

# The Village Gazette



Volume 5, Issue 8  
Village Creek Community Association

August 2008

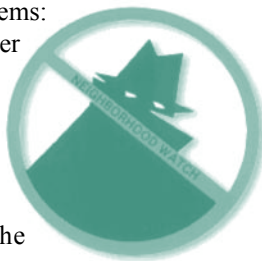
## 4th of July Parade Winners



## Neighborhood Watch Update

I want to thank each you for stepping forward and volunteering as a Block Captain as we attempt to get our program off the ground. We have much to do including the following items:

1. Sign-up Block Captains for the Remainder of Street in Village Creek
2. Sign-up Our Neighbors to Participate in the Program
3. Organize Our Neighborhood Night Out Programs to Facilitate items 1 & 2
4. Involve the Constable's Office in the Organization of Our Program



I would like to meet with you for about an hour on the morning of Saturday, August 2nd at 9:00 AM at the pool clubhouse before the pool opens. We will discuss the above items. Then we will go over the attached checklist and schedule a follow-up meeting to assign committee responsibilities. Marilyn Kilmer will forward to an example of a street template that we will want to create for each street in Village Creek. Please review it prior to the meeting.

Again, my thanks to you for the pride you take in our neighborhood.

Mike Preiser

## BACK TO SCHOOL

Classes begin August 25 for Tomball ISD. Check out their website, [www.tomballisd.net](http://www.tomballisd.net), for things you need to know to be prepared for the new school year.

## Just so you know...

The current posted pool rules also apply to the splash pad. Please take care to follow them. These rules include no pets at the splash pad – we don't want messes being left in the surrounding grass then tracked onto the new play area.

Also, in regards to rules, please show the lifeguards the same respect you'd like to receive from them. They have been hired to protect our safety in the pool area, and hold the authority to ask someone to leave if they feel the rules are not being followed or someone's safety is in jeopardy. Residents causing problems face losing their pool privileges due to non-compliance.

The HOA has ordered a canopy cover for the observation deck of the splash pad, but it won't be installed until near the end of the season. We have also ordered a new card key access system to be installed at the splash pad gate. Until it is received and installed, we ask residents to enter through the main pool gate entrance.

**Pool/Splash Pad Guest Policy:** Residents are allowed one (1) guest per household family member. Example a family of four (4) may bring four (4) guests.



# The Village Gazette

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS or 911

CenterPoint-Gas Leak.....	713-659-3552
Constables Office.....	281-376-3472
www.cd4.hctx.net	
Klein Fire Dept. ....	281-376-4449
Poison Control Center.....	800-764-7661
Willowbrook Methodist.....	281-477-1000

### SCHOOLS

Tomball ISD .....	281-357-3100
www.tomballisd.net	
Willow Creek Elem (K-4).....	281-357-3080
Northpointe Int (5-6).....	281-357-3020
Willow Wood Jr (7-8) .....	281-357-3030
Tomball High (9-12).....	281-357-3220
Transportation .....	281-357-3193

### HOA MGMT

Chaparral Management Company .....	281-537-0957
Ms. Tally Jenkins .....	tallyj@chaparralmanagement.com
Fax .....	281-537-0312

6630 Cypresswood Drive, Suite 100  
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### SERVICES

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Harris County Animal Control.....	281-999-3191
Houston Chronicle .....	713-220-7211
Greater Houston Pool.....	713-771-7665
Municipal District Services (24 hrs).....	281-290-6500
Reliant-Street lights.....	713-923-3213
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Sex Offenders.....	www.familywatchdog.us
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Trash pickup Tues/Fri	
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Yard Stork .....	kpuente@garygreene.com

### NEWSLETTER

Editor.....	skstengle@sbcglobal.net
(Deadline is the 10 <sup>th</sup> of each month)	
Publisher - Peel, Inc. ....	512-989-8905
Advertising.....	advertising@PEELinc.com, 888-687-6444

### RESIDENT BOARD MEMBERS

Scott Porto.....	scott@myvillagecreek.net
Diana Christopher .....	diana@myvillagecreek.net
Don Rumsey.....	don@myvillagecreek.net
Mike Preiser .....	mike@myvillagecreek.net
.....poolcards@ myvillagecreek.net	

## Yard of the Month

*Congratulations to Steven and Sue Nielson  
of 12430 Morning Rain for being chosen as  
July's Yard of the Month.*

### Criteria for Yard of the Month Recipients

#### Rules

- \*Yard of the Month will be awarded during the months of April-Sept.
- \*One (1) home will be selected during each month.
- \*Winner must be willing to have photos of the yard taken and published in the newsletter.
- \*Winners will be selected based on the attractiveness, maintenance, beautification, originality and creativity of their landscaping.
- \*A home cannot receive an award more than once a year.

#### Awards

- \*Yard sign indicating the selection of the winning home will be placed in the front yard of the recipients of the month.
- \*A gift certificate from a local nursery will be presented to each winner from the Landscape Committee.

#### Winners

- \*All winners must be in good standing.

#### Judging Criteria

- \*General upkeep of the yard (well manicured grass, edged, uniformly green and generally weed free).
- \*Bushes and shrubbery are neatly pruned and show good color.
- \*Unique landscaping or originality/creativity.
- \*Pleasant and overall appearance which makes the property an asset to the community.

#### Reporting

- \*The Landscape Committee will advise the Board of the Yard of the Month selection prior to notifying the homeowner/resident.

## Advertising Information

Please support the business that advertise in the Village Creek newsletter. Their advertising dollars make it possible for all residents to receive a newsletter each month at no charge. No homeowners association funds are used to produce or mail the newsletters. If you would like to support the newsletter by advertising, please contact Peel, Inc. Sales office at 888-687-6444 or advertising@PEELinc.com for ad information and pricing. The deadline for ads is the 10th of each month for the upcoming month's newsletter.

# The Village Gazette

## Carousel of Crafts Craft Bazaar

The 18th annual Carousel of Crafts will be held Friday, October 3rd, and Saturday, October 4th, from 9 am – 5 pm at Cypress Creek Christian Church, 6823 Cypresswood Drive.

This robust event features unique booths showcasing home decor, stained glass and wood art, clothing, jewelry, candles, gourmet foods, adult's and children's gifts, and much more.

For your pleasure, a light lunch menu will be offered each day. Visit our Bake Shoppe for homemade desserts and our famous Cran-Tea.

This show benefits the Christian Womens' Ministry which includes Boys and Girls Country, NAM, CAM, Youth Mission, NAM's Children's Clinic, Disciples' Quadrennial, The Bridges, and Bridges' Sumnler Program, Star of Hope, and Women Helping Women.

## HOA Meetings

The Home Owners Association (HOA) meets the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. to discuss general business and special concerns. The meetings are held at the Fairwood club house, located at 14701 Spring Cypress. All residents are encouraged to attend.

## Personal Classifieds

**For sale:** Lovely antique (1957) Mahogany bedroom suite. Includes double bed, dresser, large mirror, chest of drawers, night stand and mattress. Excellent condition. \$825. Call 281-374-7834 and leave message or email pbarriga@earthlink.net.

**Pet Looking for a home:** Good, loving home needed for Maggie, and full-blooded, papered Coker Spaniel. She is white with blonde freckles, is potty trained and very sweet. She is 2 years old and up-to-date on all shots. Please Call Renee at 281-513-3872.

*Don't want to wait for the mail?*

View the current issue of the Village Creek Community Newsletter on the 1st day of each month online at [www.PEELinc.com](http://www.PEELinc.com)

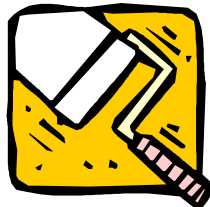
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# The Village Gazette

## IT'S YOUR MONEY - Give Your Finances a Clean Sweep

by Rich Keith

(NAPS)—Anytime of year can be the right time to get your home office organized—and while you're at it, your finances too. Here are some tips:

- **Take out the garbage.** Start with your desk top—not the one on your computer, the real one. If your desk is covered in paperwork, weed out what's important and store key documents in a central place. This could be a good time to dust off your credit report as well. If you are the victim of identity theft, one of the first places it can show up is on your credit report. Even though new legislation entitles you to one free report each year, it's estimated that only 10 percent of consumers are taking advantage of it. According to Money Magazine, 33 percent of those who did get a report found errors. To request a copy, visit [annual.credireport.com](http://annual.credireport.com) or contact one of the major credit bureaus: Equifax, Experian or TransUnion.
- **Make everything within reach.** When organizing your office, it's important to keep frequently used items close at hand. The same applies to your financial goals. Set goals you can reach. For example, start your retirement fund by putting a set amount every month into an Individual Retirement Account (IRA).
- **Have a backup plan for files and finances.** If you have important documents stored on your computer, back them up onto CDs once a month and store them in a fireproof safe. When it comes to financial backup, create an emergency fund of at least three months salary. Also, update your life insurance policy. Newsweek recently stated that for a married couple with two children, it is advisable to have life insurance protection that equals eight times your annual income. And while you're at it make sure your will is current.
- **Shred it and forget it.** If you don't have a paper shredder, get one. Shred old quarterly statements on investments once you have the annual statements. Also, shredding anything you don't need that contains your Social Security number or birth date can be your first line of defense against identity theft. One easy way to eliminate clutter in your home office may be to sign up for online banking and cut down on the need for paper statements.
- **Make it automatic.** One easy way to eliminate clutter may be to sign up for online banking and cut down on the need for paper statements. Plus, you can set up monthly withdrawals from your checking account that are deposited into an IRA—starting with as little as \$25 a month.

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# The Village Gazette

## August Landscaping

*Submitted by Ron Kerwin*

August is a great month to stay inside and make your plans for this fall's plantings. Browse the catalogs for ideas and bulbs to order now to plant in November and December for next spring's display. If you are going to work in the lawn or garden, plan it around the early morning or evening in the cooler hours. Drink plenty of water to keep from dehydrating.

The July heat may have already taken its toll on your annuals. If they are beyond help, pull them out and replace them with more heat tolerant varieties. If they are okay but overgrown, you can trim back your annuals and perennials by 1/3 to 1/2 to get better flowering in the fall. You can also trim off the dead or damaged canes and the errant chutes from your roses to enhance the fall blooms. Fertilize your roses right after you prune, as this application is very important. Do NOT trim flowering shrubs, like Indian Hawthorns, after July or you will probably trim off the buds (look like berries) that would provide the flowers next year. Rework your beds to prepare them for fall plantings of flowers or vegetables. Bury in the compost materials and add the mulch on top. They will be ready for planting when it is time. You can fertilize your lawns this month with a 3-1-2 ratio 50% slow release nitrogen fertilizer. This is a good fertilizer for your shrubs and flowerbeds too.

The heat stresses all our lawns, shrubs etc. We will probably not get much rain so we will have to water with irrigation systems or drag around sprinklers to keep everything from burning up. 1 inch of water per week should be enough. Do not water in mid-day, as most of it will simply evaporate prior to getting into the ground. Irrigate in the early morning if possible. Water deeply, not frequently. Watering in the evening can lead to plant diseases. Maintain the water in the soil of your beds more effectively by having a good thick layer of mulch. Most every month I comment on the benefits of thick mulch but it is a topic worth repeating, as its benefits are many.

If your property is in need of new sod, it can be put in now with no problems as long as you water it properly. With new sod, you do not have to suffer with mud in the fall and winter.

## Pearl Fincher Museum Day Trip to MFAH

The Pearl Fincher Museum of Fine Arts is offering northwest residents a bus excursion to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston on Friday, September 26, 2008. The MFAH will be exhibiting "In the Forest of Fontainebleau: Painters and Photographers from Corot to Monet:" as well as several other interesting exhibits.

The bus leaves the parking lot behind the Cypress Creek Christian Church/Barbara Bush Library at 6815 Cypresswood Drive promptly at 9 AM. Bus riders must be age 50 or older.

A minimum non-refundable donation of \$5 to the Pearl Fincher MFA will reserve your seat on the bus. Make your bus reservation by contacting Judi Redilla at jredilla@sbcglobal.net (281-469-3434) or Ethel Petropoulos (281-528-8846).

## Cypress Christian School Athletic Accomplishments

Shanay Briscoe, a junior at Cypress Christian School, competed in the U. S. Olympic Trials in track and field in Eugene, Oregon on June 30. She qualified for the Olympic Trials after clearing 6' 1 1/4" in the Southwest Track and Field Meet in New Mexico recently.

Eighth-grade students Allie Aimone, Lizzie Hilton, and Jacob Hicks received the middle-school Sword and Shield Award for exemplifying excellence in Athletics, Leadership, Determination, Sportsmanship, Christian Character, Academic Achievement, and Integrity.

Seniors Allie Borkovich, Holt Van Pelt, and Michelle Van Rieg received the Valiant Warrior award for exemplifying excellence in Athletics, Leadership, Determination, Sportsmanship, Christian Character, Academic Achievement, and Integrity.

## Vacation Watch Program

Take advantage of the Constable's vacation watch when you are out of town. Before leaving call the Constable's office and let them know when you will be leaving and when you will be returning. Your home will be checked during the Constable's regular neighborhood drive-through. To contact the Constable's Office, call 281-376-3472

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# **Today!**



## Natural Watch Dog

*Submitted by Luis Escobar*

I spoke with a man yesterday who has a "great watchdog". His dog lets him know when his neighbor is outside, when the kids down the street come home from school or are outside playing, when there is a squirrel on the lawn, when the mail arrives, when the neighbors get a UPS delivery, when a bird lands, a cat is out, when someone walks their dog, and on and on. WOW was I impressed. I couldn't help wondering how many times this guy was getting up to check on these alerts from his dog. I'm guessing a lot as he knew exactly what his dog was barking at. I got tired just thinking about having to check on all that activity.

I almost asked him how he would know if there was something that really needed his attention. To my thinking this wasn't a watch dog, but a nuisance barker. Can dogs learn the difference? Thankfully the answer is YES! Rover can learn to distinguish the difference, as long as we know the difference.

Rover is not a barker. I wish I could say that about the other dogs in our neighborhood. There are two yorkies behind us who go ballistic when anyone walks by. There is Rover's friend Emma the mixed up mutt next door who tries to tell the yorkies to shut up. There's Charlie the lab down the street who barks at every dog that walks by his house. You can follow us around the block, just by listening to the barking.

These dogs are all barking inappropriately. In other words this is nuisance barking. Birds, squirrels, leaves, cats, lizards or other dogs and people are not things we need Rover telling us about. Fires, someone breaking in, or unexpected things are what we want to be notified about.

As I said, Rover is not a barker. He'll look towards the sound of other dogs barking but he doesn't join in. The times he did join in we corrected him. We consistently let him know that we didn't need to know if the Yorkies saw someone or even if he saw someone. It was none of his business, but if he wanted to watch he could do so quietly. Now he basically ignores the cacophony of the "watch dogs". But he will alert us to unusual events.

One night I was having trouble sleeping and got up and went outside in the middle of the night. Rover didn't hear me go out but he did hear me come back in. He gave a couple of warning barks and started growling when he heard the front door open. The door opening in the middle of the night was unusual. He woke Cathy, alerting her to my sneaking back in. Even though he ratted me out he still got lots of praise for raising the alarm.

Dogs will naturally alert you to the things out of the ordinary. They WILL warn about unusual events, even if they are corrected for barking at the wrong things.

If Rover is a nuisance barker the chances are that over time we'll just tune him out. It's like the boy who cried wolf. When the wolf really comes we won't believe him.

Nuisance barking CAN be corrected but it's important to address the cause(s) and not just the symptom(s). Dogs bark for various reasons such as calling the pack, trying to scare someone or something, because they are afraid, or because they're bored. It's often stressful

*(Continued on Page 9)*

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### WORK OUT CHRONIC FATIGUE

Chronic fatigue is more than just feeling tired all the time. For those who suffer from this mysterious syndrome, it can be a constant battle simply to get out of bed in the morning. Symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) include unexplained fatigue lasting 30 days or more; flu-like symptoms such as a sore throat, generalized muscle pains, head-aches and swollen lymph nodes; difficulty concentrating and sensitivity to bright light. CFS was dubbed the yuppie flu in the '80s and, despite the fact that it has been recognized as a legitimate, often debilitating illness, it is still met with scorn and disbelief.

There is no cure for CFS. For some people, it simply goes away, while others are debilitated by it for many years. Because the cause is largely unexplainable, treatment for CFS focuses primarily on relieving symptoms.

#### **LOW BLOOD PRESSURE CAN BRING YOU DOWN**

One of the latest theories proposed to explain CFS is that individuals who suffer from this condition also may have extremely low blood pressure. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University found that 22 of 23 CFS patients also had a disorder called neurally mediated hypotension (NMH). People with NMH get dizzy from standing up too quickly or from standing for extended periods of time, signaling that not enough blood is reaching the brain. When treated for NMH for six months (either with medication or by increasing salt and fluid intake), nine of the 22 CFS patients said that all or nearly all of their CFS

symptoms had disappeared; another seven said that their symptoms had improved.

#### **A NOVEL APPROACH**

But what about those who have normal blood pressure, but still fight persistent fatigue? Here's an interesting proposition: Is it possible to treat chronic fatigue with exercise?



Some researchers think so. A recent review of existing research on CFS explored the possibility of using physical activity programs to treat this puzzling condition. The findings are intriguing, if not conclusive.

Many people with CFS claim that they are too tired to exercise. Measurements of strength, exercise capacity and muscle function, however, suggest that CFS patients are not much weaker than the controls (people without CFS) they are compared to in research studies. This suggests that their capacity to exercise is greater than they may perceive. But telling someone who feels unable to get out of bed to exercise is probably an exercise in futility.

#### **EXERCISE FOR ENERGY**

Still, physicians such as Dr. Neil Gordon, author of *Chronic Fatigue: Your Complete Exercise Guide*, view exercise as a form of medication and an integral part of rehabilitation from CFS. Exercise programs for people with CFS are not much different than any other comprehensive exercise program: Cardiovascular, strengthening and range-of-motion training should all be addressed. The primary difference is the pace and degree of progression: CFS patients need time to build their strength and adapt to the increased demands of exercise. And, as with any other physical condition, CFS patients should consult with their physicians before beginning an exercise program.

#### **EXERCISE YOUR OPTIONS**

People with CFS feel limited by their condition to enjoy the benefits of an active life. But as anyone who exercises will tell you, expending energy brings about increased energy in return. The same may hold true for individuals who are plagued by the unexplained tiredness of CFS.

**ACE**  
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*Reprinted with permission from the  
American Council on Exercise*



# The Village Gazette

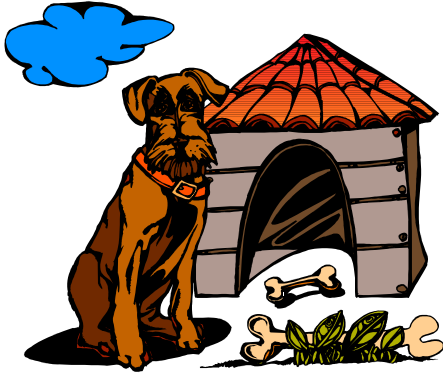
## Natural Watch Dog - (Continued from Page 7)

not only to us and our neighbors, but to the dogs as well. This is especially true with issues of separation anxiety.

Do you have a neighbor whose dog is creating a nuisance with his constant barking? How you approach this might be difficult. You might ask if their dog is ok because it seems to be upset a lot. If it only barks when the owners aren't home they might not even know it's barking. Ask about the dog with concern instead of confrontation and you may have a better chance of getting the owner to understand there's a problem.

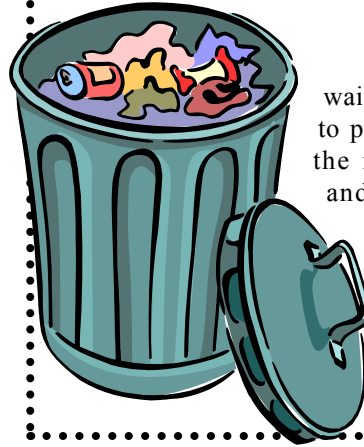
Once the inappropriate barking is under control you'll have a natural watchdog. One who alerts you to something out of the ordinary, and one who's warning you can trust. Once we can trust Rover's warning we'll know when we have to really check on things and it won't be because the kids down the street are outside playing. The results?

Happy Dogs = Happy Families and Happy Neighbors.



## Trash

If at all possible, please wait until the morning of trash day to put out your trash. Putting it out the night before attracts animals and pests who are not welcome guests! Also, take care to secure loose trash items, as they can easily blow away. Thanks for making every effort to ensure the cleanliness and beautiful appearance of Village Creek!



## Deed Restriction Reminder:

Village Creek deed restrictions prohibit residents from operating a business from their residential home. Selling items from your personal business, such as overstock and clearance items, are in violation of the deed restrictions.

## VILLAGE CREEK REAL ESTATE MARKET REPORT

Data from Houston MLS – 7/08/2008

# of Active Listings: 22

Price Range: \$169,000 - \$339,500

Avg. # Days on Market: 136

Avg. \$/sq. ft: \$77.78

Highest \$/sq. ft: \$101.61

Lowest \$/sq. ft: \$64.97

# of Pending Sales: 7

Price Range: \$174,900 - \$275,000

Avg. # Days on Market: 94

Avg. \$/sq. ft: \$76.21

Highest \$/sq. ft: \$85.03

Lowest \$/sq. ft: \$66.94

YTD Sales: 13

Price Range: \$170,000 - \$335,000

Avg. # Days on Market: 163

Avg. \$/sq. ft: \$74.75

Highest \$/sq. ft: \$101.30

Lowest \$/sq. ft: \$52.07

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# Village Creek Market Report

Courtesy of "DAVID FLORY"

This market information report is provided to keep you informed of resale market activity in your subdivision.

	Jan 08	Feb 08	Mar 08	Apr 08	May 08	Jun 08
\$350,000 +	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$300,000 - 349,999	0	0	0	0	0	1
\$250,000 - 299,999	0	1	2	1	0	1
\$200,000 - 249,999	3	0	0	0	0	1
\$160,000 - 199,999	0	0	1	0	1	0
\$160,000 -	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Highest \$/Sq Ft</b>	<b>69.97</b>	<b>76.25</b>	<b>101.30</b>	<b>81.97</b>	<b>63.15</b>	<b>88.58</b>

This chart represents the homes that have sold and closed in the past 6 months according the Houston Multiple Listing Service.

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Realtor Teams per Remax 9/2007

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## Family Volunteering: Doing Good Together

*Submitted by Wendi Baird*

During a recent camping trip, my children were shocked to see the amount of trash left along the river bank following a long holiday weekend. "Didn't the people see the empty trash cans," asked my daughter with all the childlike wisdom of an eight year old. As we looked downstream, we noticed a lone Park Ranger walking along the banks with a trash bag picking up all the empty cans and other garbage left behind by the holiday revelers.

I saw the light bulbs go off simultaneously in my kids' minds ... "Mom, can we go back to our camper and get some trash bags to help, too?" To be honest, my first thought as a mom was that I didn't want my children touching all that germ-infested garbage. But then I realized what a great learning opportunity this could be. Here was a problem, and it was one that we could work together as a family to remedy. So after walking along the river banks, filling up two trash bags with garbage, we finally caught up to the Park Ranger downstream. Although he was very appreciative of the help, he was quite surprised by our efforts. "You shouldn't have to do this," he said. "It isn't your trash or your responsibility to pick it up".

I don't know what was more disappointing that morning – the fact that this beautiful park was strewn with garbage (while empty trash cans sit in plain site) or the surprise shown by the Park Ranger that someone would voluntarily help pick up the garbage.

It seems that the phrase "That's not in my job description" has become a common mantra today. I firmly believe that one way to combat the selfish and materialistic attitudes prevalent in our society is through Family Volunteering. It's one thing to tell our children that we need to help others. But actually doing volunteer projects together as a family instills life lessons that won't be readily abandoned later in life.

According to the website [www.DoingGoodTogether.org](http://www.DoingGoodTogether.org), family volunteering "is a hands-on way to teach children the values of kindness, compassion, tolerance, community responsibility and good citizenship." The website is full of ideas for family volunteer projects. One of my favorites is one that even the youngest children can do. Create a "Giving Box" from an old coffee can or shoe box. Let your children decorate it and then place it in a prominent location in your home. Encourage your children to fill it with any loose change they find. Then as the Holiday Season approaches, let your children help choose where the money will be donated. For example, they could use the money to buy a toy to donate to Blue Santa or to buy canned goods to donate to the local food pantry.

Our children still talk about that family experience of picking up trash along the Frio River. It was gratifying to all of us to see how clean the riverbank looked after spending just a few minutes helping that lone park ranger. But, more importantly, it reinforced to us as parents that it's one thing to teach your children something, but the impact is far greater when you show them!

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## The Green Corner

*Submitted by Sheri Hicks*

### Green Up Your Everyday Cleaning

When I began going green, I started with the chemicals under my sink. I had already deduced by the chemical components, the ingredient list and the disposal warnings - they couldn't be good for the planet. What I didn't know is that despite heavy marketing claims that these products were not only safe but necessary to keep my home beautiful and healthy, they were actually causing far more harm than good.

I was shocked to find, during my research, that the EPA estimates indoor air pollution is up to five times greater than outdoor air pollution in part due to common household cleaners, aerosols, air fresheners, disinfectants, and even dry-cleaned clothing (solvent emissions). Recent studies also show a link between common household cleaners and asthma, the number one childhood chronic illness. The reason for this is that the chemical compounds in these products, when used and even while stored, emit harmful gasses that can cause eye, nose and throat irritation and respiratory issues. They are also linked to headaches, loss of coordination, nausea and liver, kidney and central nervous system damage. In some cases, they have been known to cause cancer in laboratory animals and humans and are suspected in links to neurological issues including ADHD and Parkinson's disease.

You don't have to compromise between the health and safety of your family and a clean environment. Below are my top five green cleaning solutions. Not only are they non-toxic and as effective as commercial cleaners but all of them are significantly less expensive than their commercial counterpart, something I appreciate in the midst of today's rapidly rising gas and grocery prices.

1. Baking soda is a very low cost yet extremely versatile foundation to green cleaning. Among other things, it can be used as a deodorizer, a stain remover, and a mild abrasive that can be used on porcelain bath and sink fixtures and stovetops. I once removed permanent marker from my coffee table by scrubbing with baking soda and a damp cloth.
2. Vinegar acts as a mild disinfectant and often boosts the power of baking soda. Nothing, not even Mr. Clean's Magic Eraser, can compete with the combined power of vinegar and baking soda on baked on food. Use to clean toilets, floors, windows and stove tops. Sprinkle baking soda into a slow drain and follow with vinegar, the reaction will help loosen clogs and open drains.
3. Pure Essential Oils are good substitutes for synthetic fragrances. Sprinkle your favorite essential oil (my favorites are lavender, peppermint and lemon) in a bowl of water to sit on the counter, sprinkle in closets, vacuum bags or vehicle

carpets for a safe air freshener. Be careful, essential oils are toxic to cats if applied directly to their fur.

4. Grain alcohol with high alcohol content is an effective disinfectant or even window cleaner to replace the harsher ammonia-based window cleaners or petroleum-based disinfectants. It can also be used in the occasional after cleaning cocktail! As with all alcohol products, keep out of reach of children.
5. Lemon juice is a natural stain remover and laundry brightener; a safe alternative to bleach. I recently removed a black grease stain from a pair of white pants with the power of pure lemon juice. It can also be mixed with vinegar to make a powerful disinfectant that can be used in the kitchen, in the bathroom, on floors and anywhere else germs may be lurking.

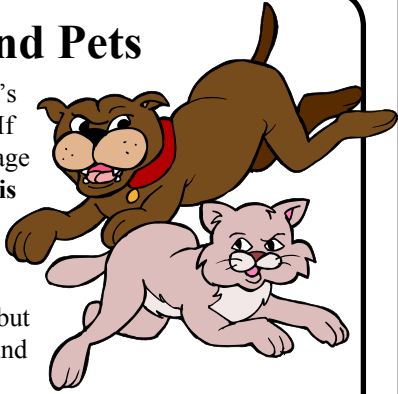
If you shy away from making your own cleaning products, there are now many safe non-toxic alternatives available on market shelves. My favorite for non-toxic dish soap (both liquid and automatic dishwasher soap), laundry soaps and softeners are made by Seventh Generation but there are other good products such as Mrs. Meyers and Planet. For an even bigger boost to the environment, use cloth rags that can be washed with the laundry instead of disposable products such as wipes or paper towels.



# The Village Gazette

## Lost and Found Pets

Have you found someone's pet? Have you lost your pet? If your answer is yes, we encourage all residents to please call **Harris County Animal Control at 281-999-3191**. The HOA offers their sympathy when one has misplaced a cat or dog, but please do not report lost or found pets to HOA Board Members.



## Pet Owners

Pet owners; please keep your pets on leashes when walking in the neighborhood, as a courtesy to others. Also, take care to pick up after your pooch if they leave a gift in someone else's yard or in any common area. No one likes to see, smell or step in those gifts!



## Sudoku

The challenge is to fill every row across, every column down, and every 3x3 box with the digits 1 through 9. Each 1 through 9 digit must appear only once in each row across, each column down, and each 3x3 box.

	5		7		8		9	
				1				
9		6			3			
			2			8		
3	7				5			
					4		1	
7		2						
8	6		5			2		
			1			4		

\*See solution at [PEELinc.com](http://PEELinc.com)

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A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook. The left side shows the black spiral binding. The main body of the notebook is a light blue rectangle. The text "NOT AVAILABLE ON-LINE" is centered in the blue area.

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# Fall Maintenance Tips

*Insure your home's value and help prevent major repairs by implimenting a regular inspection each Fall:*

- Replace the filters in your heating and air conditioning systems
- Remove window air conditioners
- Change the batteries on smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- Inspect the seals on windows and doors
- Inspect joints in ceramic tile and caulk around tub and sink
- Inspect exposed wiring and cords for wear and fraying
- Inspect unvented gas heaters for proper ventilation
- Have your heating and air conditioning systems serviced
- Inspect for and repair any plumbing leaks

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