



The Grapevine



November 2012, Volume 6, Issue 11

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September Yard of the Month

Congratulations to *Mark and Valeria of 817 Rusk Rd*, our September YOM winners!! Thank you for your efforts to keep our neighborhood beautiful.

We are always looking for Yard of the Month nominations!!! Please send addresses to landscape@hoasonoma.com.



Sonoma HOA Board Update

The Sonoma HOA Board of Directors for 2012-2013, as elected at the October Board meeting, are:

- Donna Kohn – President
- Doug White – VP
- Carl Anderson – Secretary
- Will Smith - Treasurer
- Charlie King – Member at Large



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WEBSITE

Goodwin Management Company

MANAGEMENT CO.

Property Manager: Earline Wakefield

11149 Research Blvd. Suite 100, Austin, TX 78759-5227

Voicemail: 512-502-7526

Cell: 512-470-5104

Fax: 512-346-4873

E-mail: Earline.Wakefield@Goodwintx.com

http://son.goodwintx.com

NEWSLETTER INFO

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ONLINE

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Sonoma HOA, Round Rock, TX

SONOMA HOA WEBSITE

http://hoasonoma.com

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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Poison Control 800-764-7661

Police Department 218-5500

Round Rock Hospital..... 341-1000

Williamson County Sheriff's Department..... 246-1155

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Ridgeview Middle School..... 424-8400

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Stony Point High School..... 428-7000

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October Yard of the Month



Congratulations to *James and Ada of 1854 Paradise Ridge*, our October YOM winners!! Thank you for your efforts to keep our neighborhood beautiful.

We are always looking for Yard of the Month nominations!!! Please send addresses to landscape@hoasonoma.com.

Overnight Parking

Overnight parking on our streets is becoming an issue in Sonoma. Just a reminder, it is violation of the CC & Rs to park a vehicle overnight on any street in Sonoma. If you, or a guest, are found in violation of this rule, you as the homeowner, can be subject to a fine.



Section 3.4 Uses Specifically Prohibited

(a) No more than two (2) automobiles per dwelling unit may be kept on any Lot in such manner as to be visible from any other portion of the Subdivision for any period in excess of seventy-two hours. No automobiles or other vehicles may be parked overnight on any roadway within the Subdivision.

PET CORNER

CAN I GIVE MY DOG THANKSGIVING SCRAPS?

Submitted by Kristen West

We know it's tempting, but most Thanksgiving scraps are not safest treat for your pets. Cooked turkey bones are a big no-no as they can splinter and result in a trip to pet ER. Additionally, overindulging your pet in other fatty foods can lead to stomach upset, diarrhea or even life-threatening pancreatitis. Other items to avoid are onion, sage, garlic ... and please, don't ever give your pet alcohol.

If you can't turn away from those puppy-dog eyes, a bite or two of pet-safe veggies like plain broccoli, sweet potato or carrots, or a small taste of plain turkey is usually OK. Put the treats in a Kong or other puzzle toy while you sit down to eat with your family so that your furry begger is happily preoccupied!



A Plethora of Parakeets

Nature Watch by Jim and Lynne Weber

Established in Austin in the early 1970s from escaped caged birds, Monk Parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*) also known as the Quaker Parrot, are native to the temperate and subtropical regions of Argentina and surrounding countries in South America. Monks are often heard before they are seen, as their call is a loud and throaty chap(-yee) or quak quaki quak-wi quarr, and their sometimes startling screeches sound like skveet! They have grown in numbers by being able to survive our mild winters, and as such have now been included on the official list of accepted Texas species.

A colorful bird with bright green upperparts, pale grey forehead and breast with darker scalloped edges, and very light green to yellow underparts, Monks also have an orange bill, stiff dark blue flight feathers, and a long tapered tail. Technically a parrot, it is this tail that makes them a parakeet, which is a term for small to medium sized species of parrots that generally have long tail feathers.

Monks are the only parrot that builds a stick nest, either in a tall tree or man-made structure, rather than using a hole in a tree. They often breed in colonies, building a single large nest that has separate entrance holes for each pair. In the wild these colonies can become quite large, with communal nests reaching the size of a small automobile! Also unusual for a parrot, these birds occasionally have 'helper individuals', typically grown offspring, which assist in feeding the young. Highly intelligent and social birds, Monks can live anywhere from 15 to 30 years, and like other species of parrots kept as pets routinely develop quite a large vocabulary.

Monk Parakeets readily adapt to urban neighborhoods, as they are an open woodland species. A recent informal survey found over 65 nests in Austin, mostly in cell phone towers, tall telephone poles, and sports facility light poles. Even if the nests are cleared out, many colonies return to the same place to rebuild their nest. While mainly constructed out of willow branches, these nests may include man-made items such as rope, carpet, newspaper, and scraps of cloth. The Monks' diet consists of berries, tree buds, and seeds, which can be plentiful in both the native and non-native tree species common in the Austin area.

The exact number of wild Monks in our area is unknown, and evidence of harm by feral colonies of Monks is disputed. While they can be agricultural pests by eating fruits, grains, and other crops, they can also benefit local economies through birdwatching-based ecotourism. It is also important to remember that tens of millions of parrots have been removed from the wild worldwide, and have been traded in greater numbers and for far longer than any other group of wild animals. Many parrot species are still threatened by this trade, as well as by habitat loss, predation by introduced species, and hunting for food or feathers. As such, let's respect their existence enjoy our plethora of parakeets!

*Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, look for our book, *Nature Watch Austin*, published by Texas A&M University Press.*

Upcoming Sonoma Social Events for 2012

12/8/2012

Santa Claus Returns to Sonoma

11am-1pm

Our events are drawing more Sonoma families than ever and your help is needed to ensure their success. If you could volunteer an hour or two of your time for any event, please contact Cyndi Wasserboehr @ social@hoasonoma.com or 512-294-2183.

FROM ONE NEIGHBOR TO ANOTHER.....

Sonoma is a family neighborhood made up of residents of all ages. Please be considerate when parking in your driveway to not block the sidewalk. We don't want young children, the elderly or handicapped neighbors to have to walk into the street to get around these cars...it is just not safe for them to have to do so! Thanks you for your consideration and for asking your guests to do the same!!

We Always Need An Extra Set Of Eyes

Please report any broken sprinklers or other irrigation irregularities to landscape@hoasonoma.com. This would include any areas sprinkling when you think they shouldn't or any water coming from sprinkler heads in an improper fashion. Currently the watering days for commercial property are Tuesday and Friday. Thank you for your assistance.



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Would you like to help us make the holidays brighter for hundreds of Central Texas foster children! Secret Santa is a special holiday gift program of the Adoption Coalition of Texas (ACT) helping Child Protective Services and foster families provide gifts and spread holiday cheer to Central Texas foster children through the generosity of community donors.

If you would like to be a Secret Santa this year and purchase holiday gifts for a Central Texas foster child, please email your name, email address and contact phone number to ACTSecretSanta@gmail.com. The gift drop-off days will be at several Austin-area locations on Wednesday through Saturday, December 5 – 8, and caseworkers will be picking up the gifts the following week. Once you sign up to be a donor, we'll send you all the details. Last year, thanks to the kindness of people like you, we brought smiles to the faces of more than 350 foster children!

The Adoption Coalition is a partnership of nonprofit adoption agencies and Child Protective Services working together to find forever families for abused and neglected children waiting for adoption. These are usually older children, sibling groups and children with special needs. For information about ACT and adoption, visit www.adoptioncoalitiontx.org.



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Why Knowing About Kilowatt-Hours Can Help You Save Money

By Chris Lee

Let's all admit it - we've all taken electricity for granted. As soon as we were young enough to reach the light switch to turn on the lights, we've never thought about electricity since it's been integrated into our lives as a basic necessity. By understanding a little bit about a Kilowatt-Hour (kWh) of electricity use, you'll more easily measure and compare the costs to operate your appliances in order to figure out how you can save some money.

The concept of kWh is difficult to visualize since most of us have forgotten the details of our high-school physics class (for those of us that actually took high school physics). Power, energy, time?...how can we define kWh? If you turned on twenty 100-watt lightbulbs in your house and left them on for 1 hour, you would have used 2 kWh (20 lightbulbs x 100w x 1 hour = 2000 watt-hours). And if you used your clothes dryer for an hour and your dryer is rated at 5000 watts, then you used 5 kWh (5000w x 1 hour). While each family uses electricity differently based on their living habits, here's a website that will give you an idea on

energy use of common household appliances. Caution: the dollar figures used in this chart are based on \$0.07 per kWh instead of their typical \$0.10 per kWh in Texas:

www.glendalewaterandpower.com/rates/appliance_operating_costs.aspx (Shortened: <http://goo.gl/kCeLA>)

So if you looked at your energy bill, you'll see that you're paying for the amount of kWh's that you and your family use. By knowing the concept of kWh you'll be able to more easily correlate your energy use to your energy bill and therefore be able to do more to save money. To help you save energy and therefore more money, here are some resources with helpful energy saving tips:

www.takealoadofftexas.com/index.aspx?id=energy-efficiency-tips
(<http://goo.gl/meydE>)

http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/energy_savers.pdf (<http://goo.gl/u3fuE>)

I hope you've understood the basics of a Kilowatt-Hour and how it's measured to help you see your energy usage. If you have any questions about this, please ping me at leec89@gmail.com.



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