

Trail Writer

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

Volume 7, Issue w
www.winchestertrails.com

April 2011

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 2011

- 1.....April Fool's Day
- 6.....Maintenance Board Meeting 7PM
- 16.....Community Garage Sale 8AM to 4PM
- 22.....Earth Day
- 22.....Good Friday; CFISD Student Holiday
- TBD...Children's Easter Party at the clubhouse
- 23.....Community pool tag registration at the pool
.....(10AM - 2PM)
- 24.....Easter
- 30.....Community pool tag registration at the pool
.....(10AM - 2PM)

MAY 2011

- 7.....Pool opens on weekends (10AM to 9PM)



TIME FOR THE WINCHESTER TRAILS GARAGE SALE!

Don't forget about the neighborhood-wide garage sale on April 16th. Clean out your attic and garage, and take the opportunity to get to know some new neighbors in this neighborhood-wide event!

DEAR WINCHESTER TRAILS NEIGHBORS,

The Board met on February 9 after rescheduling the meeting from the previous week due to weather related issues. We were joined by residents, Deputy Andy and GHPM, who manages our pool.

As spring is upon us and the Board is moving forward with plans for the swim season at the pool this year. GHPM presented us with pool items that need to be addressed including work in the pump room that would bring specific items up to Code and make necessary repairs. We are continuing to monitor costs for the pool and will look for ways to keep those to a minimum. We will be issuing pool tags in late April in anticipation of the summer season. Look for more information on the pool tags, operating hours and more on the website.

Deputy Andy stopped by to have a discussion with the Board about security in the Trails. While there are some crime issues in our general area and the Sheriff's department has seen an increase in the rate, the Trails has been mostly unaffected. We are fortunate to have neighbors looking out for one another as that is one of best crime prevention measures we can take. Please report any suspicious activities to the Sheriff's department. Another mitigating measure we have on our side with respect to crime is the presence of Andy through the contract deputy program, which increases our quality of life in the Trails. We certainly appreciate the efforts of the Sheriff's department in general and Andy specifically.

Finally, as spring is here and summer will soon be, please drive carefully and slowly through our neighborhood as there are many children riding their bicycles or playing in the streets particularly with the longer day light hours. Many of us have fond memories of this time of year as we grew up. Please also consider not using a cell phone or texting while driving so you can maintain proper focus. Our children are precious.

Until next month, Walter



Winchester Trails

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Clubhouse Rentals

Kristina Soliz (*voicemail-calls returned w/in 24 hrs*)..832-592-3297

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Planned Community Management, Inc. PCMI Winchester
Trails management company subdivision questions call (Office
9-5)281-870-0585

Office number is answered 24/7/365. After hours pager on call.

Sheriff, Non-911 Calls713-221-6000

Report vehical tag number/type or description of person; as appropriate

NEWSLETTER

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YARD OF THE MONTH



10314 Great Plains Lane
Walter and Tere Sonne

Congratulations!

KEEPING OUR PETS SAFE

If your pet escapes, please make sure that he or she can be reunited with you. If your pet has current tags or has been micro-chipped, there is a better chance that you can be reunited with your pet. If you are not already registered for the neighborhood eblast, send an email to eblast@winchestertrails.com to register your email address. When you are registered, in addition to being notified of security issues or other neighborhood alerts, you can be notified in the event that your pet is found, or you can notify the neighbors to be on the look-out for your lost pet.

During February and March, there were several pets found in our neighborhood. As a pet owner, I know how pets can manage to slip out the front door or the back gate, no matter how much we try to prevent them from doing so. Like other Trails residents, we have taken in pets that we have found wandering in the neighborhood, hoping to keep them from getting run over or getting too far away from home. There are risks involved in doing this, of course, because if the owners don't respond to the eblast, the signs posted, or the calls to the local veterinarians, we then have to find a home for the pet. As we found out recently, the "no-kill" shelters in the area were full and were not accepting additional pets.

Doesn't your pet deserve a chance to get back home?

STORK VOLUNTEER REQUEST

Do you have time to help your community? The Stork volunteer is one of the best and easiest of all volunteer positions. If you have an hour a month and can help your subdivision maintain its charm, please volunteer. I would be glad to give you instructions or explain what the position requires. If you have not volunteered before, this is the one to select. If you enjoy seeing the little ones, give me a call at 832.878.1005 or email.

Thank you for considering,

Ron Matthews - info@winchestertrails.com

POOL HOURS OF OPERATION

MAY 7 through MAY 30

Weekends Only

- Saturday-10:00am to 9:00pm
- Sunday-12:00pm to 9:00pm
- May 30-Mon.-10:00am to 9:00pm
(open Memorial Day)

JUNE 2 through AUGUST 21

Standard Weekly Hours

- Monday-10:00am to 9:00pm
- Tuesday-**CLOSED**
- Wednesday thru Saturday-10am to 9pm
- Sunday-12:00pm to 9:00pm

AUGUST 27 through SEPTEMBER 5

Weekends Only

- Saturday -10:00am to 9:00pm
- Sunday-12:00pm to 9:00pm
- Sept 5-Monday-11am to 9pm
(open Labor Day)

**POOL SEASON CLOSSES TUESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 6, 2011.**

POOL SWIM SEASON 2011

Your community pool opens Saturday, May 7, 2011. Final swim day will be Monday, September 5th. Registration Forms will be mailed to each home. There must be a pool tag purchased for each child and adult. Each registration form must have TWO Emergency Telephone Numbers. Children three years or older require a pool tag. Finally, homeowners **MUST BE CURRENT** on maintenance fees to purchase pool tags. Maintenance fees cannot be paid on Pool Tag Day. Bad weather can close the pool.

2011 POOL TAG REGISTRATION DAYS WILL BE THE SATURDAYS OF April 23 & April 30. AT THE POOL 10:00AM TILL 2:00PM. TAGS WILL BE AVAILABLE **BY MAIL ONLY AFTER TAG DAYS; 5-10 days delivery.**

- PARTIES website www.haveapoolparty.com
- SWIM LESSONS website www.takeaswimlesson.com
- Great Houston Pool: 713-771-7665

The following qualifications must be met in order to use the facilities:

1. Must wear swim tags at all times while at the pool.
2. Must be a Trails resident member and/or with the guest of a resident member.
3. Must be current on annual maintenance fees and in compliance with Deed Restrictions.
4. All swimmers will abide by lifeguard's instructions. Lifeguards have approval to remove any person/child.
5. Any minor dismissed by a lifeguard must leave the pool area and will be banned from the pool until a parent contacts a Board member to resolve the issue.

Full list of swim rules are posted on the Pool Board at the Pool. Please abide by these so everyone enjoys their swim.
(Continued on Page 4)



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bashanspainting@earthlink.net**

Winchester Trails

Pool Swim Season 2011 - (Continued from Page 3)

Pool tags will be available for residents whose maintenance fees are current, for the cost of \$1.00, per tag. Please note that maintenance fees must be paid two weeks (14) days prior to purchasing tags. Any question regarding maintenance fees refer to PCMI. Tags will be issued based on the number of full-time household members listed. Guest tags are available during regular pool hours and cost \$1.00 per day (no change available). Guest must be accompanied by a resident. **REPLACEMENT TAGS FOR LOST OR STOLEN TAGS WILL BE AT THE EXPENSE OF THE HOMEOWNER and can only be replaced through PCMI's mail-in directions listed below.**

After tag days, homeowners must purchase tags through the postal from PCMI. Residents cannot drive to PCMI and pick-up tags. Mail Registration forms to PCMI @ PO Box 219223 Houston, TX 77218, along with a \$5.00 administration fee and \$1.00 per tag. Mail-in purchases take 5-10 business days so **MAIL EARLY! DO NOT mail cash!**

Registration Form and Pool Schedule can be downloaded from www.winchestertrails.com. Let's all have a wonderful 2011 pool season! See you at the Pool...

POOL SEASON IS COMING SOON!

Come to the pool to register for pool tags on the following days:

- Saturday, April 23, 10AM to 2PM
- Saturday, April 30, 10AM to 2PM

Download the 2011 registration form and pool schedule from www.winchestertrails.com

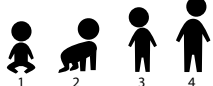


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FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DROWNING

Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death in children ages 1-4



DROWNING WILL AFFECT YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW

Drowning is the 2nd leading cause of unintentional injury-related death ages 1-14.

For more information, check out our website at

www.colinshope.org

DROWNING CAN STILL OCCUR EVEN IF YOU KNOW HOW TO SWIM

NO ONE is "drown proof" – no matter their level of swimming ability.

Falls, entrapments, and injuries lead to drowning regardless of swimming level.

A majority of people overestimate their own and their child's ability to swim, especially in a panic event.

DROWNING IS QUICK AND SILENT



Drowning occurs in as little as 2 minutes.



Irreversible brain damage occurs in as little as 4 minutes.



Most children are out of sight or missing for less than 5 minutes and usually in the presence of 1 or both parents.

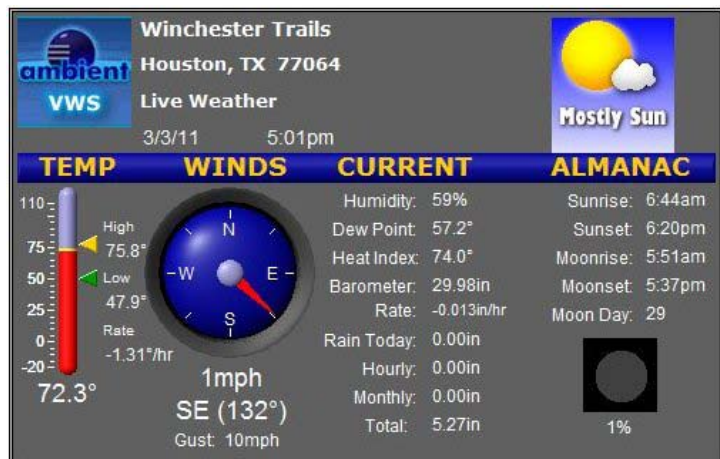


Most children die who are submerged for as little as 6-10 minutes.

Children who drown do not **scream, splash, or struggle**. They silently slip beneath the water, even with adults & lifeguards present.

TRACKING WEATHER IN THE TRAILS

One of our Winchester Trails residents has constructed a weather station and website that is accessible and more than useful. We discovered the website during the recent cold weather and were pleased to have information from our neighborhood, instead of from miles away. Greg Stenberg, owner of the weather station and webmaster, graciously invited me over and gave me a tour of the station, and the electronics to get the information to the website, which is - <http://www.gregstenberg.com/weather/weather.php>



Being able to instantly see an accurate temperature is very useful, and Greg's equipment is more accurate than the typical wireless thermometer purchased from Radio Shack. Our thermometer is consistently 3 degrees F warmer than his, as it is placed too close to the house and does not have a radiant barrier to ensure only the air temperature is recorded rather than sensing the radiant heat from the home's structure. Greg's rain gauge is also a marvel as it has a six inch barrel and is of the "tipping cup" variety. Essentially, it can never overflow, never needs to be emptied, and will accurately work in conditions from very heavy rains to the finest mist. Rain gauge placement is very important as any overhead object like power lines, trees, etc., can change the amount of water falling into the gauge and result in an inaccurate reading. As we all know, rainfall amounts are variable by location, and we can be dry here while the airport might get 3 inches of rain. This is especially helpful during the summertime, as we are monitoring rainfall to reduce the amount of water we use for irrigation.

Wind speed is also displayed, but Greg cautions that it is not very accurate due to the fact that he cannot, due to Homeowner Association restrictions, put the instrument high enough into the air to effectively monitor the wind, as buildings and trees slow and alter the path of the wind. During Hurricane Ike, Greg's station reported that the highest winds were only 44 miles per hour, and we all know they were much higher. Other parameters measured, recorded and displayed on his website are humidity, barometric pressure, wind direction and dew point. An almanac, weather forecasts and current radar are also provided in a format that allows the user to get all of the pertinent local information he/she needs in a few seconds.

And as a bonus, there are no annoying pop ups, commercials, banners or any pleas for money to keep the website up. The data is currently updated on the website every 3 minutes. -Andrew Gwynne

A "GUSHER" OF A TRIP

A group of the Winchester Trails mature residents along with several guests enjoyed an educational trip to Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown in Beaumont, Texas. We toured a replica village built from historic photos. Viewing life from 100 years ago helps us to appreciate the many conveniences we have today! We all enjoyed a great lunch at Cracker Barrel which also offers great shopping as well. We then visited the Babe Didrikson Zaharias Museum. What an all-around athlete Babe was! If you have not visited these museums, they are worth the short ride to Beaumont.



*Until the next
Trails Road Trip....*

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GREEN THUMB CORNER

Spring is here again and the onset of warmer weather is promoting vigorous growth, so it's time to get busy in the yard and garden to keep pace with nature. There are lots of colorful bedding plants in all the nurseries, and April is a good time for planting if you didn't take care of it last month. For best results, make sure the beds are raised and take the time to cultivate the soil and add lots of organic material. Keep the transplants well watered, and give them a boost with a weak "starter solution" made by mixing a tablespoon of 12-24-12 in a gallon of water. Avoid heavy feeding until plants are well established.

Summer bulbs can be planted now - can-nas, gladiolus, dahlia and caladium provide choices of color and height. Caladiums do well in shady areas, although the red varieties like some sunshine; for best results, wait until the soil temperature gets to 70 degrees. If you want instant color, you can buy caladium

plants rather than waiting a few weeks for the bulbs to produce results.

Regular readers probably get tired of the continual references to mulching, but it is important for all flowers, shrubs and trees. It helps retain moisture, stabilizes soil temperature, prevents caking or erosion of the soil, deters weeds, and makes it easier to pull out those that do poke through, as well as enhancing appearance. Smells good, too! A 2" to 4" layer of coarse shredded pine bark mulch is ideal.

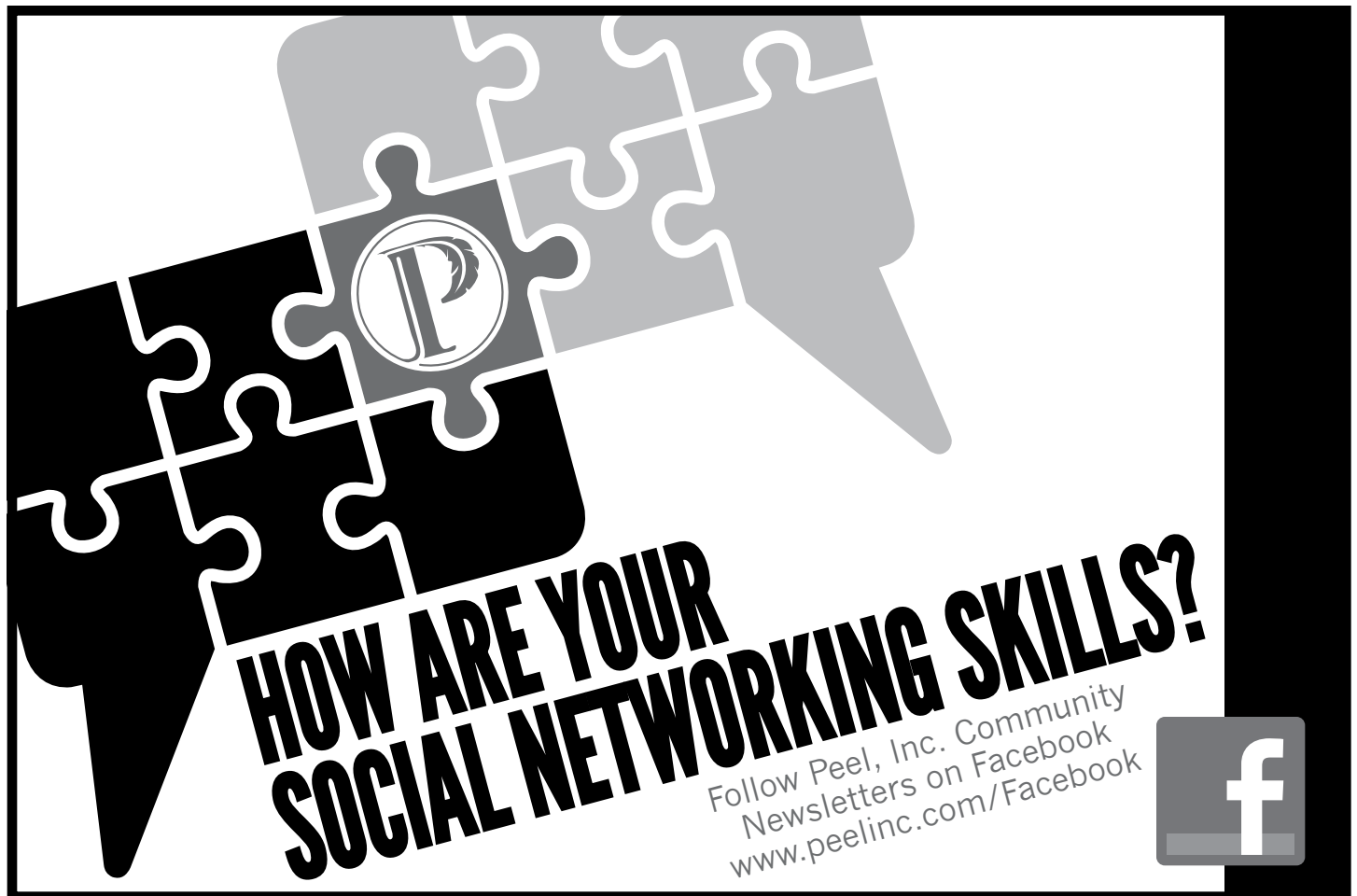
Azaleas may be pruned, and the feeding period begins now that blooming is over. The recommended regimen is two or three light feedings every four to six weeks between now and the end of June, using one of the special high-acid formulas. Or you can use general purpose 12-24-12 and supplement with a soil acidifier such as copperas. The high-phosphorous 12-24-12 is also good for roses and hibiscus, both of which like a monthly

feeding schedule. Other spring-flowering shrubs such as spirea (bridal wreath) may be pruned after blooming, and you can prune and repot the poinsettias.

Chrysanthemums tend to spread like crazy, and it's a good idea to divide and transplant at the end of this month or early May. The new shoots will produce more vigorous growth than the old central roots. Chrysanthemums are biologically programmed to bloom in October when we have equal hours of daylight and darkness, but in our southern climate, we may also get a bonus flowering session in spring after a mild winter. Throughout the summer, keep pinching back the tips for bushier growth and more blooms.


As the temperature starts climbing back into the 80's, the chinch bugs are likely to be feeding on our carefully-tended grass again, and there isn't really any alternative to chemical treatment. Apply pesticide granules to the

(Continued on page 7)



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Green Thumb Corner - (Continued from page 6)

lawn and beds every six to eight weeks. This also controls fire ants and takes care of fleas and ticks, and a good application around the house foundation helps to keep cockroaches out.

An herb patch is an attractive and aromatic feature in the garden, as well as being very useful - it's great to be able to cook or garnish with freshly picked parsley, basil or cilantro. Plants are available at the nurseries, and basil and cilantro both grow very quickly from seed. Rosemary and oregano plants will survive for years in our climate, and mint is also perennial.

In the vegetable garden, beds prepared at least two weeks earlier are ready for planting seeds now that the soil is warming up. Beans, squash, cantaloupe, cucumber and corn are all rewarding crops which can provide a good harvest from a relatively small area. Okra and eggplant may be transplanted this month or next, and it's not too late for tomato and pepper plants.

THIS MONTH'S TIP: After completing the main weekend chores of mowing and edging, it's easy to overlook the final cleanup along the curb. A few minutes spent in sweeping up the clippings from the street will really enhance the appearance of your home and improve the quality of the neighborhood.

Phil Richards - Prich8935@aol.com

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