

# The Village Gazette



Volume 9, Issue 7  
Village Creek Community Association

July 2012

## July Landscape Corner

Many people vacation during July, leaving their yards, trees, and gardens to fend for themselves. This month we will provide a few suggestions to assure your yard will be in good shape when you return. We will focus on the garden, but, even though we live in wonderful Village Creek, the world is not perfect, so consider advising the constable that you will be away, put lights on timers, etc. Consider asking a friend to check in occasionally. We have heard of homes being badly damaged by just small water leaks while the owners were away. An occasional check of each room might prevent very serious damage.

- Make sure that your watering system is working. Turn your system on manually and watch the system to see if there are any problems. DON'T wait until the day you leave!!! It would not be fun fixing a problem at that late date!
- Most newer irrigation systems will be fine, but consider what will happen when (not if) the electricity goes off. Will your irrigation timer be functional? Does it require a battery backup to keep the program and time?
- If possible, leave a contact number for your home-sitter.
- Hopefully, we will get some rain, and, hopefully, your rain sensor is working! Rain sensors reduce water usage and overwatering.
- If you have containers, group moveable ones together, and ask a friend to water them as you currently do. To really make things

simple, add an extra irrigation head on one appropriate zone to do this automatically.

- Even if your irrigation system is fully automated, it is a good idea to have a friend walk through your yard ever few days to make sure that there are no leaks, and the yard appears to be getting water.
- Mow just before you leave and mow your lawn extra high. This will be good for the lawn, and reduce water usage. Have someone mow weekly to make sure your home has an "I'm home" look. If you are gone for longer than a week, make sure it gets mowed regularly.
- Remove all weeds. You will be amazed at how big your plants have become while you are gone, and even those little weeds will also become big during your absence.
- Remove dead blooms from flowering plants. This is called, "deadheading." It encourages new blooms while you are gone.
- Add mulch to reduce water usage and assist in keeping weeds in check. Make sure the mulch doesn't interfere with the watering system.
- Inspect for serious diseases. Keep in mind that insecticides cannot tell the difference between good and bad insects.
- Remove all ripe vegetables, and ask a neighbor or friend to harvest while you are gone. Vegetables, such as tomatoes and okra will not wait for your return. Make sure not to allow okra to get longer than about 3 inches.

- Congregate "portable" house plants in a bathtub, and ask a friend to water these. To make things even simpler, another option, according to the Texas Garden Almanac, you can "...plug the drain and fill the tub with 1 or 2 inches of water that can be absorbed by the plant over a 2-week period as needed through the container hole."
- If it hasn't rained for a week or two before you leave, deep water your trees by dripping water at the base and under the canopy.
- Consider what to do with water features. What will happen if the water supply is interrupted? Most pumps will be destroyed if the water level gets too low.
- For those of us planning to stay here, sit back and enjoy fried okra, tomatoes, peppers, and other vegetables.

### THIS MONTH'S GARDEN HINT

Next time you buy a garden hose, consider getting a 1/2 inch diameter rather than the larger 5/8 or 3/4. The smaller 1/2" hoses are hard to find in stores, but can be found on line...often at recreational vehicle or boating sites. They weigh less, are easier to handle and store, but provide sufficient water for typical usage.

*Until next time,  
Happy Gardening!  
The Village Creek  
Landscape Committee*



# The Village Gazette

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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Constables Office ..... 281-376-3472, [www.cd4.hctx.net](http://www.cd4.hctx.net)  
Klein Fire Dept. ....281-376-4449  
Poison Control Center .....800-764-7661  
Willowbrook Methodist .....281-477-1000  
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Tomball ISD .....281-357-3100, [www.tomballisd.net](http://www.tomballisd.net)  
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Northpointe Int (5-6).....281-357-3020  
Willow Wood Jr (7-8) .....281-357-3030  
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**Village Creek Community Association Website:**  
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FBI.....713-693-5000  
Harris County Animal Control .....281-999-3191  
Houston Chronicle .....713-220-7211  
Greater Houston Pool .....713-771-7665  
Lost Pets... <http://www.preferredmgt.com/villagecreek/home.asp>  
Municipal District Services (24 hrs) .....281-290-6500  
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..... [www.centerpointenergy.com/outage](http://www.centerpointenergy.com/outage)  
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Publisher - Peel, Inc.....512-263-9181  
Advertising..... [advertising@PEELinc.com](mailto:advertising@PEELinc.com), 888-687-6444

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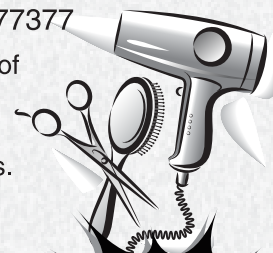
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Active Listings	14	\$224,750	\$80.78	84
Pending Listings	12	\$240,007	\$82.42	93
Sold Since 3/1/12	8	\$244,950	\$75.16	55

Statistics are averages compiled from Houston Association of Realtors MLS, 6/6/12

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# The Village Gazette

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The festivities will take place on Wednesday, July 4. The parade will gather at 10:00 am at Pedlars Court and be led by a fire truck. So pull out the red, white and blue decor and adorn your bikes, wagons, and trikes with judging to take place at the clubhouse. Then to the pool area to cool down and enjoy hot dogs, drinks and dessert provided by Village Creek. Hope to see you there!

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# The Village Gazette

## Salt of the Earth: Sodium & Your Health

### TIPS FOR REDUCING SODIUM FOR BETTER HEALTH

Sodium is everywhere—swirling in the oceans, stored in vast underground crystalline deposits—and contained in just about every food and drink imaginable.

The fact is, sodium is as an essential, life-sustaining ingredient for every known plant and animal on the planet. Without sodium, our bodies would cease to function. Sodium helps our cells draw in nutrients, maintains balanced pH levels, enables nerve function and muscle contraction, helps regulate your heartbeat, and is a key component of your bones, explains Jose Mejia, M.D., a cardiologist for The Austin Diagnostic Clinic (ADC).

Yet too much of this essential element can pose serious health risks in people, including high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, and congestive heart failure. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the average person should only consume 2,300 milligrams (mg)—about one teaspoon full—or less, per day. If you are 51 or older, are black, or already have high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease, then you should limit your intake to 1,500 mg or less per day, Dr. Mejia adds.

“Unfortunately, the average American gets about 3,400 mg of sodium a day, which is far more than is recommended for good health,” Dr. Mejia says. “Keeping the amount of sodium you eat under control can be challenging, but understanding the main dietary sources of sodium is one of the best ways to start lowering your intake.”

### SALT BY ANY OTHER NAME

One of the most troubling parts of monitoring your sodium intake is understanding how extensively the food industry uses sodium as a flavor enhancer and as a preservative in everything from bread to canned soup. And then there’s a matter of naming conventions. Common table salt, otherwise known as sodium chloride, is just one form of sodium. There are many other compounds that contain sodium, including monosodium glutamate (MSG), baking soda, baking powder, disodium phosphate, sodium alginate, and sodium nitrite (sometimes just nitrite).

“Most of the sodium we eat comes from processed foods and foods prepared in restaurants. Sodium is already part of processed

*(Continued on Page 6)*

# Join us for our **OPEN HOUSE**

**What:** Open House

**When:** Saturday, July 21, 2012, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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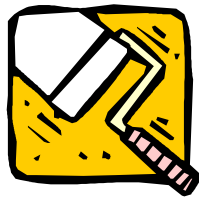
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## Salt of the Earth - (Continued from Page 5)

foods and cannot be removed. Even fresh fruits, meats, vegetables and dairy products contain sodium," Dr. Mejia notes. "However, food manufacturers and restaurants can produce foods with far less sodium. In addition, you can select lower sodium foods when possible, and you can cook more foods yourself to better control how much sodium you eat."

### SHOPPING SMART TO REDUCE SODIUM

The most practical way to reduce your sodium is by altering what you bring home from the grocery store. Many items like baked goods, breakfast cereals, soups, and lunchmeats are very high insodium.

"Pay very close attention to food labels," Dr. Mejia says. "It may add extra time to your shopping trip, but it's important to understand just what the food industry means when it uses sodium-related terms. Portion size is just as important. Frankly, it's the only way to make sure you are not eating too much sodium."

*Here are some of the most common terms used on food packaging. If it doesn't have a label, your best option may be to avoid buying it.*

- **"Sodium free" or "Salt free."** Each serving of this product contains less than 5 mg of sodium.
- **"Very low sodium"** - Each serving contains 35 mg of sodium or less.
- **"Low sodium"** - Each serving contains 140 mg of sodium or less.
- **"Reduced" or "Less sodium"** - The product contains at least 25 percent less sodium than the regular version. Check the label to see how much sodium is in a serving.
- **"Lite" or "Light in sodium"** - The sodium content has been reduced by at least 50 percent from the regular version.
- **"Unsalted" or "No salt added"** - Not salt is added during processing of a food that normally contains salt. However, some foods with these labels may still be high in sodium because some of the ingredients may be high in sodium.

### A DASH OF SOMETHING ELSE

The widespread use of sodium means it can be challenging to avoid, especially if you are traveling with limited food options at airports. In that case, bringing low sodium snacks is a good option. At home, consider using alternative seasonings that are sodium free. Eventually, your taste buds will adjust to the lower sodium options.

"It takes some effort, but a low sodium diet can have tremendous health benefits," Dr. Mejia says. "If you are concerned or curious, it may be a good idea with check with your physician about the amount of sodium you are eating."

*Jose Mejia, M.D., Cardiologist - The Austin Diagnostic Clinic,*



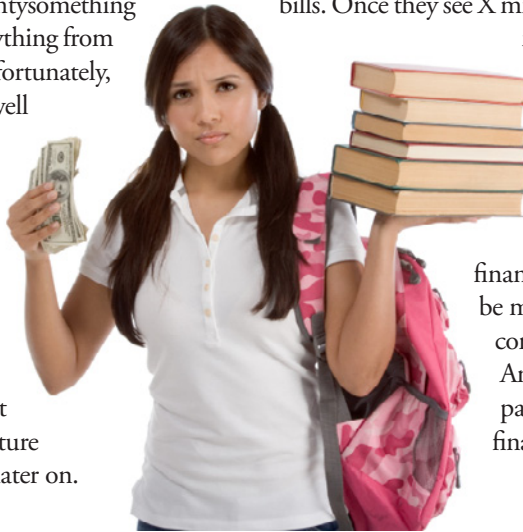
# The Village Gazette

## Financial Focus - Student Loans Crushing College Grads

Submitted by Rich Keith

Today's college grads are facing the "real world" with an extra scoop of debt. Two-thirds of students graduating from college or graduate school have student loans – about \$25,000 on average. That's a 25% increase over the past 10 years. In fact, today's twentysomething holds an average debt of \$45,000, including everything from student loans to mortgages and credit cards. Unfortunately, unemployment for those aged 18-29 is 12.4%, well above the national rate of 8.2%.

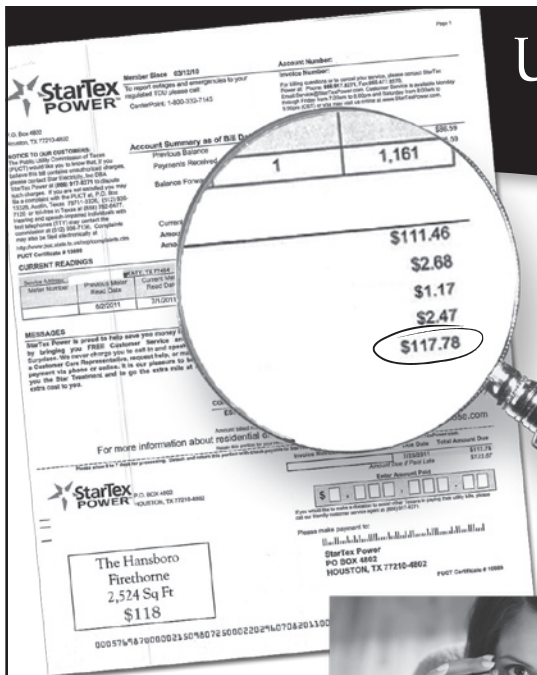
Don't feel as if you have to be the savior. Six in 10 boomers report giving financial help (outside of college tuition) to a child or grandchild in the past five years. Of those, \$59,000 was the average amount of aid. If this sounds like you, ask yourself: Do I really have the resources? Am I saving enough for retirement? Try to share more financial wisdom and less cash with your adult offspring. The more you save for your own future means less possibility that you'll need their help later on.



Without going into too much detail, share the family financial picture with your children once they hit the mid-teen years. They need to know the family income is X and it takes Y amount to cover the mortgage and bills. Once they see X minus Y in action they will be surprised at how much it actually costs to run a household.

This may have a side benefit of limiting how much and how often your children ask you for money and gifts.

Children who have a basic understanding of money, especially the corrosive effects of debt, have a better chance of becoming financially independent later in life. They will be more resistant to the credit card offers sure to come to them in their freshman year at college. And they will more ready to partner with their parents as the family manages their college finances with them.



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# The Village Gazette

## Tech-Etiquette: Is there an App for Civility?

*Submitted by Darcy Folsom*

In today's age of apps and gadgets, it's likely that you or someone you know has benefitted handily from the ubiquitous smartphone in today's digitally-dependent society. If the question were posed to our current generation, "What item would you never want to be without?" it is fair to say that most individuals living in 21st century America would answer: "My phone!" Without our phones, it is certain that many of us would be lost. We would be unable to text, tweet, phone, email, face time, and even friend or like another individual. Would we really? Is American society becoming so dependent upon these technological devices that we are challenged to even recognize our our humanity within? How many young men and women know the value of the age-old adage "Never leave home without a smile?" Is who we were created to be, in such competition with what we hold in our hand, that we have forgotten the simple value of kindness - shared in a smile, of gratification - by greeting another with a genuine handshake? Is it technology that propels our lives, or are we doing our best to prepare our lives to propel the technology that supports them?

Regardless of how many apps and buttons and gadgets, and even insurance, we carry on our smartphones, could it be that we have something even better when it comes to insuring our ability to connect with the people we like? Or to be-Friend those to whom we're attracted, or bring restitution to those un-Friended? Today's digitally-dependent generation has a challenge before them that

none before have known. That is, being able to successfully pair technology with common courtesy. Remembering what our grandmothers taught us about the civilities of life (carried in our hip pockets) may apply more today, than any app could ever provide. But pairing the art of civility with the current age of technology requires practice. The 21st century can only get better as those old-fashioned manners make their way from our pockets to the person next to us. After all, the words we speak are far more significant than the technology that transmits them. Why not polish a few points of etiquette this summer and complement your savvy skills on your smartphone? By doing so, you and your smartphone may just move from merely getting the message delivered, to doing so with principles that shape our character and improve our attitudes about both our electronic devices, and the lives of those who use them.

**TIP #1** - When you take a call in the presence of another person, you are communicating, "You are secondary; the caller is more important than you are." If you are expecting a call, let your companion know in advance, and excuse yourself before taking the call, limiting the call to under one minute. Never use a cell phone on a date, unless there is an emergency.

**TIP #2** - If you find it necessary to use your smartphone while driving, make it a habit to get into your car, buckle up, and prepare your hand's free device to activate the call BEFORE starting your engine.

**TIP #3** - Allow your personality, not your PDA to impress others. Avoid using novelty

ringtones, and choose the vibrate option as much as possible.

**TIP #4** - Remove your earpiece when not on the phone. Always keep your phone in a pocket or a purse, rather than laying it on the table next to you.

**TIP #5** - When in a public place, refrain from using your ear buds to listen to your favorite playlist. Instead, be prepared to greet those who are near you, looking oncoming passersby in the eye, with a smile and "Hello!" This is not only courteous, but it is also a way to remain sure about your surroundings.

As you travel to the lake or the seaside with friends, consider the value that a few manners may add to the dynamics of your summer relationships. Ask the question - is there something more fundamental than a fancy app, or gadget insurance to satisfy our lack? What have we already been given as a way to connect with the people we like, and those we want to be-Friend? Rather than search your smartphone for the latest apps, ask your companion's permission to practice with them, as you begin to apply these principles of Tech-Etiquette. These courtesies will both benefit the words we speak and the actions we offer, as we engage those around us with the very acts of courtesy we desire for others to share with us. Practicing the art of civility alongside the technology that propels our lives, I believe we will see our digitally-dependent generation become the one to re-engage our culture with civility and the accomplished principles of common courtesy.



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## Village Creek

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## WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A PET FOOD

Pet nutrition and pet food selection has improved significantly over the last few years, however, there is still a lot of confusion regarding what to feed our four-legged friends.

Following the horrific melamine pet food recalls of 2007, much research has been dedicated to learning more about pet nutrition and how pet food is manufactured and distributed to consumers. This has spawned a greater selection of high-quality, pet super-foods. However, it has also prompted some companies who still make cheap, low-quality pet food to simply change their packaging to dupe consumers into believing that they're buying food filled with wholesome fresh meat, fruits, and vegetables.

Don't be fooled! A pretty bag with pictures of cascading corn and carrots does not a quality pet food make. Read the ingredient label to see what's really in the bag and in your pet's food bowl.

Here are some things to look for in the ingredient label and to consider when choosing a food for your furry family members.

### PROTEIN

A named protein and/or protein meal should be first on the ingredient list. For example, if you're buying a chicken formula pet food, look for, "chicken," or, "chicken meal," as the first ingredient, not chicken by-product. Remember: meal is a good thing, by-product is a bad thing. Also, if a protein source is not named - beware. For example, if the ingredient label reads, "meat meal," you have no way of knowing what the protein source is and should be wary. It could be anything from aardvark to zebra. The best pet foods have two or three protein sources in the first five ingredients listed.

Confused about the difference between chicken and chicken meal? Chicken, or any other protein source listed in the ingredient label, means that fresh meat was added to the mix before cooking. This is great! But just like our bodies, animals are about 70% water. So, when the mixture is cooked, the fresh meat in it loses volume, thereby decreasing

the amount of protein in the final product. Chicken meal, on the other hand, is chicken meat, bone and some connective tissue that has been cooked, dried and added to the mix before cooking, which ultimately increases the protein level of the food.

### VEGGIES, FRUITS & WHOLEGRAINS

Like humans, pets benefit from the vitamins and enzymes in fresh vegetables and fruits. Look for quality produce and complex carbohydrates like carrots, spinach, pumpkin, etc. as well as whole grain rice, oats, and/or barley. These healthy foods have lower glycemic index ranges, which will keep your pet more satisfied and will help to avoid sudden drops in energy levels. Avoid highly processed grains such as corn, wheat and rice. As with humans, these are empty fillers and fast burning carbohydrates.

### US SOURCED

Do a little extra digging to find where the ingredients of a food you're considering are sourced. Often, you can find this information on the manufacturer's website. If not, call them and ask. Look for foods made with ingredients from the US. This will help you take advantage of the strict, governmental regulations that watch pet food manufacturers and that are there to protect you and your pets from contamination. Furthermore, buying products made in the US is just plain good sense for the local economy and environment.

### WHAT TO AVOID

By-products and by-product meals should be avoided for a number of reasons. First, you have no way of knowing exactly what the ingredient is, but you can be sure that it is a low-value portion of the animal. In addition to the ingredient itself being dubious, low-value products are not handled with the same care as higher-value products, so they could become rancid or exposed to harmful bacteria. Also

avoid sweeteners, which are added to poor quality foods to enhance palatability. Other ingredients to avoid are artificial preservatives such as BHA, BHT, and ethoxyquin, and artificial colors.

Once you've narrowed your choices down to a few based on quality ingredients, then consider your pet's specific health needs. Is your pet overweight, underweight, young, adult, or senior? Does he/she have allergies or itchy skin? There are high-quality foods that are formulated to address all of these issues and more.

After you've finally chosen a healthy pet food and are ready to purchase, be sure to check the, "Best By," date. In quality, natural foods, this will be about 12 months from the manufacture date. When dishing out the new grub to your pet, start by mixing it with a bit of his last diet to help his tummy transition. Do this for about a week, adding a little more of the new food everyday. By day seven, your pet should be ready for full servings and a fuller life.





# DROWNING IS PREVENTABLE



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**I WILL NOT** become distracted.

**I WILL** maintain a valid CPR certification.

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JACKETS**



**MULTIPLE BARRIERS ON  
ALL POOLS & HOTTUBS**



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