



The Village Gazette

Volume 11, Issue 8
Village Creek Community Association

August 2014

Village Creek Yard of the Month

August, 2014
17327 Eagle Ledge

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The Village Gazette

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NEWSLETTER

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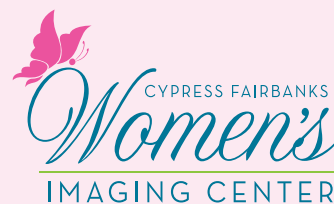
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A FEW DAYS IN THE LIFE OF A HOME HANDYMAN

by: Gordon R. Watson

DRIPPING FAUCETS

Vacationing at my mother-in-law's home always means doing some repair work. I like keeping busy, and there are generally some things needing attention. One of the recent issues there was a dripping kitchen faucet. Drips are really a thing of the past for most faucets. Happily, ceramic has replaced rubber as the seal, so most faucet manufacturers have a lifetime warranty of one sort or another. I gave her my standard verbal disclaimer (that her home's piping is old and something might break and require a real plumber). So far, I have never had to resort to calling one (knock on wood). I turned off the main water supply outside because her 1950's home doesn't have shut off valves (called stops in the trade) beneath the kitchen sink. Outside, after digging a hole in a flower planter to find the shut off valve, I gently advised her not to bury the main shut off valve because it wasn't designed to be buried, and it might be difficult to find quickly. In the kitchen again, fully expecting the old style rubber washers, I removed the kitchen faucet handle, protected the shiny chrome with masking tape, applied a wrench, and removed the faucet stem. To my surprise, the sink faucet did have new-style ceramic style seals. The problem, it turned out, was that debris, probably from her home's aging and rusting (50+ year old) galvanized pipes, had stuck in the ceramic cartridge, causing the seal to be incomplete. Fortunately, once I cleaned the debris out, the drip went away. I love it when I don't have to buy parts for a repair. The fact that the old piping is obviously corroding and slowly failing is another story for another time. Replacing that piping almost certainly will require a real plumber. Sometime I might mention to her that it might be a good idea to replace the old pipe on her schedule rather than the pipe's schedule.

CORROSION

Her home also has a clothesline (not all that common these days) which had all but fallen over. The old clothesline was the old style with two "crosses" each cross with a two-inch galvanized pipe stuck in concrete (with five ropes for holding the clothes). Over time, these pipes rusted away. The funny thing is that the pipes really only rusted in one place: about two inches above the ground and two inches below the ground. The remaining pipe was in near-perfect condition. Even the pipes buried twenty-four inches in the ground were near-perfect! My point in mentioning this is that this corrosion is caused by moisture and oxygen. While we will likely never have a clothesline, the principle applies to all materials such as iron and wood placed in the ground and prone to rust or wood rot. While there is little we can do about oxygen, to the degree



feasible, we should try to keep water away from anything placed in the ground. Better yet, when feasible, avoid putting anything which can rust or rot directly in the ground.

STUD FINDERS

Over the years, I have owned at least three electronic stud finders. These are the devices that are supposed to locate the wooden or metal studs behind the sheet rock. My history with them hasn't been trouble-free. My last one worked fairly well for a few years, but it recently proudly advised me that the closet wall I wanted to attach a shelf to, had no studs. I now have three "broken" stud finders in my tool box. I promise to properly dispose of them soon. Fortunately, while doing some work at my son and daughter-in-law's home, I found (in my son's tool chest) a non-electric, entirely rare earth magnet-type "stud finder" that works so well that I don't think I will ever go back to the electronic type. It is made by C.H. Hanson. Of course, it only indirectly finds the stud. It finds the nails or screws holding the sheet rock to the stud. At about \$10, it is a bargain. I just bought one for myself, and believe it may be the last I ever have to buy (unless I lose it, of course). Hint: Once a stud is found, you can apply painter's tape (masking tape (not too tight or you may strip away the paint) to the stud location, or you can place another magnet on the nail location as a marker.



TRAVEL TIPS

By Cahl Rasmussen

Last month I told you about the new airlines and service coming in and out of George Bush Intercontinental (IAH). As of this writing, United has announced new service to Santiago, Chile and Atlantic City, New Jersey.

With the US Airways and American Airlines merger, plans call for US Airways and American Airlines to merge their ticket counters at Terminal A sometime either this summer or fall. Frontier will move from their current spot, over to the east side of Terminal A next to Spirit Airlines.

Also in the last issue, I talked about Global Entry and how useful it is if you travel internationally. A new program at IAH is called CLEAR. It works a bit like Global Entry, but it is not run by the government. It is run privately, and there is a \$25.00 annual fee to join. CLEAR allows you to go to the front of the security line, but, unlike Global Entry, you will still need to remove your shoes, belt, laptop from its bag, and all liquids. Also, it is only available in select markets right now: nine airports.

With summer almost over, it is now time to begin thinking about holiday travel plans. Book early to avoid disappointment. Fares will only be going up as the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays approach, so

begin looking and pricing. Booking a connecting flight is sometimes cheaper than non-stop flights. So if you don't mind making a connection, it might save you a little money. Also I hear a lot at the airport about direct and non-stop flight and what the difference is. A non-stop is just that, from say Houston to Los Angeles. You leave Houston and land in Los Angeles. A direct flight is a flight from say Houston to Los Angeles, but you will make a stop somewhere. The flight number will not change and you might not even change planes, but you will stop at some point before you reach your destination. Example: I flew from Houston to Beijing, China awhile back. My flight was flight 89 from Houston to Newark. We changed planes, but the flight number from Newark to Beijing was still flight 89. That's a direct flight.

Lastly, think about flying to an alternate city. The New York area has three airports: Newark, JFK, and La Guardia. The Los Angeles area has five: LAX, Burbank, Orange County, Ontario, and Long Beach. Check flights to those cities if your travel plans can accommodate it. It could save you some money as well.

Happy Travels

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The Village Gazette

Landscape Corner

Gordon R. Watson

RAIN AND IRRIGATION

Our rainfall has been better this year, and it makes all the difference in our landscaping. Nothing matches Mother Nature for excellent watering. I am sure that we would all love to just turn our systems off. However, if it doesn't rain, plan to supplement rain with a bit of irrigation.

LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Much progress has been made during the last year with Village Creek's landscaping. The entrance from Spring Cypress to the Club House has been spruced up significantly. The landscape around the Clubhouse has been improved. Dead and dying trees have been removed. New trees will be planted in the fall and winter. Landscape beds throughout Village Creek have been improved.

POOL AREA

Did you notice that the Village Creek pool area has wonderful new shading, fresh coating on the splash pad, new patio furniture, and many other improvements? Thanks to the Board and Pool Committee for making this nice area even better. Attendance is way up this year!

TREES

On average, Houston gets about one inch of rain each month. Mature trees and bushes will need an inch of water every one to two weeks to just stay alive. If your trees are in lawns, you will need to add a bit more water, as they are competing with the lawn for moisture. Younger trees will need even more water to keep their roots in moist soil. Do a slow soaking a few feet from the trunk to a foot or two beyond the canopy (outer-most leaves). A soaker hose works well for watering trees, but any method will do.

LAWNS

Arrange to keep the mower clippings on the lawn. With the exception of golf course putting greens, there are few arguments for bagging clippings. If your water system is automated, water several times a day to allow water to soak in rather than all at one time. If possible, water during mornings or evenings rather than in the heat of the day (to minimize loss of water through evaporation). Cut your grass high (three inches or more). If you have bare spots, August is a good month to fix those problems. Add sod or plugs, and make sure you keep the new grass moist during the first few weeks. Also consider that bare spots may be caused by inadequate sprinkler coverage. In those cases, adjust or add sprinkler heads as needed.

(Continued on Page 7)



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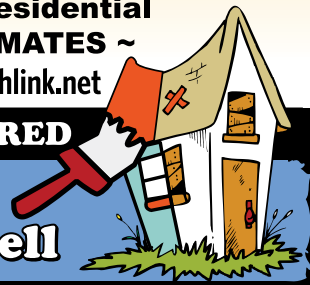
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The Village Gazette

(Continued from Page 6)

VEGETABLES

We had GREAT success with tomatoes this year, but as the heat rises, tomatoes pretty much die out. Our success with cucumbers was less stellar. The best vegetables for the hot part of summer are okra and southern pea seeds and transplants of eggplant and peppers. August is the time to plant green beans, cucumbers and summer squash.

FALL COLOR

If you want fall color, this is the time to plant marigolds and petunias. If using seeds, start them in a shady part of the yard.

MULCH

Maintain three inches of mulch around all plants and bare areas. Mulch keeps water in, keeps the heat out, and greatly reduces the need for weeding. Do keep mulch six inches or so away from tree and bush trunks. Remember that mulch "tree volcanoes" can damage trees. Make sure your trees and bushes get a good drink once or twice a week from rain or from irrigation.

ROSES

Expect roses to look quite bad by late summer. In August, cut back between 1/4 and 1/3 of the bush. Fertilize with straight nitrogen such as ammonium sulfate. Use one half pound of ammonium sulfate per

plant in mid-August. Distribute the fertilizer around the drip line. If no blooms appear in the first week of September, add a second application. Water thoroughly after pruning and fertilizing. Maintain three inches of mulch.

FRUIT TREES

We planted four tiny citrus trees five years ago. One of them died. We had no idea what the remaining citrus were. Finally, this year, we had lots of limes on one of them. We are still waiting on the other two to find out what they are. We need to work on record-keeping. According to Texas Gardener Magazine, this is the month to stop fertilizing all fruit trees.



Fourth of July *Celebration*

Village Creek's 4th of July was begun in grand fashion with an old time patriotic parade led by the Klein Volunteer Fire Department. Their ladder truck was followed by waving American flags, a classic U.S. Army truck, and a parade of hundreds of Village Creek families...many riding elegantly decorated bikes and all other manner of conveyance. After the parade, the spirited celebration continued with great food, refreshing swimming, and festive entertainment. The weather was more than perfect. Thanks to the Village Creek Social Committee for their hardwork!



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TENNIS TIPS

By USPTA/PTR Master Professional
Fernando Velasco



The Modern Game: The Backhand Approach Shot

In previous newsletters, I offered tips on how to execute the basic strokes for players who are just beginning to play tennis or who want to resume playing.

I am now offering suggestions on how to play the “modern” game mostly geared towards players who are happy with hitting the ball over the net and controlling the point with consistency. These players may be already playing for leagues or in tournaments and are looking for more “weapons” on the court.

In this issue, I will offer instructions on how to execute the Top Backhand Approach Shot. This shot is used when an opponent hits a soft shot that has bounced high over the net. The player will take advantage and will charge to the net, thus hitting with top spin high over the net and hit with power. When the ball hits the court, it will take a big hop, forcing the opponent to fall back close to the fence, or to hit the ball on the rise. This shot can be used as a “winner” or as an “approach shot.”

In the illustrations, Kaylen Combs, one of the top players of the Grey Rock Tennis Academy, shows the proper technique to execute this stroke. Kaylen is coached by the Director of the Tennis Academy, Darin Pleasant, who is showing her the proper point of contact on step 2. Kaylen plays with her left hand.

Step 1: The Back Swing: When Kaylen sees the opportunity, she makes a quick turn of her upper body and takes the racket high and back. The head of the racket is now at shoulder height, her shoulders are turned, the right hand gripping the racket and her left hand relaxed. Her weight is on the front foot as her momentum carries her forward to attack the ball. Her right wrist

is “laid back” to allow maximum point of contact.

Step 2: The Point of Contact: The success of a top spin shot is keeping the ball on the strings going from low to high in a 30 degree angle and accelerating the racket head around the outside of the ball. Kaylen started the swing high and “looped” it to allow the head of the racket to drop down. She will be brushing around the outside of the ball as she makes contact with it. Her left shoulder is almost opening and her weight has is moving through the shot.

Step 3: The Follow Through: In order to get maximum control and power, Kaylen is keeping her right arm extended through the shot. She has “snapped” her right wrist and has the head of the racket facing down. Her weight is going forward.

Step 4: The Finish: Kaylen’s upper body acceleration forced the head of the racket to “wrap around” her left ear, thus creating the most power and topspin on the ball. Her legs are already in position to move forward the net for a volley. Her right foot should naturally move forward due to her momentum and racket speed. From her looks, she apparently hit a very wide cross court approach shot for a defensive return.

Step 5: The Volley Winner: Once Kaylen hit, she moved to the net for a “winner”. By the smile on her face, her backhand approach shot was successful and she won the point with a backhand volley.

Look in the next Newsletter for: “*The Modern Game: The Swinging Forehand Approach Shot*” Court Time at no additional cost and being able to reserve court time seven days in advance

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