

Volume 10, Issue 6 Village Creek Community Association

June 2013

## Village Creek Yard of the Month May 2013 **I7214 Eagle Ledge** Thank you to Plants for all Seasons for donating the gift certificates for each month's winner.



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Klein Fire Dept	
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(select 'emergency' option)	

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Willow Creek Elem (K-4).	
Northpointe Int (5-6)	
Willow Wood Jr (7-8)	
Tomball Memorial High S	chool

### HOA MGMT

Preferred Management		
Patti Tine	patti@preferredmgt.com	
Fax		
Mailing: P.O. Box 69020	69 Houston, TX 77269	
Village Creek Community Association Website:		
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### SERVICES

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FBI713-693-5000
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Municipal District Services (24 hrs)
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Trash pickup Tues/Fri
Recycling Fri (only newspapers/#1 & 2 plastics/aluminum cans)
Yard Storkkpuente@garygreene.com

### NEWSLETTER

Editor	
Jerry Gabbert	jgabbert@gmail.com
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Advertisingadvertising@PEELing	c.com, 888-687-6444

### **RESIDENT BOARD MEMBERS**

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Tom Brogan	
Richard Moore	
Website	www.preferredmgt.com/villagecreek
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My name is Ken McCoy and we have lived in Village Creek for the past nine years and was selected to serve on the HOA board in August 2011. My wife Tracy and I have 3 children – Ty, Chase and Kinsey.

I currently work for GE Oil & Gas and I enjoy golfing and spending time with my family and friends. I joined the HOA Board to become more involved in helping to improve the neighborhood as well as making Village Creek a better place to live for current and future homeowners. I really love working for the homeowners to increase the look and amenities that Village Creek has to offer and I look forward to continuing to do so once re-elected.





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I'm Jeff Lev and I am a current board member of the Village Creek HOA. Our family has been a member of this community for the last 6 years and we have really enjoyed our time living here. I am fortunate to work close by at HP, where I have been employed for 16 years. When I am not travelling to Asia for work, I like to play basketball at the Y, and camp with my children and our Cub Scout troop.

I have been a board member for 4 years and have enjoyed my time serving our community. We take great pride in representing the fine people in our neighborhood by trying to make it a great place to live. Serving in almost every capacity on the board through my time here, I have seen what has worked and also some of the challenges in our neighborhood. I have been active with multiple committees, trying to help wherever I am needed.

Throughout my time on the board, it has been very important to me that we not raise the homeowner's dues. The switch of management companies in the past few years was part of a long term plan that I supported in order to improve services for our community with lower overall costs. We have been able to efficiently use our funds to beautify all aspects of the neighborhood, mostly through our landscaping committee. This has been the largest outlay of funds in many years, and it is visible throughout the community.

For many years, I have been a supporter of a clubhouse for a neighborhood of our size and I am committed to making that a reality in

the near future. Plans are now in place and will continue to progress as this will be something we can all enjoy together once completed.

In my time on the Board, we have continually improved our neighborhood and made it a better place to live. I look forward to continuing that with your support in the coming years.





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### Empress Cove Block Party – Best Block Christmas Decorations Crawfish Boil

The men of Empress Cove Lane put on a great party for their families April 21<sup>st</sup> to celebrate their hard work in winning the Christmas Best Block in 2012. Neighbors on the street gathered to enjoy boiled crawfish, hamburgers and lots of desserts!



Pictured from left to right: Mike Seal, Scott Longtin, Stacy Hunter, Scott Cranston, Ryan McReynolds, Chad Tucker, Chris Laderer, Jerry Gabbert. No pictured Bob Peterson, Craig Gleadell and Chris Foley.

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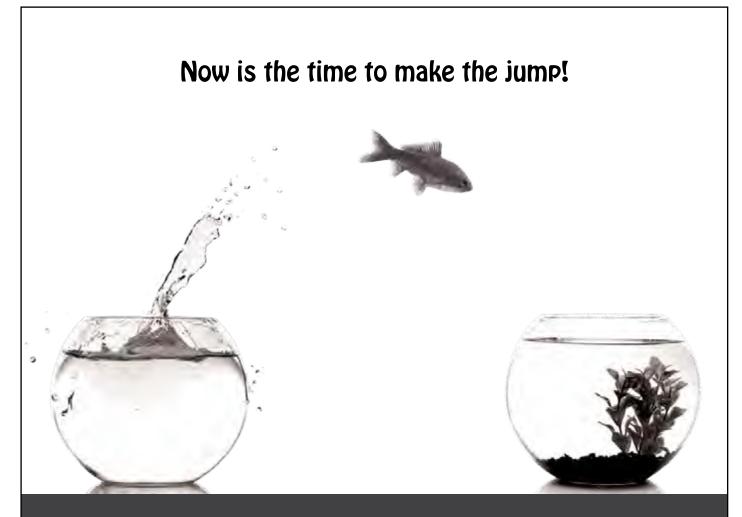
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# Village Creek HOME HANDYMAN HINTS MAY 2013

Gordon R. Watson

### REFRIGERATOR MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

The energy cost for average refrigerators in 1947 was about \$50 (today's dollars), which, surprisingly, is about the same as new refrigerators today; however, as can be seen from the graph, the time between 1947 and 1973, energy cost for average individual refrigerators increased to over \$200/year (some models were apparently as high as \$350/year). Then, slowly over the next 40 years, laws and/or common sense prevailed to bring energy costs back down to where it was in 1947. Of course refrigerators are bigger and have more features now.

### Figure 1

Cost to Run Average Refrigerator

If you have an older refrigerator, you may want to see if it makes sense for you to buy a new one based on energy savings. To see the actual energy cost for your refrigerator, see this excellent on-line calculator:

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=refrig.calculator

Today's refrigerators have many more features than a 1947 refrigerator, and some of these features need attention. When you take delivery of a new refrigerator, check the following. Once the deliveryman is gone, it will not be so easy to fix these problems.

Make sure that the delivery person levels it.

Check to assure that the doors are aligned.

Check the gasket(s) on the doors to make sure that the magnets inside seal tightly against the refrigerator metal. You can do this by trying to run a business card through the gap. A good seal will not allow it through. I have seen doors that had a 1/8" gap because of bad adjustments... enough to cause the refrigerator to waste significant energy

Most refrigerators have fan-cooled condenser coils at the bottom. These begin accumulating dust the first day you turn it on, and, slowly, the refrigerator becomes less efficient. The compressor works longer, and the energy bill goes up. I ran an energy test on coils with a year's dust accumulation on our fairly new refrigerator. Then I cleaned the coils and tested it again. Extrapolating, my test indicated a yearly energy cost increase of less than \$1.00, but if you wait long enough, this number will become significant. I have run similar tests where the energy waste was much higher (\$25/year). Note that we are a small family and have no pets. If you have a large family and pets, you may need to clean the coils more often.

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In many cases, the condenser coil is accessible from the front by removing the small plastic louvers below the door(s). These may be attached with friction clips or with screws. Once you have figured out how to remove the cover, you will see the dust-covered coils. These may be in the back in some models.

### Figure 2

About One Year's Dust Accumulation

A vacuum cleaner can easily clean the front of these, but it is likely that some dust will have started accumulating farther back as well. A special brush (available from hardware stores) is made to help with this job, but our coils are configured in a manner which didn't allow me to use a brush. I don't necessarily recommend my next step, but I have no problem with it. After cleaning most of the dust off with our small shop vacuum, I

(Continued on Page 7)



### Handyman Hints- (Continued from Page 6)

reversed the hose to blow air into the coils. This dislodged the dirt, but it does get some dust into the room. Maybe save this job until a day when you can open some windows for a bit. Optionally, just get what you can with the crevice cleaner in the vacuum mode. Next time I may run my bigger shop vacuum to catch some of the dust as it flies out.

Sticky things get spilled in refrigerators, and such spills often reach the door gasket. At least once a year, (and certainly whenever there is a spill), wipe the gasket and adjacent door frame off with a warm/wet/soapy cloth. You may want to go around the gasket with a soft plastic brush to get into the crevices. Then rinse and dry with a cloth. I have seen gaskets stick to the door frame, and then tear as the door was opened. It is very expensive to replace a refrigerator gasket.

Our refrigerator has a water filter to keep the ice and drink dispenser water safe, but I wish it weren't there. Our refrigerator is supplied with water from another filter system, so the refrigerator filter is redundant and just acts to reduce water pressure to the water dispenser. The refrigerator manufacturer advises us to change refrigerator filters every six months (even though he has no clue of what our water is like). The retail price of these is about \$39. Keeping in mind that our refrigerator uses about \$65/year in electricity, two of these filters may cost more than the refrigerator's energy. Fortunately, searches on the internet have found them at a lower cost, and we have changed it once in four years (because our water is already filtered).

There is another potential option for those of you who have a filter system ahead of the refrigerator. Some refrigerators have a bypass device available which will allow you to remove the old filter and eliminate it entirely. Do a search for your make and model and include the words, bypass plug, blank filter, or dummy filter in your search. If you cannot find a bypass plug for your model, and would like to reduce the number of filter changes, consider putting a pre-filter ahead of the refrigerator filter. GE's Whole House  $\frac{3}{4}$ " filter model GXWH04F (less than \$20) is an empty canister which can house different filter cartridges. The cartridges cost less than \$6 apiece. Look for the smallest micron level you can find as there are quite a few options available for the filter canister. This type of filter is not as convenient because it can be messy to change. You also need to have a place for it. I put ours under the kitchen sink. Its purpose is to remove larger particles which will clog your expensive refrigerator filter.

### Figure 3 Filter Canister

Refrigerator and freezer temperature will affect energy, so follow your refrigerator manual's advice. Ours says to keep the refrigerator at 37 degrees F and the freezer at 0 degrees F. I am guessing that the manufacturer knows what he is talking about. You may want to buy a good refrigerator thermometer (labeled NSF) to confirm your temperature settings. Until next time, happy home repair!



# LANDSCAPE CORNER

### June Lawn Comments

As I write this, we are still in a drought, so we probably will need to continue using water carefully. The experts predict that Texas' population will keep growing, but there will be less water available...both because of drought and requirements to use less underground water.

According to the book, Texas Gardener (TG) by Doug Welch, "Most lawns receive twice as much water as they require for healthy appearance." He says that you can observe your grass and watch for it to wilt. At that point, you have 24 to 48 hours to add an inch of water before serious injury.

"Texas Gardener" Magazine (TGM) advises that, if there is no rain, we should water once a week...and certainly no more than twice...but work toward once a week.

Raise your mower on Saint Augustine grass to 4" or more. Leave grass clippings on your lawn to enhance the soil beneath...and for lots of other reasons as discussed in the past.

Try using less fertilizer. Fertilizer forces more growth and a need for more water.

### "Consumer Reports" recommends fertilizing twice a year (a bit before Memorial Day and a bit before Labor Day). They suggest the fertilizer manufacturers have a vested interest in more fertilizing.

### June Vegetable Activity

Continue planting heat-loving vegetables such as southern peas, okra, cantaloupe, sweet potatoes, and pumpkins. Soil, for most vegetable gardens, should be maintained moist (not wet) 3" below the surface.

### June Trees and Shrubs

"Texas Gardener Magazine" (TGM) advises that roots of trees and shrubs which were planted during the fall to spring season be kept slightly damp. You should water these new trees and shrubs once a week and deep enough to keep the root ball and surrounding area moist. To allow time for the water to get to the root ball, you may need to water to the point of run-off, and then repeat several times. Make sure that new trees and shrubs have 3" of mulch beneath them to keep in moisture.

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### Landscape Corner- (Continued from Page 8)

### Cantaloupes

How do you know a cantaloupe is ready to eat? According to Audrey Jones of TGM (a direct quote), "The secret is on the end where the vine separates from the fruit: the more the indentation, the riper the melon. If there is a little part of the vine still in place, that fruit is less likely to be ripe." This advice applies only to typical cantaloupes. If the melon is a different variety, we apparently are on our own.

### Tree and Bush Reminder

From http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/ drought/mulches.html

When applying mulch around plants, cover the area of soil containing roots (which is commonly a few feet beyond the tree canopy). Keep mulch 6" away from trunk. Again: Please do not pile mulch against tree trunks. It isn't needed against trunks and may do harm. Place the mulch around the tree or bush as a "donut"...allowing the plant to be in the hole of the donut structure. It is traditional for Texans to create "volcanos" around their trees. Here are some comments regarding these "volcanos" from smithtree.com:

Keep the mulch no more than 2 to 4 inches deep. Get rid of your tree volcano. It can cause: insect and disease problems, excess moisture in the root system, nutrient deficiency or toxicity, creation of a habitat for rodents who chew bark or girdle trees, and, in some cases, encourage surface roots.

A tree volcano: The mulch is too high. Remove it until only 4" remains, and keep the mulch 6" away from the trunk.

Most of Village Creek's oaks are Live Oaks which probably will grow to between 40 and 60 feet tall with a width of 50 to 70 feet. Note that horizontal limbs will NOT rise in height as the tree matures. If anything, they will sag, so we all need to consider pruning the trees to accommodate future walking and automobile traffic. According to Texas A & M, prune Live Oaks in late February or early March when the trees lose and regain new leaves. Major pruning in winter often shocks trees, and it will lose its leaves. Dead limbs should be removed anytime during the year."

(Continued on Page 10)

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	June	71°	91°	52° (1984)	104° (1998)	4.58	0"
	Until next	t time, Happy Gar	dening! The Villa	ge Creek Lands	cape Committee	2	



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