

Trail Writer

The Official Publication of the
Winchester Trails
Maintenance Assoc. Social Committee

Volume 6, Issue 2
www.winchestertrails.com

February 2010

Letter from the Board President

Greetings,

It is hard to believe that the first month of the New Year has already passed. Your Board has been busy as the New Year brings many tasks that need to be planned and considered. We have authorized the rehabilitation of the tennis courts as the courts have needed repairs, and we believe that they could not be expected to be enjoyed by the residents in the condition they were in throughout 2009. We allocated funding to make the necessary repairs during the budget process for 2010. We are also turning our attention to the pool as swimming season is rapidly approaching. We will try to complete any repairs in the offseason to minimize disruptions, but at times we will have problems that arise in the summer. Recently, we had to replace a pump; while we had hoped to repair the pump, it was beyond repair and a replacement was in order.

Early in January, it was brought to the Board's attention of a home that had fallen into disrepair as the owners had moved away and chose not to maintain the yard or the swimming pool. While PCMI conducts regular inspections in the neighborhood, it is very difficult for them to identify every item that might be in violation with the deed restrictions. The inspections are done during different times of the month and on different days, but it is not possible to document all the issues. This is especially true if there is a problem in the backyard behind a fence. We need your help. If there is a problem with a neighboring property or on your street, please let PCMI know by giving them a telephone call. You can also contact a Board member, but the Board will in turn call PCMI. The Board takes its responsibilities with respect to the Deed Restrictions very seriously as these restrictions help to maintain the quality of life we enjoy in the Trails.

There has been quite a bit of activity in the Trails with respect to painting, roof repairs, fence replacement, and other improvements. Please keep in mind that these require an Architectural Review Form that is available on the web site or through PCMI. Finally, there were considerable fireworks activities in the Trails on New Year's Eve. Please be cognizant of your neighbors, as not everyone enjoys the fireworks and they may be trying to sleep. Also, fireworks can frighten pets. Finally, clean up the residuals from the fireworks. Thanks!

Until next month...

Upcoming Events

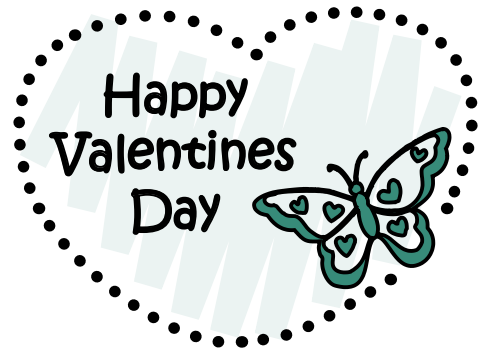
February 2
Groundhog Day

February 3
Maintenance Board Meeting, 7 PM

February 14
Happy Valentine's Day!

February 15
President's Day;
CFISD Student Holiday

February 17
Ash Wednesday



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Holiday in the Trails

What a fun and wonderful holiday event in Winchester Trails! We celebrated the holiday with a visit from Santa, complete with cookies and milk. The very popular hayride was lighted by the beautiful luminaries. We even had snow!



Thanks to all the volunteers that turned our neighborhood into a magical Winter Wonderland (if only for just a night!).



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You may contact Ron Matthews or any Board member with questions on this disclaimer.

Yard of The Month

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Winchester Trails

Welcome to Winchester Trails!

Hailing from Iowa and now calling 10427 Minturn Lane home is the Rangel family. Dad, Anthony, is a chemistry teacher, football and golf coach in CFISD while mom, Christy, is a reading intervention teacher in AISD. Joining them are children Jackson, age 7, and Brooklyn, age 4 as well as the family pet shephard mixes, Riley and Koda.

Winchester Trails Classifieds

Have any items that you need to get rid of but think someone else could use? Have a useful service to offer your neighbors? Why not place an ad in The Trail Writer? Just send the info and a phone to the newsletter editor, and your ad will be run in the newsletter for two issues.

Personal classifieds (one time sell items, such as a used bike...) run at no charge to Winchester residents, limit 30 words, please e-mail articles@PEELinc.com.

Business classifieds (offering a service or product line for profit) are \$50, limit 40 words, please contact Peel, Inc. Sales Office @ 888-687-6444 or advertising@PEELinc.com.

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GREEN THUMB CORNER

February is prime time for getting the yard back into good shape and ready for a new growing season before the warm weather arrives and before the weeds start to take control, and there are already plenty of winter weeds to take care of. A couple of hard freezes this winter may have damaged your patio plants and some of the garden shrubs, so cut off the dead wood and give them chance to recover. By mid-February we should be safe from the danger of any more frosts, so now is the time to complete the winter pruning of trees, evergreens and summer-flowering shrubs to encourage new growth. Don't prune the spring-flowering shrubs - you'll be cutting off potential blooms. Try to plant (or move) trees and shrubs before they start their springtime growth spurt. This is also a favorable month to set cuttings of hardwood shrubs and also to divide, separate and transplant perennials.

Don't forget that Valentine's day is the traditional deadline for rose pruning; cut back to about three or four good canes, knee-high (except climbing varieties). Climbing roses will bloom on last year's growth and you need to maintain lateral canes on a trellis, fence or wall to promote flowering. Select and plant new bare-root roses now (container-grown plants can go in later, if you wish), but don't feed newly planted bushes until after first bloom.

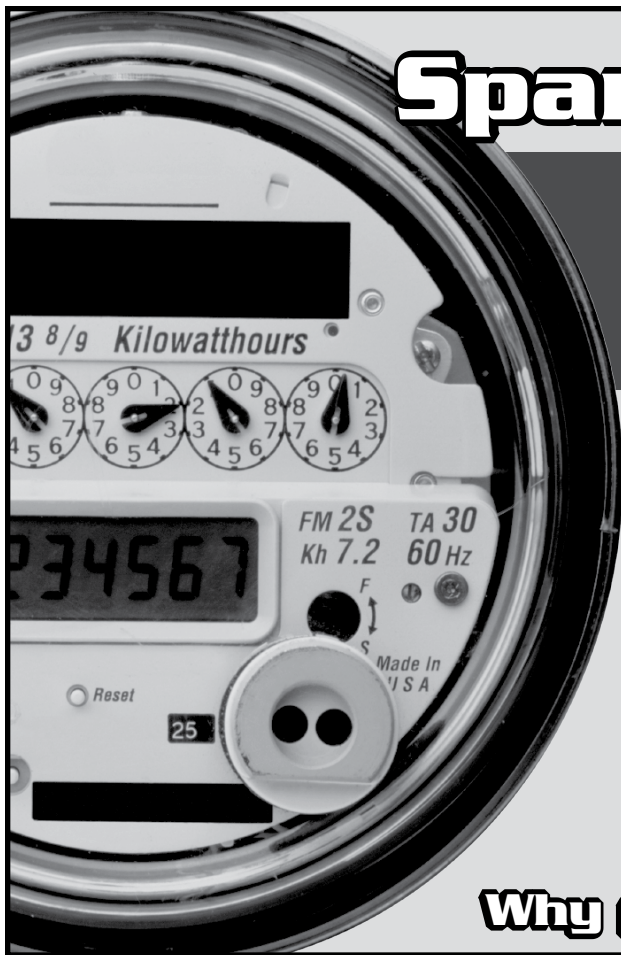
It's not too late to apply dormant oil spray on fruit trees, and it's

a perfect time to clean up, cultivate and mulch all the beds. Do it now, while the weather is pleasantly cool and the task is manageable - leave it too late and you'll find yourself struggling to take care of overgrown weeds in the summer.

Feed trees by using a stake or a length of pipe to drive a series of holes a foot deep and a foot or so apart around the drip line, and apply a small handful of general-purpose fertilizer (such as 12-24-12) in each hole. A good rule of thumb is to apply a total of about one and a half pounds for each inch of trunk diameter. If your pine trees have very pale green or yellowish needles, that's a sign that the soil is too alkaline, and the cure is to include a soil acidifier with the fertilizer (an iron supplement such as "Ironite" serves the purpose very well). Magnolias also need acid soil conditions, so use special azalea/camellia fertilizer or add a soil acidifier.

Hold off feeding the grass until it starts to green-up, and don't feed azaleas until after they bloom, but do go ahead and fertilize evergreen shrubs. In general, wait until March to feed the ornamental shrubs - feeding too early will encourage tender new growth that may be nipped if we are unlucky enough to get a very late frost. Pansies have a hearty appetite and need a balanced fertilizer (13-13-13) every few weeks; remove faded blossoms to encourage new blooms. The pansies

(Continued on page 6)



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Winchester Trails

Green Thumb Corner - (Continued from page 5)

should have another couple of months of useful life but the recent mild winter season has really been too warm for a good display.

Before we get into the heavy grass-cutting season, it's a good idea to sharpen the mower blade and take care of other maintenance activities on the machine. And it's not too late to fill in those low spots in the lawn where someone drove over the grass; use a good weed-free topsoil or sand and don't bury the grass too deep at each application - leave the leaf tips sticking out to encourage it to grow through.

In the vegetable garden, set out plants of the cool-weather varieties (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower) and plant seeds for beets, rutabaga, carrots and potatoes. If you are also thinking of raising a second potato crop in the fall, plan ahead by getting extra seed potatoes now and storing them in the refrigerator. It's usually impossible to buy them in late summer, and regular potatoes from the grocery store may not sprout because they are usually treated with a growth inhibitor.

THIS MONTH'S TIP:

While you're busy pruning those trees and shrubs, remember the rule-of-thumb about not cutting off more than one third of the foliage at any one time (except for crape myrtles, which can tolerate being cut back to almost nothing).

Phil Richards

Prich8935@aol.com

Tomato and Pepper Sale and Expo

AgriLife Extension and the Harris County Master Gardeners will be holding their Tomato and Pepper Sale and Expo on Saturday February 27th, 9am to 2pm at the AgriLife Extension office located at 3033 Bear Creek Drive, Houston Tx 77084.

The sale will feature the best varieties of tomatoes, peppers, and herbs for Harris County.

The expo hours are 9am to 12pm, and will feature fun, educational exhibits for the entire family. The expo topics include: Fire Ants, Garden Pests, Herbs, Low Volume Irrigation, Pruning, Rainwater Harvesting, and Soils and Composting.

For more information visit <http://harris-tx.tamu.edu/hort/docs/10TPSaleFlyer.pdf>, or call David Parish at 281-855-5600.

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A 2010 Cougar Blue Camaro will also be raffled off during the casino night in support of S.N.A.P. Raffle tickets are \$20 each or 6 for \$100. You do not have to be present to win. Contact Mike Wilson at 832-496-2748 or michael.e.wilson@exxonmobil.com for raffle tickets. Details about the 2010 S.N.A.P. are at www.cycreeksnap.org.



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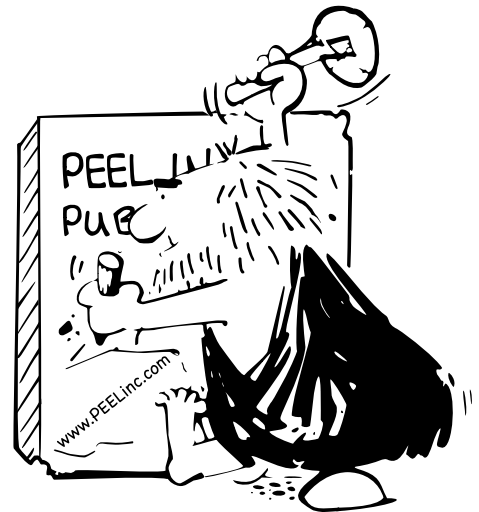
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