



# ACIA

## Happenings

December 2011

Official Newsletter of the Atascocita Community Improvement Association

Volume 1, Issue 6

### *From the Treasurer's Desk*

#### **FINANCIAL TIP OF THE MONTH**

With the economy and state of the market place topping the news of the day, some basic facts that can lead to successful investing might be of interest to some of our readers. So, for what it's worth, let's take a look. Basic 1, understand what you're dealing with, to begin, "what are the most common forms of organizing a new business?" There are 3 forms: the sole proprietorship, the partnership, and the corporation. Are there are other forms, yes indeed, but these are usually variations of the 3 mentioned. What are the differences between the 3?

The sole proprietorship is often used by a new small business, often what we call "the mom and pop" type, simple and inexpensive to start, can be done without a lawyer, and is relatively free of legal restriction. The setting up of a strictly business bank account (never commingle business and personal funds) usually accompanied by a local dba (doing business as) form can and often does suffice. Profits from the business (revenues—expenses) are taxable but reported on the owner's individual tax return on a separate Schedule and taxed at the owner's individual rate. The owner is personally liable for debts and claims of the business that frequently can be recovered from his personal assets.

The 2nd form, the partnership, is used when more than one owner is involved, for example more money or expertise is needed for the new business. This should involve a lawyer to write a contract stressing contributions, involvement, expertise, sharing of profits and losses, and dissolution. A separate tax return is required but profits and losses from the partnership are passed through to be reported and taxed on the partners' individual returns. The general partners are personally liable for debts and claims of the business that frequently can be recovered from his personal assets. The 3rd form, the corporation is a legal entity, it may own property, incur debt, sue or be sued, and it must file a separate tax return and pay taxes. The advantages include limited liability, easy transfer of ownership through shares of stock, and continuity of existence.

Next month, we'll move up to Basic 2, "how is capital raised to finance the activities of the business, understanding the differences between stocks and bonds," how they are priced, and reading the listings of daily price changes on the business pages or the internet. If space allows we'll start on Basic 3, "how to determine the value of a company's stocks and bonds" with some tips on building a personal portfolio that meets your goals and needs.

*By Peggy Reap, Treasurer*

### *Holiday Greetings From*

#### **THE ATASCOCITA GARDEN CLUB**



The cooler weather certainly turns our thoughts to holiday plans. The venue is the Atascocita Garden's Club events assembly room at 6450 Kings Parkway and the date is Tuesday, December 6th at 9:30am. The busy members will be decorating the Rosemont Living Center for the holidays. There will be beautiful poinsettias for the fireplace mantel and gorgeous table decorations. It will be a special time to give back to the community. Then on December 13th we will have an elegant holiday luncheon with delicious food and festive entertainment in our talented hostess's home. This is a well attended event. As we open the door to the holidays, we wish each and every one of you a wonderful holiday season.

*The Members of the Atascocita Garden Club*

#### **ACIA MARINA UPDATE**

The Marina is nearing completion! The ramp has been replaced, and the necessary repair items have been done to make sure the ramp is safe and usable. We have added a walking pier to divide the ramp into two lanes for launching, and to help walk boats on and off trailers. We hope everyone will enjoy the new ramp, look forward to the return of boating weather and the lake!

*(Continued on Page 2)*

# ACIA HAPPENINGS

## COMMUNITY CONTACTS

### BOARD MEMBERS

Phil Baumann, President/Grounds.. pbaumann@atascocitacia.org  
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Laura Lammers .....  
Sean Parker.....  
Steve Daniele.....

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Atascocita Volunteer Fire Dept (AVFD)  
    *Non-Emergency Number* ..... 281-852-2181  
Harris County Animal Control ..... 281-999-3191  
Texas Poison Control Center ..... 800-222-1222

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    *Gas Leaks* ..... 713-659-2111  
Water, Severn Trent ..... 281-579-4500  
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Telephone, Centurylink..... 877-290-5458  
Trash, Waste Management..... 888-964-9734  
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Harris County MUD #132 ..... www.hcmud132.com  
Harris County MUD #151 ..... www.hcmud151.org

### SCHOOLS

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Maplebrook Elementary ..... 281-641-2900  
Atascocita Middle School ..... 281-641-1000  
Atascocita High School ..... 281-641-7500

### NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

Editor, Mindy Marules..... mmarules@atascocitacia.org  
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### ACIA Marina Update - (Continued from Cover Page)

A few more additions that will be completed soon at the marina; a canvas cover will be erected over a large portion of the existing patio. This cover will offer protection from the sun and weather, and a nice picnic spot for our community. A second smaller shade structure will be erected close to where the earth peninsula was removed. It will offer a shady area at the front of the pier to enter and exit watercraft!

Final additions, budget permitting, will include some tables and benches to make the marina a family friendly area for our community. I hope that we will be able to add this last piece this year. If not we will slate it for 2012 budget. I hope everyone enjoys the new and improved ACIA Marina.

*Kyle Adams*

## ACIA ELECTION RESULTS

**HALBROOK – 213**  
**LAMMERS – 337**  
**MARTIN – 33**  
**PECK – 57**  
**PERWIEN – 71**  
**REAP – 283**  
**WELLS – 312**

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### *To Atascocita...*

It's hard to believe that it's already December, where did 2011 go? As everyone heads into the Christmas season, remember to take time out to offer assistance to someone in need. We would like to spotlight a great local ministry that gives back to others in their time of need.

#### **KSBJ Giving Tree**

The spirit of Giving Tree is to mobilize the community to help individuals and families with legitimate needs due to dire circumstances they are facing at this time.

First launched over 13 years ago, KSBJ's Giving Tree connects families with needs to individuals and families who would like to help meet those needs by providing gifts and/or services directly to the "nominated" family.

KSBJ listeners can become involved in two ways, either by serving as the Coordinator for a family in need or by assisting as a Giver to help meet the families need.

***Last year, over 5000 lives were impacted through the KSBJ Giving Tree!***

For questions or more info please email [givingtree@ksbj.org](mailto:givingtree@ksbj.org) or visit their website [www.ksbj.org](http://www.ksbj.org)

In Harris County a homeowner can qualify for a homestead exemption. A homestead exemption helps you save on taxes on your home. An exemption removes part of the value of your property from taxation and lowers your taxes. For example, if your home is valued at \$100,000 and you qualify for a \$20,000 exemption, you pay taxes on your home as if it was worth only \$80,000. An Application for Residential Homestead Exemption (same form for over-65, disability, over-55 surviving spouse, or 100% disabled veteran homestead exemptions) can be found at the Forms Page under the Residential Exemption Section (11-13) at [www.hcad.org](http://www.hcad.org).

In order to qualify for a homestead exemption, a homeowner must complete the purchase and occupy the property by December 31, 2011. Be sure to visit our website, [www.majorleaguehomes.com](http://www.majorleaguehomes.com) and click on the lender tab to find out more about securing a home loan. This is the first step in home ownership. Get in touch with us so we can assist you with finding the home of your dreams! Remember, we offer a FREE LOCAL MOVE to our clients! Some restrictions apply ask for details.

We would like to take this time to wish you and your family a blessed Christmas and a happy new year! Thank you for your business! We look forward to assisting you, your friends, family and coworkers with all their real estate needs as we finish out 2011 and head into 2012. We look forward to seeing many of you out and about during this Christmas season!

***Blessings to you and your family!  
Rebekah and Mark Snipp***

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## *Happy Holidays to All!*



# ACIA HAPPENINGS

## WATERING GRASS

By Kay Ledbetter

Watering grass, whether in a park, a football field or a homeowner's yard, was an issue throughout the summer as those responsible for upkeep tried to keep things green under drought conditions. But pouring water onto grass during periods of drought is not necessary and can even have the opposite effect of what lawn managers might want, according to Texas AgriLife Extension Service experts.

Dr. Jim McAfee, AgriLife Extension turfgrass specialist in Dallas, and Dr. David Chalmers, AgriLife Extension state turfgrass specialist in College Station, say two things are needed for anyone to maximize the effectiveness of the water they put on grass – sprinkler auditing and evapotranspiration information. The goal this summer was to not lose the grass, Chalmers said. To accomplish that, consumers need research-based information on the minimum amount of irrigation required to maintain the viability of warm-season turfgrass, regardless of the appearance, through long-term drought.

Chalmers conducted a three-month study this summer looking at deficit turf irrigation on St. Augustine grass based upon weather station evapotranspiration data. The study indicated that even at levels of 24 percent of the evapotranspiration rate, which is considered very high stress, and 36 percent or normal stress, the ground cover

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will be greatly reduced but the plant population would be maintained for regrowth and lawn recovery when more moisture is available.

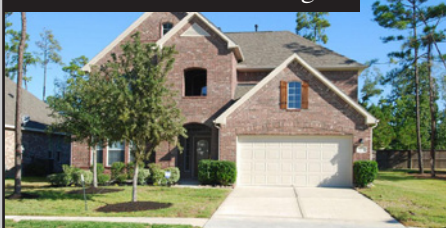
The amount of irrigation needed to maintain warm-season turf with acceptable quality was equal to 60 percent of weather station evapotranspiration, Chalmers said. (Continued on Page 5)

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# ACIA HAPPENINGS

## Watering Grass - (Cont. from Page 4)

Evapotranspiration for some areas can be found by going to <http://texaset.tamu.edu/> and clicking on the county and weather station nearest to the lawn. It will calculate how much water needs to be applied with input of a little information, McAfee said. This site does not cover the entire state, so others may need to find an alternative source for collecting the evapotranspiration rate.

"In addition to knowing how much evapotranspiration is taking place, you have to know what your system is putting out," he said. So one of the first steps to correctly and efficiently water grass is auditing the sprinkler system in use, McAfee said. "In some cases, reducing the amount of water these people are putting on their sports fields can actually improve the field," he said. "The whole thing is about having available oxygen to the roots. Overwatering can reduce the quality of the field, because the roots can't get oxygen when they are water-logged."



*Dr. Jim McAfee, Texas AgriLife Extension Service turfgrass specialist in Dallas, suggests all watering systems on turfgrass should be put through an audit to make sure the proper amount of water is applied, especially in these times of drought when water management is key. He is showing a catch can which can be purchased online. (Texas AgriLife Research photo by Kay Ledbetter)*

He estimated that most football fields inside a track, about 90,000 square feet of turf, are on average overwatered by as much as 30 percent, or about a million gallons overage per field annually. "A few simple measures will help you determine how much water you are putting on," McAfee said.

To conduct a proper audit, however, he advised first running the system and fixing all broken heads, leaking heads and misalignments. "For sports fields, we place the catch cans out by zones and then run that zone for a set period of time, generally 10 to 15 minutes. Then we record the amount of water collected in the catch cans and enter that value plus the run time (in minutes) into a computer program that calculates the precipitation rate (in inches per hour) and the distribution uniformity," McAfee said.

The computer program for calculating this information was developed by Dr. Guy Fipps and Charles Swanson, both with Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

*(Continued on Page 6)*

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# ACIA HAPPENINGS

## Watering Grass - (Cont. from Page 5)

"For homeowners who don't have the catch cans and want to do an irrigation audit, then we recommend placing tuna cans or similar type cans out by zones," McAfee said. "The homeowner runs that zone for a set period of time, say 10 minutes. They then measure the depth of water in each catch can and they calculate the average depth for all the tuna cans in the one zone."

Multiplying that number by six will provide the homeowner with information on how fast their irrigation system is applying the water, he said. AgriLife Extension has catch cans that can be ordered from <https://agrilifebookstore.org/>, search "catch can." They are simple to use and are about half the price of some others, he said, but added another alternative for home lawn sprinklers are cat food or tuna cans.

For the sports field manager, an alternative to the catch-can system might be looking at the water meter before turning the system on, then run it for 10 to 15 minutes. Turn it off and read the meter again to determine the output of gallons for that time period. Then determine what the evapotranspiration rate is and apply about 60 percent of that rate. "You need to do this audit at the time of day you will normally be watering, because it can make a difference. A city's water pressure varies throughout the day, depending on use and that can affect how much your system is putting out," McAfee said.

He recommended watering sometime between 3 a.m. and mid-morning because reduced wind means better distribution and less evaporation. Irrigation just before dawn also helps keep turf diseases to a minimum by reducing the leaf wetness period as opposed to early evening watering. Educating the public on techniques to save water and save their turf is important during periods of drought, but also a good practice year in and year out, McAfee said.

"I did an audit on one lawn that was 10,000 square feet and the owner was putting on 100,000 gallons of water per month," he said. "That's way over the 20,000 to 30,000 gallons that yard needed." One problem, McAfee said, is many homeowners never change their sprinkler system from the rate they set it at when they were establishing the lawn to what they need for maintenance. "We are starting through the Master Gardener program to try to get people to work with homeowners and educate them on efficient lawn irrigation," he said. The Texas Master Gardener program is a statewide volunteer horticulture-related program in conjunction with AgriLife Extension.

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# ACIA HAPPENINGS

## Cooler Weather IS HOME IMPROVEMENT TIME

### *Information from your Architectural Control Committee*

Fall weather is fix-up time for the outside of our homes. Residents planning changes to the outside of their homes, such as, painting, siding, re-roofing, etc., should apply and receive Architectural Control Committee (ACC) approval before beginning these changes. Guidelines for these changes can be found on the ACIA website, along with the application form. The ACC is here to assist and guide residents and ensure their home improvements meet the standards outlined in our deed restrictions and architectural guidelines. Our property management company, C.A.M., can also assist residents with information on home improvements.

## A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The "Atascocita Happenings" newsletter is a wonderful tool for the community as a whole and the ACIA board to share information. This publication will continue to grow if everyone participates. If you are involved in a community club or activity, please e-mail information on your activities and meeting for inclusion in the newsletter. If there is an upcoming event in the area which you think everyone would love to attend, please send in the information for the "Community Reminders" section of the newsletter. If you have any ideas for the newsletter, please let us know and we can incorporate them into the publication. The more everyone gets involved, the better the information can be. The deadline for submission is the 8th day of the month for inclusion in the next month's publication.

## COMMUNITY REMINDERS

The ACIA Board of Trustees will NOT be holding a meeting the month of December. Look forward to seeing everyone in January.

Prior to initiating any home improvements requiring Architectural Control Committee approval (painting, pools, roofing, etc) please submit an approval request form to the C.A.M. office. The form and Architectural Guidelines can be found on the website or at the C.A.M. office.

The 2011 Texas Legislature passed new laws regarding Property Owners Associations. This new legislation will impact several areas, including but not limited to records, forms, document filing and deed restrictions. The attorneys and management company for the ACIA are working hard to bring everything into compliance under the guidelines give by the Texas Legislature. More information will be forthcoming.

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