

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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We're Here to Help – You and Your Garage!

Okay, it's three months on, and those New Year's resolutions are getting harder and harder to keep. (Don't I know it!) We can't help you make time for those great books you've wanted to read. We can't help you with healthier eating. And we can't help you with your TV time. But we can help you get organized—especially where your garage is concerned.

In fact, we do it every year around this time, when it's pretty clear that spring has sprung-, with our Annual Super-Duper Best-in-Town Willow Creek HOA Garage Sale. Mark the dates: Friday, April 6 and Saturday, April 7.



We're here to offer a little seasonal magic by helping you turn all that that stuff you've been "storing" in your garage into a little "mad" money. And look at it this way, you've got to get all that stuff out of the way of your lawnmower, anyway, now that it's time to mow.

We'll tell the papers and online media, we'll put out signs, and we'll get the word out every way we can. All you've got to do is dust off those treasures, move 'em onto your driveway, price 'em, and sell 'em.

Oh, and, of course, let us know your address and the days and times your sale will be taking place. Friday April 6? Saturday, April 7? Both days? What time do you open? And what time do you close? We want to make sure your potential customers know. And here's an idea: you can also team up with a neighbor—that'll increase your inventory and make your sale really stand out.

Please contact wchoa99@gmail.com with your information no later than April 2. We look forward to having exciting sale days this year.

Recreational Vehicle Parking

This is one we get a lot of questions about: can I park my mobile home or travel trailer in my yard? In my driveway? And what about my neighbor, aren't the rules the same for everybody?

The easy answer: well, it all depends.

The covenants governing activity in the different sections of Willow Creek Estates do not all address this subject in the same way. For some sections, there are restrictions on how long such a vehicle may be parked in a driveway or on the street. For other sections, such vehicles must be fully housed in

garages so that they are not visible from the street. In some areas, they can't be on the property at all. But in all cases, if parked on your property, these vehicles may **not** be used for residential purposes.

If the Willow Creek HOA Board becomes aware of a violation of a deed-restriction or covenant violation, it will contact the property owner to ensure that appropriate action is taken to bring the property into compliance.

The best course of action? Check the covenants and restrictions governing your section of Willow Creek Estates. They're all posted on our website. In fact, you can click right here for [Deed Restrictions and Covenants](#). If you have questions, please check with us so we can make sure you have the information you need.

Rentals? House Sharing? What's the Story?

Another issue that generates a lot of questions from current members of the Willow Creek community and from potential residents is property rental and occupancy rules. We'll try to address this as briefly and directly as possible.

Willow Creek Estates is a single-family residential community. Period!

In practice, that means that all homes must be single-family homes; no homes may be constructed or used as multi-family dwellings. Property owners are not required to live in the homes they own, but if they do not occupy the home, they may only lease the entire dwelling, not individual rooms or "shared living space," to a single family or resident

It's worth noting, too, that if your Willow Creek property is within the city limits of San Marcos, the City has enacted ordinances governing single-family occupancy. Homes in certain zoning districts in the City of San Marcos are designated for "single family" use. This includes Willow Creek. The City's Land Development Code defines a family as any number of individuals living as a single housekeeping unit who are related by blood, legal adoption, marriage, or conservatorship. This means that in a single-family zoning district, the number of unrelated people who may occupy a home is limited. Violations of the city ordinances governing residency can result in citations and expensive fines.

Our goal as a homeowners association is to maintain an attractive, stable community, one that reflects your expectations and needs—while respecting the rights of current and potential property owners and the requirements of the law—and one that protects, maintains, and enhances the value of your personal, social, and financial investment in the Willow Creek Estates community. We work with local realtors to ensure that potential buyers are aware of their rights and obligations, both within the parameters of the law and within our covenants and restrictions.

Annual Meeting

Our next annual meeting is Sunday, June 3, beginning at 3 pm., at the San Marcos Police Department conference room, on the west I-35 access road, between Wonder World Drive and McCarty Lane. Our agenda includes a review of the activities of the past year, a financial report, and nomination and election of board members and officers for the coming year. It's also a great opportunity to share your concerns or observations, so that the Board and Officers can respond or follow up, as necessary. Please mark your calendars and save this special day and date to attend the meeting. If you cannot attend, please let us know so we can arrange for you to cast a proxy ballot as we select our leadership team for the coming year.



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We will be electing three board members, as well as our president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. This is a great opportunity to get involved in sharing your vision for the Willow Creek community with your neighbors and friends. Community involvement drives community awareness, and community awareness drives community action. This leads to a stronger community, one that is responsive to the needs of its residents, and one that maintains its attractiveness as a unique and desirable place to live.

Annual Dues: It's that Time Again!

Thanks to many of you for paying your annual dues of \$20 promptly. If you haven't paid yet, it's easy: just send a check to WCHOA, PO Box 1883, San Marcos, TX 78667-1883. The amount of dues is small for the value you receive. Your dues supports neighborhood events and enhancements such as the Annual Garage Sale, National Night Out, entrance-sign maintenance, displaying American flags on national holidays, working to maintain and improve our community, and more.

Your board and officers are unpaid volunteers who work for you and the preservation of the neighborhood. We'd love to have you join us! We need your help to assist us with the many tasks involved, so please consider it and contact us. Many hands get the many tasks done more quickly.



Emergency Phone, Text, Email Alerts

The City of San Marcos offers emergency phone, text and email notification system through its partnership with the Capital Area Council of Governments. This system also provides helpful, general information.

Emergency Messages

- Registering with [WarnCentralTexas](http://WarnCentralTexas.com) allows the City to directly contact residents by phone, text or email during a disaster or public safety event. The City can quickly give specific directions that affect specific neighborhoods such as evacuation orders and directions to shelters.

General Messages

- The City of San Marcos also uses the system for non-emergency messages for events such as major street closures, election information, and some community meetings and other items of community interest.

Register

- Residents must register cell phone numbers and email addresses to have alerts sent to their mobile devices. (Landline phones are automatically registered). To add your cell phone and email address, register at [WarnCentralTexas](http://WarnCentralTexas.com). If you can't register on the website, call 866-939-0911. And you can opt out at any time.

As we've all learned over the last several years, weather conditions can be extreme in our area and emergency notifications can provide you the information you need—when you need it—to take the best action to keep you out of harm's way.

Lawn Equipment Maintenance

If you haven't already, you'll be taking your mower out of mothballs very soon. Be sure to test your mower and provide any necessary maintenance to make sure it runs, hums, and mows like a charm. If you have a riding mower, check the tires. Those ubiquitous cacti, the ones that you've cut a deal with—don't mess with me and I won't mess with you—generally forget the terms of that deal at this time of year. And they *will* poke a hole or two in the tires of your mower. Best to catch the problem and fix it before you begin that long slog under the hot sun. And don't take any chances: make sure you've engaged the emergency brake and chocked your mower *before* you crawl under it or remove a flat tire.

Vote Early—and Vote Often!

No, no, no! I don't mean it like that. We just came through primary elections—with quite a few that will require runoffs to select the Democratic and Republican nominees for various state and county offices in the November general election. And before you know it, we'll be looking at school board elections, where we'll be electing two at-large trustees of the San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District. Later in the year, we'll also be going to the polls to elect a mayor and two members of the San Marcos City Council.

By the way, did you know that the San Marcos CISD represents about 60% of our local property tax burden? All the more reason your voice needs to be heard in the school board election.

Voting early avoids long lines and voting often—as in voting in every election that affects you—makes sure that your voice is heard in the elections that define the future of our schools, our state, our county, and our city. We voted in record numbers in the primary. There's no better way than voting to signal to our elected officials—and would-be elected officials—that our voices are the voices that they need to be listening to. In that respect, we're proud that Willow Creek is one of the leaders in voter turnout in Hays County. And we want to keep it that way.

Here's some important information about the primary runoff and the school board elections:

San Marcos School Board Election

- Election Day: Saturday, May 5
- Last day to register to vote: Thursday, April 5
- Last day to apply for a ballot by mail: Tuesday, April 24
- Early voting period: Monday, April 23 through Tuesday, May 1

Primary Runoff Election

- Election Day: Tuesday, May 22
- Last day to register to vote: Monday, April 23
- Last date to apply for a ballot by mail: Wednesday, May 2
- Early voting period: Monday, May 14 through Friday, May 18

Polling places haven't been announced yet, but you can contact the Hays County Election Office for more information about the elections and about voter registration. The phone number is 512-393-1810; the email address is elections@co.hays.tx.us, and you can visit the website at <http://www.co.hays.tx.us/elections.aspx>.



WCHOA Website

While we're on the subject of websites, don't forget to spend a few minutes with the Willow Creek Homeowners Association website, <https://wchoatx.com>. It's a great place to learn what's going on in the neighborhood—and how it affects you.

Lost pets. Found pets. Which days are recycling days? Which are trash days? Which are compost days? (And, by deduction, which days you can sleep in.) Contact information for community and government services and agencies. Community events and announcements.

It's a great way to keep in touch, and learn how the WCHOA, through your support and participation, is working to keep our neighborhood special. It's a way to let us know if you're planning renovations or additions to your property, and seek guidance and advice to be sure they're consistent with the restrictions and covenants that affect your property. And it's a great way to let us know what's on your mind. WCHOA is your organization. Your involvement makes it even better.

Lawn Furniture/Patio Areas

Time to refresh those patio sets so they'll be in great shape for summer. Use a critter-safe method to clean the furniture and dislodge any bugs that may have nested underneath or between the cushions. Never assume that spiders or ants don't find your furniture attractive: they'll surprise you every time.

Before your "fire up" your grill or smoker, make sure everything works properly, vents properly, contains fire safely, and is used only in safe areas. Make sure you dispose of ashes safely, and make sure you have a fire-extinguisher close by. Be aware of "open fire" regulations, whether you're in the city or the county. They're designed to protect your property, your investment, and your life. And when you're done with your feast, be sure your grill or smoker has cooled down, and the ashes have been removed and extinguished, before you cover it or store it. Be BBQ smart.



Traffic: Working to Stay Ahead of It

As San Marcos development continues to move south along Hunter and I-35, traffic becomes more of an issue. This is something all of us have noticed as we wait two, three, or more traffic-light cycles to turn left or cross Hunter Road from Stagecoach Trail during busy times—particularly during the school year. And there's a new, multi-story medical office development planned on our side of that intersection.

We're working to get out ahead of this to help keep traffic from bogging down even more. We're planning to meet with City traffic officials so that they fully understand our concerns. We want to make sure they make every effort to engineer a solution that supports optimal traffic flow through an increasingly congested intersection before it becomes a major issue. As you know, major commercial development has been approved previously by the City of San Marcos at the intersection of Hunter Road and Wonderworld Drive. This will exacerbate potential traffic problems related to additional development at Hunter and Stagecoach. Emergency personnel, residents, and service providers do not need to fight what threatens to become impossible traffic at this corner. They need to have safe, quick, unblocked access.

Kids! Schools! Cars! Caution!

Just the other day, I watched a mother with her young child dash between cars on Stagecoach Trail to cross the street in front of Hernandez School. She didn't check to see if any cars were passing on the other side of the cars lined up in the long queue entering the school. She stepped right in front of my car as if there wasn't another one anywhere that she had to worry about.

Fortunately, I was going much slower than the 20 mph required when the school-crossing light is flashing, or both of them could have been hurt. That would have been devastating—for all of us. But as we all know, that's not always the case. The danger can be pedestrians in a rush and not paying attention, or it can be drivers in a similar rush, exercising the same lack of caution. Either way, the consequences are the same. Please, drive your very best in this type of situation. Not just on Stagecoach, but anywhere students may be crossing.

If I come across the mother again—at the H-E-B or the CVS or anywhere else—I'll share my concern. She, and her child, are important to me. Their features, happy and loving, are etched in my memory. I want them to experience that joy and love for many, many years to come.

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