



April 2016

**COURTYARD HOMEOWNERS
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

COURTYARD CALLER

Official Courtyard Newsletter

Volume 12, Number 4

Message FROM THE *Board*

Happy Springtime to Everyone! Fresh new leaves on the trees, beautiful flowers, birds singing, longer days to enjoy the outside. Spring is also a time when many of us are doing general cleaning or “fix’in up” things in and around our homes and yards. Along these lines, please keep in mind that trash containers should be stored where they are not visible from the street between trash pick-up days. The City’s ordinance states that trash containers can go out the evening before pick-up (Thursday for us) and should be back in place the next night (Friday night). If you can’t get them in your garage, please find an alternative location on your property that is not visible from the street. Big bushes (or small ones on the way to growing bigger) and a little neighborly cooperation work wonders in this regard – and if you and your next door neighbors (who might be able to see them) are okay with where you each stash them, then that’s okay with us. If you are going to be out of town for a long weekend and need to set them out before you leave, please consider asking a neighbor to move them up close to your house. Cooperation is greatly appreciated. Keep in mind that blue recycling containers are picked up every other Friday -- April 8 & 22 this month.

Hope you had a chance to stop by and enjoy the fun at this year’s Easter Egg Hunt in our Community Park

on Saturday, March 26. Thank you to Social Committee Chairman, Joany Price, and all the volunteers who gave their time to make this event possible. PLEASE NOTE THAT WE NEED SOME CO-CHAIRS FOR THE JULY 4 PARADE & PICNIC CELEBRATION. Joany cannot be here on July 4 but has everything well organized and will have this year’s preparations ready to go. We simply need some volunteers to help manage things that morning. If you have attended this event in the past, you know how much fun everyone has. Please get in touch with Joany if you can help out. joanyprice@gmail.com.

Check out the new website page for latest information on Fire Safety activities in the Courtyard. Watch a sobering but very good video showing how wildfires get started and can spread so quickly and what you can do to increase your chances of surviving one. You can also request a free risk evaluation for the outside of your home from this page.

Don’t forget that the NW area wide Garage Sale is May 7 (rain day May 14). We provide advertising in the Austin American Statesman and have signs to put out in the neighborhood to help direct buyers to your location. Contact Joany Price for more information.

Drive Safely in the Courtyard !

April showers...

bring May sales.



**Your Courtyard Neighbor
& Tennis Club Member**

Joany Price

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Courtyard Book Club

*Tuesday, May 3, 2016
5216 Scout Island Cir North*

The Courtyard Book Club will be discussing two related selections for May, *Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker* and *Behind the Scenes: Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House*.

New York Times bestselling author Jennifer Chiaverini's compelling historical novel, *Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker*, unveils the private lives of Abraham and Mary Lincoln through the perspective of the First Lady's most trusted confidante and friend, her dressmaker, Elizabeth Keckley. In a life that spanned nearly a century and witnessed some of the most momentous events in American history, Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley was born a slave. A gifted seamstress, she earned her freedom by the skill of her needle, and won the friendship of First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln by her devotion. A sweeping historical novel, *Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker* illuminates the extraordinary relationship the two women shared, beginning in the hallowed halls of the White House during the trials of the Civil War and enduring almost, but not quite, to the end of Mrs. Lincoln's days.

Keckley saved scraps from the dozens of gowns she made for Mrs. Lincoln, eventually piecing together a tribute known as the Mary Todd Lincoln Quilt. She also saved memories, which she fashioned into a book, *Behind the Scenes: Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House*. Upon its publication, Keckley's memoir created a scandal that compelled Mary Todd Lincoln to sever all ties with her, but in the decades since, Keckley's story has languished in the archives. In this impeccably researched, engrossing novel, Chiaverini brings history to life in rich, moving style.

All are welcome to join the group that meets the first Tuesday of each month. For more information contact Lou Blemaster at 512-551-2659 or email loublemaster@gmail.com.

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Courtyard Fire Safety News – April 2016 Firewise for 2016

Congratulations Courtyard homeowners! Your 2015 efforts in fire safety under the banner of being “Firewise” have resulted, once again, in Courtyard being designated a Firewise Community. Thanks to the Fire Safety Committee and homeowner volunteers who have made this possible. Special thanks to Jim Gattis for his leadership in getting to this point starting back in 2013.

USAA Homeowners Insurance Discount

Maintaining the Firewise Community designation provides a particular benefit to homeowners insured with USAA. Texas has approved filings by USAA to give homeowners insurance discounts to USAA members living in communities recognized by the Firewise Communities/USA® program. This discount applies to policies issuing or renewing on or after 6/30/2015. If you obtained new insurance after this date, you will automatically receive the discount – amounting to approximately 5% off your full premium. If you are extending insurance obtained prior to this date, check your policy to ensure you are receiving the discount. If not, bring this to the attention of USAA to receive your discount.

Wildfire Risk to Homes

The 2013 Texas A&M Forest Service wildfire risk assessment for Courtyard community concluded the obvious: we are in a high risk area, and there are opportunities we should take advantage of to reduce wildfire risk to our homes. These include:

- All homes in the community obtaining a Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) Assessment to determine how best to harden each home against wildfire “ember intrusion” that will destroy a house (We term this assessment for Courtyard residents an “evaluation”)
- Creating a “defensible space” around homes in response to findings from the evaluation
- Managing vegetation and reducing potential fuel sources in our common areas

For an excellent tutorial on how the community homeowners can respond to the risk, see Making Your Home Firewise <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6jV-gM9EwQ>

To sign up with the Courtyard Fire Safety Committee to schedule an evaluation by one of our trained teams, email fire-safety@courtyardhoa.org.



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ANNUAL NW AUSTIN COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE

It's that time again! Time to purge, declutter and score some cash! Mark your calendars for the Courtyard's Annual Neighborhood Garage Sale

Saturday May 7nd (rain day May 14)

This annual event which includes neighboring communities is always a big success. And we make it easy for you!

The Homeowners Association will take care of advertising in the Austin American Statesman and putting up signs in the neighborhood.

Not sure you have enough stuff to sell? No problem, just team up with a neighbor.

What about those leftover items that don't sell? No worries, the HOA has an arrangement with Settlement Home for Children (www.settlementhome.org) to come by the day of the sale and pick up any leftovers for donation. You will need to contact them directly to set it up.

If you would like a sign placed near your home, we'll do that too. Contact Joany Price (775-8942; joanyprice@gmail.com) to reserve your sign.

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Honey Bee Swarms

Honey bees are beneficial by producing honey, wax and pollinating crops. With warmer temperatures, honey bees are becoming more active and may soon begin to swarm.

Honey bee swarms look like a large clump of bees clustered together. The swarm may stay in a location from a few hours to a week. Swarms are produced as a part of the colony's reproductive process. An established colony produces a new queen, causing the old queen and half the worker bees to leave the colony to search for a new nesting location. Swarming honey bees are usually gentle and unlikely to sting. Swarms are not protecting their home, food or offspring. Scout bees are sent out from the swarm to search for a nesting site. Colonies produce comb and honey and are defensive. Bees from a colony are more likely to sting as they are guarding their home, food and offspring.

Sometimes, honey bee colonies can be found in wall voids, chimneys, attics or sheds. If bees are in a wall void, DO NOT block their entrance; this makes them search for another way to exit and could lead bees into the structure. To keep bees from entering a home, seal any holes found in walls where pipes enter the home, cracks in window framing, knotholes, weep holes, or cracks between wood and brick junctures.

While many enjoy having honey bees around, some people are severely allergic to their venom. This, along with other situations, such as bees located near sensitive areas (such as playgrounds) may require removal or even extermination of the bees.

People should NOT try remove or exterminate bees on their own. Beekeepers and pest control companies have equipment to carry out these jobs in a safe manner. The city or county does not provide bee removal services.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

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POEM IN YOUR POCKET DAY

April 21, 2016

Every April, on Poem in Your Pocket Day, people celebrate by selecting a poem, carrying it with them, and sharing it with others throughout the day at schools, bookstores, libraries, parks, workplaces, and on Twitter using the hashtag #pocketpoem. Find out more about this and other ways to celebrate National Poetry Month at www.poets.org.

Otherwise by Jane Kenyon

I got out of bed
on two strong legs.
It might have been
otherwise. I ate
cereal, sweet
milk, ripe, flawless
peach. It might
have been otherwise.
I took the dog uphill
to the birch wood.
All morning I did
the work I love.
At noon I lay down
with my mate. It might
have been otherwise.
We ate dinner together
at a table with silver
candlesticks. It might
have been otherwise.
I slept in a bed
in a room with paintings
on the walls, and
planned another day
just like this day.
But one day, I know,
it will be otherwise.

Morning – by Billy Collins

Why do we bother with the rest of the day,
the swale of the afternoon,
the sudden dip into evening,
then night with his notorious perfumes,
his many-pointed stars?
This is the best—
throwing off the light covers,
feet on the cold floor,
and buzzing around the house on espresso—
maybe a splash of water on the face,
a palmful of vitamins—

(Continued on Page 7)

(Continued from Page 6)

but mostly buzzing around the house on espresso,
dictionary and atlas open on the rug,
the typewriter waiting for the key of the head,
a cello on the radio,
and, if necessary, the windows—
trees fifty, a hundred years old
out there,
heavy clouds on the way
and the lawn steaming like a horse
in the early morning.



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Questions about the event?
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or Wendi Baldwin
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Real Estate Activity – January 1-March 7, 2016

THE COURTYARD

Single-Family Residences

ACTIVE	#BR/BA	#LIV	#GAR	Year Built	SQ FT	\$/SQ FT	LIST PRICE
5606 Parade Ridge	2/2.5	2	2	1995	2,205	\$217.23	\$479,000
PENDING							
5803 Harrinton Cove	3/2.5	1	2	1985	2,670	\$198.13	\$529,000
5909 Tom Wooton Dr	4/2.5	2	2	1985	2,641	\$225.29	\$595,000
5600 N Scout Island Cir	3/3	2	2	1995	2,786	\$224.34	\$625,000
SOLD							
5502 Courtyard Drive	2/2	2	2	1995	1,855	\$215.58	\$399,900
5722 Sam Houston Cir	4/3	2	2	1985	2,830	\$225.44	\$638,000
5314 N Scout Island Cir	4/3.5	2	2	1999	3,743	\$296.55	\$1,110,000

Information compiled from the Austin Multiple Listing Service.

For more details concerning pricing of homes in your neighborhood, please contact me.



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