

Willow Creek News & Views

Winter 2019

A publication of



NEWSLETTER EDITORS: WCHOA Board

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President's Message

Greetings! The holidays are upon us! It's a bit disconcerting to feel "fall-ish" while many stores are displaying Christmas items. Several of us shop all year for holiday items to find the best values. But we don't anticipate a Santa on every shopping corner throughout the year. Research is showing that putting people in the holiday mood, early in the season, helps meet revenue targets. Plus putting out nice displays will draw shoppers inside their brick and mortar stores and not just online. Are you happier with earlier displays or offended? If you shop with children or grandchildren, you are aware how much attractive displays influence young peoples' psyches. Thus the "enjoyment" of early displays depends on your perspective.



Your WCHOA board is hard at work handling many requests for fences, pools, garage additions, solar panel installations, and much more. Please keep those requests coming to our WCHOA Board (our three Directors) so your requests will be handled promptly and efficiently. We enjoy your requests since the right result adds value to your property and the overall health and prosperity of the neighborhood. Be sure you comply with all the city and/or county requirements before, during and after completion.

Tax bills have been delivered and it's a bit of a shock to see assessments which may have doubled within the last decade. If you have questions, please contact the Tax Office (as listed on your notice) if you wish to inquire about any aspect of the assessment or appeal the amount. You may qualify for special consideration.

We get this question from time to time: How can I be a good neighbor? We have an item on this subject in this Newsletter so be sure to see what it takes to qualify. We're thinking of running a Good Neighbor contest (probably best defined as "my ideal neighbor") in conjunction with the Holiday Display Contest. We have great neighbors and each one is very different. One is very quiet; one loves to have rambunctious football parties; one loves to work on custom cars.

The November election in the City of San Marcos is over and we have Willow Creek neighbor Saul Gonzales reconfirmed in Place 2 and a new council member Maxfield Baker in Place 1. City Council members serve "at large" and are all accountable to you. You can contact any or all of them at sanmarcostx.gov. Normally, the City Council meets on the first and third Tuesdays each month at 6:00 pm. If you cannot attend, live feeds are available. Or you can watch the video at your leisure at a more convenient time. Have something to say? Sign-up sheets are available the day of the meetings to make

your comments within a 3-minute time period. Or you may submit written comments which will be included in the City Council member packets. If you decide to make comments at the meeting, you must preface your remarks with your name and address.

One thing I've noticed lately from members of City Council is that there appears to be growing support for a "senior citizen" discount or "special rate for seniors" on property taxes. That is an item that I'm interested in pursuing.

As we prepare for the holidays please keep a few things in mind: Scammers are everywhere—be alert, be prepared and most importantly—be suspicious! I had an awkward experience recently at our local HEB. A person was making a plea for money to her "friends/relatives" on her cell phone. Her conversation was purposefully loud enough to hear within 10 to 15 feet. I had a sympathetic ear and then realized she was following people in the store (including me) repeating the same pitch over and over. My nature is to help people out and it was uncomfortable having someone "tracking" me as if I were a doomed critter for a bobcat lunch. So be aware of your surroundings and stay tuned to what's happening around you. A casual "passer-by" might have fallen for her pitch. Needy individuals can always be referred to the local food bank for groceries or some of the local agencies if other items are needed. Families in need of toys for Christmas can apply for the Blue or Brown Santa programs. Want to make sure that someone gets the help he/she really needs? You can help many of the local organizations through donations of food, money or time.



Check out our latest special!
512-392-0022
San Marcos - Kyle - Buda

~ Becky Dobbins, Your WCHOA President

Happy Holidays

Holiday Display Contest

Yes, that time of year is almost here again. Themes and lights are enjoyed by all who drive through our neighborhoods and we want to encourage all of you to participate. We have a new twist this year for the holiday contest—no categories. We will award five prizes for the most notable displays—\$25 gift cards. Judges will be members of your WCHOA Board. Judging starts December 16 and ends on the 19th. We'll post winners on our new website so each of you can stop by the winning entries before December 25th. Many of our residents take down their displays on "Boxing Day" (December 26th) so we want you have a chance to look at the winners.

We would love to have one or more volunteer photographers to help us get some great pics of the winning displays. Please contact us at wchoa99@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer to help.

Being a Good Neighbor

Not too long ago, the City of San Marcos posted suggestions on how to be a good neighbor. Since the suggestions apply to both city and county areas in any community, we will share some of them:

- 1) Be respectful and considerate. A smile and a wave can go a long way in maintaining friendly relationships.
- 2) Maintain your curb appeal by keeping the grass at a reasonable height, picking up trash in the yard and bringing in those trash/recycle/compost cans promptly once pick-ups are completed.
- 3) Be mindful of your pets since some people are not critter lovers. Keep your dog on a leash and most importantly pick up any "poop" that your dog leaves behind. Do not throw it onto your neighbor's yard or onto a vacant lot since those vacant lots are owned by your neighbors!

- 4) Be aware of noise levels. Try to minimize loud or disruptive behavior before 9 am or after 9 pm. There are noise exceptions during the World Series or the Super Bowl. That's to be expected!
- 5) Please do not start chain saws, tractor mowers and similar equipment early in the morning or operate them late at night.
- 6) Be mindful of your HOA requirements, or city/county restrictions. If your HOA says no chickens or horses? That's what it means—no chickens nor horses!
- 7) If there is a dispute between neighbors, it's best to work it out face to face if safe to do so.
- 8) And if your neighbor needs help? Lend a helping hand if you can do so. We live in a great community and you can be a good neighbor by helping each other. One example is to put out/remove trash cans if someone is homebound or on vacation.



WCHOA Website

Hope everyone has had a chance to check out our new WCHOA website that we brought up in September. The new map is awesome. You can click on an area (each of the 15 sections has a different color) and you will pull up the deed restrictions for that section. Keep in mind that Willow Creek was developed over a 30-year period and each section has a separate set of deed restrictions—so your neighbor may have different restrictions than you do. Our goal was to provide as much useful information as possible and to make it easy for you to contact us and submit information to us.

In addition to a lot of information about Willow Creek, there are many things that you can do on the website and a few of the most popular items are: get in touch with us with your questions; pay dues online; request architectural approval; report lost and found items; report restriction violations; submit calendar events, submit photos, etc. We welcome your input and hope that you will send us information to add to our events calendar and neighborhood photos to display in our gallery. Additionally, there is information about the sections that have mandatory dues, i.e., “*The Ridge HOA*” and “*The Ridge II HOA*” so residents of those areas can see the additional requirements for these properties.

In case you are wondering, the beautiful Texas Hill Country picture on our home page was taken on Summit Ridge Drive looking across Purgatory Creek. Giving credit where credit is due, we want to



thank Melissa Jewett (a Willow Creek resident and former board member) and Terra Rivers (Melissa’s assistant) for partnering with us to build such a beautiful and extremely functional website.

We sell ads to local businesses in our area to cover the website and newsletter expenses. Most of our current advertisers have been with us since we began selling ads. We certainly appreciate their support and hope that even more of our neighbors will utilize their services and/or products. The ad revenue allows us to keep our dues at the \$20 per calendar year rate. If you or someone you know is interested in advertising with WCHOA, please contact Carol at wchoa99@gmail.com. Our ad rates are quite reasonable.

Food Banks of Hays County

There are numerous food drives going on throughout Hays County to prepare for the holidays. The food banks will usually let you know on their websites or through emails what type of foodstuffs they need. Oftentimes HEB knows exactly what’s needed and you can ask store personnel for advice. When

in doubt, call the food bank and ask before you purchase items. You'll often be surprised about what's needed so it's always best to find out first. Let your grocery store know you are purchasing items for a food bank—you might get a discount!

Roofing Signs

We've noticed a plethora of roofing signs still posted in yards. Please remove them if your commitment is completed. If your favorite roofer is interested in advertising in our area, encourage them to contact Carol at wchoa99@gmail.com to place an ad on our website or in our newsletter. Everyone can benefit that way!

Architectural Control Board

Here's a gentle reminder: Several of you are doing great things to your property by removing aging structures and installing new fences, patios, back deck areas and even refurbishing pools/pool areas. This adds aesthetic value and we are delighted! Many of you are installing solar panels too. We really appreciate "upgrades" to the neighborhood since it adds beauty to Willow Creek Estates! Be sure to contact the Architectural Control Board **in advance** so they can help you if needed. Generally, you'll receive a notice stating: "It has been brought to our attention that some 'construction' activity is occurring on your property." As you may or may not know, any exterior changes or alterations are to be submitted to the Architectural Control committee for review and approval. This is done so that the quality of the neighborhood can be maintained.

And on behalf of the Architectural committee, we request that you submit to us a description of the work that is being done. If new structures are being erected, please provide a drawing or other document noting the scope of the project. Architectural committee member(s) will be happy to

meet with you if that would be more convenient. The WCHOA Directors (Gordy Love, Marianne Moore and Fred Davis) comprise this committee. All three are eager to assist.

Subscribe & Receive Our Email Updates

If you are not currently receiving our email communications (neighborhood alerts, informational updates, lost & found), a quick and simple way to start receiving them is to send an email to wchoa99@gmail.com and ask to be added to our email distribution list. Be sure to include your name and street address along with your email address. Also, we are happy to add additional family members to our distribution list – just send us their name and email address.

Cold Weather Blast

Yes, winter is here after a very short fall season. Neither domestic pets nor plants like the winter freeze. Here are some tips on how to help them survive:

- 1) Bring your domestic pets inside if they do not have weather-protected shelters with heating elements. We use cat pods which get toasty in cold weather and we often have visiting cats use them.
- 2) Do not give your domestic pets frozen water or expect them to lick ice. The same is true for your potted outdoor plants. Icy water is not the best option nor is hot water. Use tepid water if possible.



- 3) Wrap your plants with sheets or towels or bring your plants inside if possible. Note that if you have your heater at full blast indoors your outdoor potted plants probably won't like that either. It's all about moderate conditions—for plants and domestic pets.
- 4) Some people place Christmas lights on plants to help keep them warm. We've tried that and it didn't work for us, but it might work for you. If you cannot bring your potted plants inside, move them as close as possible to the house.
- 5) And don't forget what happens if your pipes freeze! You must prevent that from happening so contact your favorite local plumber for advice on how to avoid frozen pipes.

Stay Informed

Please sign up for official emergency alerts in our neighborhood—you can receive them by text, email or phone. Visit warncentraltexas.org and sign up today! It's a very good warning system for Hays (and a few other) counties.

Our Sponsors:

We want to acknowledge our great WCHOA sponsors and partners who support us by advertising with us or sponsoring events. All are locally owned businesses located in southwest San Marcos. They all say they enjoy working with the great folks in Willow Creek Estates. Their support provides partial funding for our WCHOA sponsored events, maintaining/upgrading our website, and distribution of newsletters. So please consider supporting these local businesses whenever possible.

Our current sponsors/partners:

- [San Marcos Window Washing](#)
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