

Willow Creek News & Views

Summer 2016

A publication of



WCHOA ~ Willow Creek Homeowners Association, Inc.

"Deed Restricted Single-Family Neighborhood" — www.wchoatx.com

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President's Message:

A warm, summer "Thank You!" to our neighbors in Willow Creek who contributed to so many successful events this year—and who worked to make our neighborhood even better.

Thanks, as well, to the members of WCHOA Board for their generosity in devoting their time and energy this past year. The WCHOA board works diligently to anticipate issues and mitigate problems. In addition to planning, organizing, and implementing plans and events, the Directors acted on seven architectural requests. This involved reviewing blueprints, site plans, and construction materials. Requests ranged from home expansions, to new pools, to fences, and to widening a driveway. Their job is to make sure we're working with our residents to accommodate their needs while maintaining the unique character of our neighborhood.

A huge thanks to Carol Short, who is our historian, treasurer, and website facilitator. She's the "heart and soul" of our organization. It's no surprise that WCHOA residents always speak about Carol in glowing tones.

Most of the "heavy lifting" on day-to-day issues is done by our three amazing Directors—Marianne Moore, Gordy Love, and Kathy Galinger. Also, a special thank you to the rest of the support team: Debbie Harvey, Vice President, and Jon Leonard, Secretary. We work together to make sure that our deliberations and decisions reflect the wishes of the many residents of our community.

We're happy to report that the current board was re-elected unanimously at our annual meeting in June. More information on the annual meeting follows.

Thanks again for your support. The Board is here to serve you.

A final thought—if you haven't done so yet, please take a moment to pay your calendar year 2016 dues. It's only \$20—an amazing bargain when you realize the effort that goes into making sure our neighborhood remains one of the real gems in the San Marcos area.

—Becky Dobbins, President

Directors' Message:

Becky Dobins has covered virtually everything in this newsletter so a Director's Message is only necessary to ensure she gets credit for all she does for the homeowners. Our hard working President keeps us all organized, drafts every newsletter and still has time to make many of the goodies served at the annual meeting. Thanks Becky, it's a pleasure to work with you.

July 4th Holiday Celebrations:

The July 4th holiday is almost here. The use of fireworks in your yard is prohibited if your house is within the city or your house is within 5,000 feet of city



property. There are numerous safety cautions about the use of small fireworks including sparklers. Go to a city or county sponsored fireworks event and enjoy the show with family and friends. Be sure when night falls on July 4th to keep your dogs and cats inside. The loud noises cause our pets to "freak out."

WCHOA Annual Meeting:

Our June 5th annual meeting was **our HOA's 30th anniversary!** And befitting such a significant event, 49 residents attended, with proxies from 12 other residents.

This year's meeting reaffirmed the strategic direction of the Board, which was elected to serve an additional year. We'll continue our focus on serving Willow Creek HOA's residents and working with them to continue to improve our neighborhood.

We are a single-family residential neighborhood and it is the Board's job to enforce the deed restrictions that protect your neighborhood and your investment in it.



Attendees provided positive feedback about the new, mid-afternoon time slot, 3 pm to 5 pm, which was planned to minimize schedule conflicts with other Sunday activities.

So we'll be meeting at the same time next year, but a different date. Our bylaws specify that we conduct our annual membership meeting the first Sunday in June. Mark your calendar now for June 4 for next year's meeting.

Thanks to those who prepared so many delicious snacks, and to the many members who were able to join us on a beautiful Sunday afternoon.

Special thanks to the San Marcos Police Department for its hospitality in making its meeting facility available to us. Thanks to the local businesses and members who donated so many wonderful door prizes: gift cards from The Root Cellar, H-E-B, Target, CVS, and Subway. Please support our local businesses and business owners.

Oh Dear! The Deer Are Everywhere:

Big ones. Small ones. Short ones. Tall ones. And this year there seem to be more fawns than ever. So please drive carefully – whether it's your car or lawnmower.

When the fawns are very young, mothers temporarily leave them in high grass, which serves as protection. But don't attempt to pick up the fawns or move them. The mothers get very aggressive if they think the fawns are in trouble and may attempt to butt you when you don't expect it.

As the fawns get a little bit older and a little bit bolder, they often race through the neighborhood and run out into our streets, heedless of traffic, creating hazardous conditions – for you and the deer.



If a deer and your car connect – often because a deer runs headlong into your vehicle—call San Marcos Animal Control immediately, at 512-805-2655. If it's after hours, a weekend or a holiday, you may have to contact the local police department or sheriff's office.

We understand that there are partisans on both sides of the deer issue. Some welcome them. Some don't.

While you may enjoy feeding the deer, attracting them to your property by setting out food can make your neighbors' yards virtual salad bars as groups of deer—often a dozen or two—amble through other yards on the way to yours, and enjoy the roses and other flowers, vegetables, herbs, and other plantings that serve as appetizers on their way to the main course served up in your yard.

And, as many of us have learned after dropping a bundle at the garden center, deer-resistant is NOT the same as deer-proof. With last month's steady rains, everything is green and the deer have plenty to eat so they do not need additional snacks.

Bottom line? Please be a considerate and thoughtful neighbor. That's what makes our neighborhood special.

Annual Garage Sale:

The April Garage Sale was a smash hit. We had 31 homes participate—an all-time high. It's a great way to clean out closets and the garage. Participating residents receive ad, newspaper, web site, and email notification support. A few tips for holding a successful garage sale: Items should be clearly marked, properly displayed, and freshly cleaned. Be willing to bargain or mark the item non-negotiable. Be ready to start early in the morning even though the sale starts at a publicized time since veteran treasure hunters often start when dawn breaks. If many items are for sale, then more than one person should help manage the sale. Have change handy to close the sale quickly. These simple guidelines ensure success. A good thing to remember is that leftover items can be donated to various local charity services.



<http://www.treshermanasrestaurant.com/catering>

Welcome to our New Residents:

We're glad you are here! Some basics about our neighborhood: Deer eat almost anything. Any plant is subject to deer munching unless encased by rabbit fence.

Some residents use dogs to keep the deer "at bay." However, almost nothing works every time over a long time period. Be realistic about your expectations. If you plant roses without a fence, the deer will eat them. Esperanza, palm trees, lantana, salvia, and oleander are about the only plants deer will not eat. Everything else is subject to being eaten, including cacti. If you decide to install a fence or make other exterior modifications to your property, please [contact WCHOA to request permission in accordance with your deed restrictions](#). We will review your request, the design, materials and setbacks and will respond.

Activity Center:

The San Marcos Activity Center at 501 East Hopkins is the life center of San Marcos (adjacent to the Library). You can sign up for a year or single use. They have a pool, weight room, and racquetball court. The membership fees (annual fees) are super cheap for senior citizens and individuals. Single use fees are a steal. The Center opens at 6 a.m. Monday thru Friday, at 10 a.m. on Saturday and is closed on Sunday. Since it is summer, let's sweat out the carbs at the Center!!

Spiffy Neighborhoods:

Our property values depend on us—all of us—keeping the lawns mowed, the trash picked-up and cleaning up grass clippings that you blow on to the street when cutting your lawn make our neighborhood look well kept. It doesn't take much effort to keep things looking great. Natural areas are wonderful as long as weeds are kept in check and the area is cleared back about 20 feet from the street. Remember that neat lawns and spruced-up flower beds add value to your property. Be patient when your lawns grow ever so slowly.

Remember this is the Hill Country. The "flora" of the area is fragile since the top soil is very thin. It takes years to replace what is lost after grading or excavation. If new top soil is brought onto the lot, make sure it is good top soil—and "local" top soil. If you bring in top soil from other areas, it may not support the local greenery. Staying as close to the Hill Country "normal" flora and soil is important for the long- term health of your yard. So dig out the stickers and encourage the right vegetation to grow.

What Does Our Website Have to Offer You?

- ✓ Read Current and Back Issues of "Willow Creek News & Views" Newsletters
- ✓ Send Us Your Questions via the "Contact Us" page
- ✓ Report Lost and Found (pets and other items)
- ✓ Report Restriction Violation
- ✓ Request Architectural Control Approval
- ✓ Report New or Changed Email Address(es) & Phone Number(s)
- ✓ Submit Items for Inclusion on the Events Calendar
- ✓ Pay Membership Dues via PayPal
- ✓ Check Membership Status
- ✓ Submit "Just Willow Creek" Items
- ✓ Submit Volunteer Form
- ✓ Read/Print Deed Restrictions/ Covenants
- ✓ Read/Print Bylaws
- ✓ View Current & Past Board Members
- ✓ Request HOA Verification When Selling Willow Creek Property
- ✓ View "Community Information"
- ✓ View "Membership Has Its Benefits"
- ✓ View "New Resident Information"
- ✓ View "About Us" for a brief history of WCHOA

Golf Carts:

A number of residents have come to us with questions about the authorized use of what are commonly referred to as “golf carts” on public streets that run through our neighborhood.

There are many variables involved, based on the type of vehicle, the streets and roads involved, and applicable city or county traffic regulations.

The best place to start is with the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles’ helpful “Off-Highway Vehicles” website:

<http://www.txdmv.gov/motorists/buying-or-selling-a-vehicle/off-highway-vehicles>

This website describes the various types of vehicles within this classification and the safety and operational regulations that apply to each of them.

It is worth noting that for a vehicle that is classified as a “golf cart” by DMV, operation on a public roadway is generally only permitted in a very limited number of situations, including transportation of two miles or less between a golf course and the location where the vehicle is usually parked.

Under certain, more stringent conditions—including specific mandatory safety equipment and insurance—local jurisdictions may permit the operations of golf carts on certain roadways.

If you have questions on this subject, we refer you to the experts, the San Marcos Police Department, 512-753-2108, or, if you live outside of city limits, to the Hays County Sheriff’s Office, 512-393-7800.



Household Hazardous Waste:

Collection is open weekly—rain or shine, every Tuesday and Friday, starting at 12 noon until 3:30 p.m. This is open to both city and county residents—proof of residency is required. Please check this out—location is the traffic yard, 630 E Hopkins, San Marcos. This is a drive-through event—do not exit your vehicles. The list of “will accept” items is quite long. Please check the list at www.sanmarcostx.gov/index.aspx?recordid=3687&page=102 before making a trip. Both the City of San Marcos and Hays County are reaching out to local residents to make sure they have the info they need to make a decision. Use the resources that are available.

The USPS Annual Food Drive:

The US Postal Service’s annual Food Drive in May nearly doubled donations from previous years. The letter carriers picked up food at mailboxes and the Hays County Food Bank was the happy recipient. Whether the donation was a single can of non-perishable food or a hundred items, all donations were appreciated. Some of our residents dropped off items at the local post office—so thanks to all! Remember this national food drive happens every year, so mark May 13 on your 2017 calendar for next year’s event.



The Hays County Food Bank usually posts what types of food they need so check out their website before you shop. Their website address is haysfoodbank.org or call them at 512-392-8300. You can also designate them as “your charity” on Smile Amazon (smile.amazon.com). A percent of every dollar spent from your account on Smile Amazon will be sent to the Hays County Food Bank. Amazon will also ship directly to the food bank. Their current wish list includes, rice, green beans, peanuts, canned ravioli, canned peaches and pears, granola bars, peanut butter, canned tuna or chicken. They always need volunteers too.

Your Privacy—Important to Us:

The Willow Creek Homeowner’s Association respects and protects the contact information we have on file for you. **We do not** make your information available to vendors or other individuals or entities. If you receive a call or email message from a vendor that claims it received your contact information from the Willow Creek HOA, you can be sure this is untrue. We recommend that you contact the Better Business Bureau immediately at www.bbb.org. And please contact us, as well, so we can let our members know.

Information Sharing:

Interested in sharing info with the Willow Creek Homeowners Association members? We have a “Just Willow Creek” section that is ideal. It’s perfect for recommendations and offers to dog-sit or babysit and even advertise your garage sale. Please use this tool—it is designed for your use.



Critter Watch:

Watch out for scorpions, snakes and spiders!



Did you know that Texas has 18 different species of scorpions? And because of the recent rain, numerous snakes, including rattlers and corals, are making the rounds. Yes, there are good snakes and then there are those that will send you to the hospital. Whenever you have a snake encounter, you may not have enough time to determine if it's a "good snake" or otherwise.

Rattlesnakes and coral snakes ("red against yellow kills a fellow") have been sighted and dispatched by some of our neighbors. We often react quickly and may not be able to determine whether the snake is benign. So, what tools can we use to educate ourselves to make that split second decision? Here is a link which will show you what the "good guys" look like: www.poisoncontrol.org.

The same web site has the skinny on scorpions and fire ants – and more. Please watch out for them, too, since they're everywhere.

Our Texas Scorpions seek shelter inside and outside the house and garage. They can hide under pet dishes or trash baskets. They get into shoes, stacked papers, backpacks, pans, etc. They know no limits. But they do like water and they do like shade.



So before you put on your clothes, shake them out and check your shoes. The last thing you need is an extremely painful and potentially dangerous allergic reaction.

Use the same approach with fire ants. Never wear open shoes in the yard or do garden work without gloves. A single fire ant will sting repeatedly. Putting cornmeal in ant-feeding areas or on the ant hill itself can help with eradication and can show results within a few days of application. But be very careful when you do anything involving fire ants: folks who are allergic, have been rushed to the hospital with only a few stings.

Membership:

Being a member of the WCHOA is a unique experience. It's a bit like bourbon chicken: You know it's going to be great, but you've never ordered it before.

Is it worth \$20? Oh, yes indeed! It's a real deal!

And we make it easy to pay—by cash, by check, or through PayPal on our website. So order the equivalent of Bourbon Chicken (or, if you prefer veggies, a mouth-watering vegetable and pasta dish) and enjoy every bite.

It's a guaranteed win-win!

About Town:

Other articles in this newsletter highlight some of the amazing artists we have in the San Marcos area. Following are additional places in San Marcos to experience artistic events: El Centro had a Cuban art and photography exhibit; Art on the Square (the Courthouse Square) had numerous booths; the Dahlia Woods Gallery on LBJ with recent showings, and 218 Studioworks on Guadalupe had a one man art show for Buddy Pajak. These events were well-attended—great art, great company and talent appreciation. In addition, there is always an art show at the Activity Center! We are blessed! Your support of these venues makes a genuine difference in our community.



<http://www.treshermanasrestaurant.com/>

Murals Dedication:

Two beautiful new murals have been dedicated in the City of San Marcos. "Electric Jazz" by Cody Seigmund was dedicated on June 14 at Eddie Durham Park. The second mural by Susan Harmon, was dedicated on June 16, and is installed on the back of the Hays County Justice Center. These murals add to the artistic value of the community. To date we have murals at the Children's Park, Crook Park, Root Cellar Bakery, Hays County Justice Center, and Eddie Durham Park. All are gorgeous and must be seen. For more information, email Lisa Morris at <mailto:lmorris@sanmarcostx.gov>.

Trash:

We've been picking up trash tossed from vehicles throughout the neighborhood. Recent trash—cups from WhatABurger, bags from Target and Burger King, styrofoam boxes, a few hats, one rug, soda cans, cigarette butt piles, grocery bags, water bottles, kites, balloons, and worse. Please do not throw your trash out of car or truck windows. We also have flying garbage from the trash receptacles. Securely tie up the garbage before placing it in the receptacle for the weekly pick-up. We really appreciate your help with this. Let's avoid pizza boxes flying through the neighborhood on our after trash pick-up day. It's not pleasant picking trash off cactus spines. Also if you notice trash around a construction site, contact the site foreman or send the address to WCHOA so that we can resolve the problem.

Why A Newsletter?

Interested in adding a topic to the newsletter? People like more than just an email or going to a web site. So we use various media to reach our homeowners with items that are of interest. If you have ideas for topics, let us know by sending an email wchoa99@gmail.com or a postcard to P.O. Box 1883, San Marcos, TX.

Summer Concerts are Happening Now!

Summer in the Park is a weekly series of free concerts on Thursday nights at the San Marcos Plaza Park. Events start at 7:30 p.m. Two performers are Shelley King on July 21 and Terry Hendrix on July 28.

The last event is on August 11 with Two Tons of Steel. Don't miss out! A few rules apply: no smoking, no styrofoam, and no glass containers. Information <https://smpaa.us/events/summerinthepark/>. Please attend and support our many local artists. Their talent is a gift for all of us.

Staying in Compliance with WCHOA:

We continue to respond to reports of WCHOA restriction violations. Violations are almost always reported to us by homeowners. Some of these violations are also violations of city ordinances. Our directors use progressive action steps to encourage prompt corrective action by the homeowner. We listen, we observe, and we carefully think things through before acting. This means we strive to keep negotiations businesslike, efficient and effective. Always remember while paying dues in the Willow Creek Homeowners Association is voluntary, **compliance with the deed restrictions is mandatory—both city and county**. Remember to be a good neighbor—which means observing the deed restrictions.

Checkout the City of San Marcos website (sanmarcostx.gov):

Don't forget how exciting and helpful this website can be. The range of information available is amazing. You have a "bulky" pickup for example, call 800-375-8375, press 2, for Customer Service. Quick Facts, among many other items about trash and recycling are also posted.



The WCHOA Board Wishes You a Happy and Safe Fourth of July