

Willow Creek News & Views

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A publication of



WCHOA ~ Willow Creek Homeowners Association, Inc.

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

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President's Message:

Happy New Year to all our neighbors and friends in Willow Creek!!

I hope that you had a wonderful holiday season. We sent out a seasonal message in December and acknowledged the Christmas light winners. The visual effect of so many homes with so many wonderful combinations of illuminated colors and designs was stunning. We thank those who participated and noticed that our neighborhood improved its carbon footprint by using fewer electric lights and many more solar lights. We also saw a good number of early adopters who used laser-projection lights. Together, solar and the newer laser-projection lights reflect a neighborhood that respects tradition while always looking forward to newer and better ways of doing things. No surprise there—that's the Willow Creek way. We're thinking of adding solar and laser lights categories to next year's contest. Give us your feedback please.

The 2016 Christmas Lights contest winners:

- **BEST CHILDREN'S THEME** – 601 Snyder Hill – Wes + Debbie Wallis
- **BEST ELEGANT THEME** – 2400 Summit Ridge – Dennis + Susan Wolking
- **BEST COLORFUL THEME** – 823 Willow Creek Circle – Ron + Judy Brown

Congratulations to our winners and thanks to everybody who participated. We hope they all participate in our Super Spring Garage Sale, too.

In Remembrance: We lost some of our neighbors and friends recently—it is difficult to say good-bye even if we know the time is near. It is especially difficult to lose someone suddenly. Whether you are a native Texan, a long-time resident, or have moved here recently, your loss is our loss. If you need assistance or have any questions, please contact WCHOA.

----Becky Dobbins, President

Spring Garage Sale:

Spring's coming. So's our Super Spring Garage Sale. Start preparing now for the big Spring event—the annual garage sale. It's exciting and fun. The dates this year are Friday & Saturday, April 7th & 8th. We will post/publish your address with information that you want shared.



As an example: "123 Street Name Saturday only from 9 to 3. Mostly books and small items. Prices negotiable." This event is heavily attended and participants have been pleased with the results. Some folks join forces and use one location—that's OK too, and it drives great customer traffic. Prepare now and clean out your garages and closets!

Shop Local:

We have many smaller businesses/restaurants that need our support to stay in business. Please support them and help keep San Marcos thriving.

Dirt Pile on Stagecoach Trail:

We continue to file objections to the foul dirt pile on Stagecoach Trail across from the Hernandez School. We're told that it's okay to have this dirt heap as long as the contractor has open construction in the area. Well, it seems like the construction is completed, so we have filed another formal complaint with the city. Not only is it an eyesore, it's a safety hazard. Contact [San Marcos Connect Service Requests](#) and ask to have it removed—the more complaints the city receives on this issue, the better the prospects for action.

And here's something worth knowing: San Marcos Connect Service Requests also offers an app that can be downloaded to your iPhone or Android if you need to quickly bring an issue to the attention of the City. This was helpful to us recently as strong winds took down the stop sign at Stagecoach Trail and Rolling Oaks Drive, creating a hazardous situation. A temporary sign was put up within hours.

Growth Pressures Our Neighborhoods:

How do you control the negative effects on our neighborhoods? We live in a popular and rapidly growing area. The challenge is to balance the growth and keep the best parts of the local character. We've heard many times: do not turn us into Austin. (Too much traffic, too many high-rises, too many bars). It's called the "too-too-too much" syndrome.

We are also attracting more tourists and other visitors because of shopping and university activities. These are important revenue generators and, handled wisely, are good for our community. Many visitors prefer staying in the historic areas instead of a motel on the interstate. This means they want restaurants nearby. This can mean less sleep for residents depending on the hours of the businesses. Watch the [city](#) or [county](#) calendars and invite yourself to one of these important planning meetings. Input is necessary from those who are most affected.

Critters:

Some of our families have lost cats and dogs this winter season. We're happy to report that most have been found, but some still haven't. This can be particularly hard for a pet that's used to sleeping snugly inside at night.



An advertisement for San Marcos Window Washing. At the top left, it says "5 Star Business" next to the Yelp logo, which includes five red stars. To the right is the Google logo with "5 STAR RATING" and five yellow stars. Below the stars is a photo of a woman and a child smiling. To the right of the photo, it says "David and Nicole Rodriguez", "Licensed and Insured", "Commercial and Residential", "Window and Pressure Washing etc.", "512 699-7729", "512 293-2771", and "SanMarcosWindowWashing.com". At the bottom, the company name "San Marcos Window Washing" is written in a blue cursive font.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Please have your animals wear a collar with a current phone number. Even better, have them chipped—that makes it much easier for a found pet to be reunited with its family. Check with your Vet or the San Marcos Regional Animal Shelter for more information about chipping. Our animals are precious to us and, if they wander away, we want to get them home as soon as possible. We have many more successes than not, but we want them all to get back home.

New Year's celebrations that included fireworks were fewer than in the past this year. We appreciate it for the added quiet and safety—and so do our pets, who often get disoriented at the noise. Fireworks are not allowed within nor close to the city limits. Thank you for celebrating safely and sanely. January 28th was the Lunar New Year. We're now in the Year of the Rooster! So Happy New Year and a big "Cock-a-Doodle Doo to You!"

What's Up in the County?

Earlier this month, Hays County held a public open-house meeting on the possible roadway improvements to the Posey Road corridor. Materials related to this meeting are posted at <https://www.co.hays.tx.us/posey-road-corridor-study.aspx>. We know how important an adequate roadway system is to our community as it continues to expand in the direction of Wonder World, McCarty, Centerpoint and Posey Road. Your thoughts and ideas can help make sure the County's actions consider the needs and desires of Willow Creek residents.

Reminder:

Willow Creek Estates is a single-family residential community. This means there are specific limitations on the number of non-related folks who may occupy a particular home—this is covered by San Marcos city ordinance and by the deed covenants covering your section of Willow Creek Estates. Need more information? Check our website: wchoatx.com.

We're delighted that our neighbors recognize the importance of preserving the sanctity of the single-family residence neighborhood. It contributes to the unique Willow Creek experience. We're fortunate that our larger San Marcos area community, enhanced by the presence of Texas State University, offers so much culturally, economically, and socially. This extends to types and density of housing offered throughout the broader community, reflecting the need for different types of housing and developmental density in different parts of our community.

Lost and Found:

Keys! Phones! Glasses! Wallets! Hats! iPods! Pets! It's amazing the types of items that are found on the streets in our neighborhood. Whether you're walking or jogging, please secure your items as you enjoy your fitness routine. Many of the electronic gadgets we carry with us today cost a pretty penny to replace—not to mention the time and frustration of getting all your data, apps, and settings back. There are easy ways to avoid this. Many of us use our hands to hold items. That can work—up to a point. Folks tell us that zippered pockets provide a lot more security. So do fanny packs, arm bands, and belt holsters. And, from time to time, many of us leave an item on top of our cars when we're loading or unloading. It's hard to remember the details when you're in a hurry, especially if you get distracted halfway through. Please check your car's roof or bumper before taking off! The last thing you want to hear is the crunch of your vehicle's tire bidding your Smartphone goodbye.



Local Youth Programs:

The City of San Marcos is currently accepting applications for grants to fund programs serving

children and youth in San Marcos. Some programs that have received San Marcos Youth Master Plan Funding in the past include CASA of Central Texas, Texas State University, and Girls Empowerment Network. To see if your group qualifies or for more information, contact Youth Services Manager Jessica Ramos at 512-393-8283 or email jramos@sanmarcostx.gov. Applications must be turned in to the Grant Harris, Jr. Building, 401 E Hopkins, by noon on February 10, 2017.



Youth Activity Scholarships are available, too! Applications are accepted through September 30, 2017. These scholarships pay 50 percent of the registration fees for any of the programs offered by the city, including team sports, Summer Fun, and other activities and camps. Interested—or know somebody who is? Check out www.sanmarcostx.gov/youthactivity

Changes:

Kenneth Bell from the San Marcos Marshal's office and our city manager, Jared Miller, are moving on to new jobs in different cities. We wish them both well.

Ken was an extremely responsive city employee who had his fingers on the pulse of San Marcos' residents' needs, with a special focus on our neighborhoods. He was delightful to work with and always responsive to the requests and needs of Willow Creek. The City Marshal's group is being realigned and the position duties will be re-assigned.

We also wish Jared well as he takes over the city manager position in Amarillo, where he has close family ties. During the last three years Jared listened and did his best to act on our concerns and worked to make San Marcos a better place to live.

And speaking of changes, San Marcos has a new Mayor, John Thomaidis, and two new city council members—Saul Gonzalez and Ed Mihalkanin. Saul is a Willow Creek resident. On the county side, Will Conley, who has family in Willow Creek, continues to represent us as a Hays County Commissioner. We'll be working to get to know our new representatives and keep all our representatives aware of issues that affect our neighborhood. You can find contact information for all of them on the [San Marcos](http://SanMarcos) and [Hays County](http://HaysCounty) government websites.

Lunch and History:

Lunch and history go together, as the old jingle says, like “soup and sandwich.” Have you ever had lunch in a museum house? Did you know that the Heritage Association of San Marcos



sponsors an inexpensive (only \$8) lunch most every Friday at the Charles S. Cock Museum from 11 am to 1 pm? It's located at the corner of

East Hopkins and North C. M. Allen Parkway. Each week's lunch is sponsored by a local volunteer group and served in the Cottage Kitchen at the museum. For information about the museum and the volunteer groups, go to <http://heritagesanmarcos.org>. As the oldest residential building in town, the Cock House is one of the most important historic sites in San Marcos.

Did you know?

We were living here for a year or two before we realized that Wonder World Drive is actually named for a charming privately operated amusement and nature park right here in San Marcos. Wonder World Park is built around Wonder Cave, Texas's first show cave, located right in the Balcones Fault. It's only a 10-minute drive from Willow Creek, at 1000 Prospect St., only three miles away. The cave is a dry formed, which means created by an earthquake, not by erosion. The fault itself is visible from the cave's ceiling. Little known fact: this cave was originally “discovered” by accident and ended up being used for storage of illicit goods for a time.

Greenery not so green?

As I drove around the neighborhood, I noticed that many yard plants seem to be doing poorly even though we've had plenty of rain. The



problem is we've had a few v-e-r-y cold nights and more than our share of cloudy days. This type of weather tends to knock off non-native plants. Palms and citrus are especially vulnerable. No

matter how often you try, the freeze can destroy your plants, even if you cover them or use lights

to keep them warm. Your best bet is to stick with native plants. For expert advice, consult with a local nursery. You might not hear the advice you want, but you'll hear advice you need to maintain beautiful landscaping.



Speaking of Weather:

The weather continues to excite weather observers (well, it is Texas, right?)—if you were raised in a household that loved weather maps or following tornadoes. So, here are a few reminders on how to prepare for those unexpected—and potentially dangerous—weather events.

- *High winds:* Take down anything that will swing, or break loose. The last winds were strong enough to roll over patio chairs, potted plants, and bird feeders. Secure anything that you think might be shifted by fierce winds.
- *Tornadoes:* Do what you'd do for high winds. And then some. Do you have a safe location inside your house? A designated, reinforced closet? Or an outside bunker? Some builders scoff at tornadoes as a possibility for San Marcos. Well, we have them. And we have tornado sirens in our neighborhood. Please pay attention to them. If those sirens go off, head for secure shelter immediately. If your home doesn't offer a safe location, consider having an expert evaluate your house and identify the safest location inside. Do it today. The recent tornadoes in the Southeast highlight why it is important to be prepared. But don't just depend on the sirens, learn other signs of possible tornados, as well. In the daytime: if it gets really quiet, and your animals start circling, and it seems suddenly warmish, listen to the radio for weather warnings—And it's always a good idea to have a battery operated or hand-cranked radio. If you hear the siren or detect the other signs, move to shelter immediately. At Nighttime: if you hear the siren move to shelter immediately.

Your eMail Address is the Key:

Want to know what's going on in the neighborhood and what your Homeowners Association is up to? The best way to do that is to share your email address with us. We use your email address to distribute the Newsletter and to put out alerts you need to know about such as vandalism, scam artists, thefts, lost or found pets, or other timely information. We only use your email address to keep you hooked in to Willow Creek information. We don't sell it. [Add or update your email/phone online](#) or send us a quick message and we'll add you to the list. More than one email address? No problem. We'll be happy to make sure all of them are covered. You can reach us at wchoa99@gmail.com.

Awareness reduces accidents:

There are several intersections in our area that are accident-susceptible. Here are a few quick tips that can keep you out of harm's way.



- Approach intersections cautiously. We see drivers run red lights and stop signs every day. It could be you they hit.
- Minimize risk. If you're stopped to make a left-hand turn, keep your wheels straight until you begin the turn. You could be hit from behind and forced into oncoming traffic. I saw that happen more than once since the beginning of the year.
- We have a lot of big-truck traffic nearby because of the H-E-B distribution center on Hunter Road. Tractor trailers make v-e-r-y wide left-hand turns, and we've all seen incautious drivers get sandwiched by left-turning trucks going from eastbound Wonder World onto the I-35 North Access Road. Is there a truck on your right as you're making that turn? Hold back and give it plenty of room. We support our local businesses, but that doesn't mean we have to be regular visitors to the auto-body shop.
- Use both left-hand turn lanes to head North when turning from westbound Wonder World onto I-35. Unfortunately, you can't see the signage letting you know there are two left-hand turn lanes until it's often too late to safely get into one of them. And many drivers don't know about

the two left-hand lanes, leading to confusion that sometimes borders on chaos at this intersection. And even for those who do, the funneling process and lane-marking are extremely haphazard. Be aware. Be cautious. And be safe. We continue to make the city aware of the pressing need to improve this intersection— especially in view of the added traffic that will come with a new H-E-B. And we'll keep at it until we get some action.

- Keep in mind, too, that San Marcos and Hays County are among the fastest-growing jurisdictions in the United States. Many of our newer residents may have little experience with four-way stops. Just because you know what to do doesn't mean they do. So take an extra second to be sure you can discern other drivers' intentions at a four-way stop.

And, as always, please watch your speed in Willow Creek Estates. And no "Hollywood" stops either!

Secure your trash:

The neighborhood dogs find your trash barrels exciting. Whatever you put in them becomes an attractive nuisance for our various animals. Try to manage content as carefully as possible. When you bag your trash, tie the top. Place the bags tamped down in the cans. Do not place trash in the cans that is loose. If the can is tipped over, then it becomes every dog's dream.



Payments

Accepted:

Secure online dues payment is available on our [website](#) and you will not be charged a fee for using this service. As you probably know, when you use **PayPal** our HOA will not have access to nor will we store any of your personal financial information on our site.

2017 HOA DUES ARE PAYABLE IN JANUARY but we will accept your payment any time during the year. It's easy! Just go to the WCHOA website, select "**Pay Dues**" and pay your annual \$20 membership dues. You may still pay by check. Mail to WCHOA, PO Box 1883, San Marcos, TX 78667-1883.