

The Village Gazette



Volume 11, Issue 9
Village Creek Community Association

September 2014

Village Creek Yard of the Month

SEPTEMBER, 2014
17706 Feathers Landing Drive

Thanks to Plants for all Seasons for donating the gift certificates for each month's winner. Photograph and Judging by Laura Domangue, Landscape Committee and Board Member



The Village Gazette

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 Constables Office 281-376-3472, 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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 (select 'emergency' option)

SCHOOLS

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 Willow Creek Elem (K-4)..... 281-357-3080
 Northpointe Int (5-6)..... 281-357-3020
 Willow Wood Jr (7-8) 281-357-3030
 Tomball High (9-12) 281-357-3220
 Tomball Memorial High School 281-357-3230
 Transportation..... 281-357-3193

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SERVICES

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Domestic Violence 281-401-6250
 FBI..... 713-693-5000
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 www.centerpointenergy.com/outage
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 Comcast - Cable/High Speed Internet..... 713-341-1000
 Republic Waste..... 713-849-0400
 Trash pickup Tues/Fri
 Recycling Fri (only newspapers/#1 & 2 plastics/aluminum cans)
 Yard Stork kpuente@garygreene.com

NEWSLETTER

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Reminder: If you want to read "The Village Gazette" on line (including past issues from January, 2012). Here is the link: <http://www.peelinc.com/newsletter.php?newsletter=VC>.

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The Great Water Closet Mystery

Gordon R. Watson

Recently, in one of our bathrooms, about a quart of water mysteriously appeared on the tile floor. There were no leaks anywhere on or around the toilet. None under the sink. I even went to the attic to check above that bathroom. Very odd. I dried the floor and accepted the belief that my grandson had just been a bit exuberant while taking a bath. Then, a few days later, the water reappeared, and I couldn't blame him. Upon further checking, I found that the small plastic line inside of the tank (used to refill the bowl after a flush) had broken loose. It had shot water upward to the tank cover and apparently dripped down the back of the tank. The reason it had come loose is that the overflow tube inside of the toilet had gotten old and cracked.

I easily reattached the tube, but, because the parts were more than ten years old, I decided that it would be best to replace the entire overflow tube. I talked it over with my wife, and we decided to replace all of the tank parts. Our local hardware store sold a kit including a new float valve, new overflow tube, and new flapper for less than \$20. Nice. The entire job took about an hour. Great! Not many jobs go so smoothly. There weren't even any leaks. I should have been suspicious as jobs normally don't go so smoothly.

Well, it was immediately obvious that the toilet didn't flush very well at all. The water just sort of built up in the bowl and moved around as if in an earthquake or a ship in high seas, slowly draining as if the drain were plugged. This wouldn't do at all. I figured I must have dropped something down the drain. I removed the tank again, and this time removed the entire toilet from the floor. I inspected everything. I ran a snake down through the floor for twenty feet. I ran a snake through the S curve in the toilet bowl. I even ran a garden hose through the floor drain. Nothing was obviously amiss. Dang.

I put the whole thing back together. Same thing. The flush was awful. My wife, kindly, intending good will, mentioned that "maybe we should get a new toilet." Not being a quitter, I mumbled something like, "I'm not there yet." Actually, the thought had crossed my mind several times. It even crossed my mind that I might have to hire a plumber. Gasp! Then a mental calculation advised me that it would be cheaper to buy a toilet than hire a plumber.

Well, I thought, maybe I should put the old overflow tube back on with original gaskets, etc. This required that I remove the old tube and glue a new $\frac{3}{4}$ " PVC pipe to replace the crumbling old tube. I did that. Reinstalled. Flushed. What the heck? It works fine.

What do I think? Honestly, I really still don't know. Maybe it is because even though the new overflow pipe, flapper, and flapper seat are pretty much the same as the old, the new flapper opened

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backwards from the old. Or maybe there is another reason someone can contact me about. Aliens? Ghosts? Moon alignment?

My permanent fix? I guess, eventually, I may try to install a new overflow pipe that is more like the original. Lesson learned? None, really. Just verified again that even the simplest job often turns out going awry.

A REALLY GOOD PRODUCT

My wife mentioned today that our oak front door was getting a bit dusty. I got a pail of water with a bit of soap and washed it down. Then I sprayed it lightly with the garden hose, and dried it. Finally, I put a coat of Howard SunShield on. I also cleaned our porch oak chairs and polished them with it. This stuff made the door and furniture look really good. It has UV inhibitors (sort of a sun screen for wood). It only took about 1/8th of the bottle. At about \$13 per 16 ounce bottle, it is reasonable compared to the pain of refinishing a door. Any exterior clear finish takes a beating... even more so if exposed to direct sunlight (which our door isn't). When I do finish exterior wood with a clear finish, I always try to use spar varnish. It is better than ordinary polyurethane for sunlight. Hopefully, a yearly SunShield coating will keep our exterior wood looking good.



Official Notice COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE

Sharon Gabbert, Board Member, has notified the "Village Gazette" that there will be a Community Garage Sale on Friday, October 17th and Saturday, October 18th.

Clean out that attic and shovel out that garage. Move that unused sofa out on the driveway. Sell that extra car. Sell that extra airplane. Sell that extra 50' yacht. Sell that extra 60" HD television.

Buy junk, and sell antiques. Make big bucks! The whole neighborhood will be negotiating, renegotiating, selling, and buying. Who knows, even the American Pickers might show up. Don't miss it!

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Travel Tips

By Cahl Rasmussen

In the last two articles I have written, I have told you about airfares, new destinations, Global Entry, CLEAR and the differences between nonstop and direct flights. I thought for this article I would talk to you about destinations.

First of all, for travel for the upcoming fall months. I know that for you with children this may not apply since the kids are just getting back to school and fall travel is unrealistic. For those "empty nesters" or those without children, fall is a very good time to think about taking that well deserved vacation.

I would first consider Europe. Out of Houston (IAH) there is, of course, United, but you also have several foreign flagged air carriers that can get you there. KLM to Amsterdam, Lufthansa to Frankfurt, Singapore to Moscow, Air France to Paris, two flights by British Airways to London, and the new service by Scandinavian Air Service to Stavanger Norway. If these

destinations aren't for you, United offers connections out of Newark to all of the major European cities.

If traveling after September 15th, airfare usually drops or deals are offered. It is a slow time for the airlines, and they want passenger in those seats, so there are deals to be had. Secondly, hotels and B&B's usually drop their rates as well, and, best of all, the crowds of tourists are mostly gone. Europe in late September or early October usually has nice weather. It is not as hot as summer, and it is just lovely in the fall.

So if you are looking to cool down after this long, hot, humid Houston weather, consider going to Europe. You will see history much older than this country. You will meet new people and best of all you don't even need to drive. Getting around by train or subway is the best way to see Europe.

Happy Travels

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Landscape Corner

By Gordon R. Watson

Tomatoes

The heat in Middle July finally got to our tomatoes, but some, particularly the cherry tomatoes, continued through July into August, but the best tomatoes matured in June. The year 2014 tomato crop was the finest since we arrived in 2009. We had big tomatoes and small ones. We even had some "volunteer" tomatoes that came up from our compost pile. I have no idea why our previous years were not as productive. Anyway, we will certainly plant tomatoes next year. They taste so good when freshly picked.

Caprese Salad

Our garden has basil in the summer, and we had vine ripened tomatoes, so we had quite a few Caprese Salads this summer. Even I can make it now. It is so nice that you just go outside and pick tomatoes and cut basil for a meal. Another great herb is Sage. Just this evening, our daughter served us fried Sage. Delicious, and it grows so well here. Check with your nursery about the eatable varieties.

Vegetable Planting in September (from AgriLife Extension of Texas A&M)

Early September: Beans (*Snap, Lima, and Bush*)

Middle September: Beets, Chinese cabbage, Collards, Kohlrabi plants, Eggplants plants, Mustard, Peas (*English and snap*), Radishes,

Planting Trees and Bushes

September is a great time to plant containerized trees and shrubs that are not cold sensitive. It is not a good month for bare-roots or plants that may be damaged by early freezes. Typically, the days are not as hot as summer, and rains are often more common...conditions which are very good for new plants.

Dead-head (remove old blooms) perennials.

This will encourage the plant to add more blooms.

Mulch anytime

Most weeds hate shade, and mulch provides shade which reduces weeds, and reduces the need for water. Mulch also creates a wonderful fresh look for the yard.

Lawn and Garden Watering

As the temperature drops, use the "seasonal adjustment" to lower your watering time to much less than in the heat of summer. Water your plants less, but if it doesn't rain, do water trees and shrubs to assure they have sufficient water.

Lawn Fertilizing

Fall is the most important season to fertilize a lawn. Wait until the growth slows, but has not stopped. For our area, November is a good time to fertilize. READ the instructions on the fertilizer bag.

Live Oaks

As most of you know, our community has hundreds of Live Oaks in our yards and reserve areas. I took ten minutes one day to use chalk to mark the diameter of our Live Oaks in our front yard. Assuming they will be reasonably small (say 60 feet tall by 60 feet in diameter), and knowing that old Live Oaks are both beautiful and huge, it wasn't a surprise that they took up most of our front yard and more. The following is a direct quotation from the U.S. Forest Service regarding Oaks and preparation for when they mature. Note that this quote is widely used in many articles with different authors. For that reason, I cannot give the original author credit

"One of the biggest problems with Live Oak in our cities is the lack of pruning. Therefore, it is not a plant-and-forget tree. Because this tree can live a long time, it is important to develop proper trunk and branch structure early in the life of the tree. Prune the tree each year for the first three years, then every five years to age 30. Such a pruning program will ensure that the tree develops into a strong, long-lived fixture in the community, and will help develop the 14 to 15 foot tall vehicle clearance needed for planting along city streets."

A concern has been mentioned to the Landscape Committee that oaks along our streets may be causing damage to trucks and school buses. It would be wise to try to prune them properly now before the trees become bigger.

Until next time, Happy Gardening!

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