be held on April 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> this year. We typically schedule this event for the first weekend in April; however, since we did not want to schedule the sale on Easter weekend, we postponed the event until the following weekend.

