THE OF A COLUME 13 | ISSUE 5 | MAY 2016

EYE-CATCHING Village Creek Gard

12634 Willow Breeze is one of many beautiful yards in Village Creek. If you want to recommend a Village Creek Eye-Catching Yard or a portion of a yard (even your own!) for The Voice, please send us a note and picture (or we will take it) at villagecreek@peelinc.com. We can't promise that we will publish all, but will certainly consider all we receive.



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

IN CASE OF ANY EMERGENCY DIAL 911

SCHOOLS

Tomball ISD	.tomballisd.net
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

SERVICES

Harris County Animal Control
Lost/Found Pets Nextdoor.com
Harris County Veterinary Public Health281-999-3191
Municipal District Services (24 hrs) 281-2906503
For leaks, outages and Sewer stoppage
Reliant-Street lights www.centerpointenergy.com/outage
Republic Waste713-849-0400
Trash pickup Tues/Fri
Recycling Fri (only newspapers/#1 & 2 plastics/aluminum

Recycling Fri (only newspapers/#1 & 2 plastics/aluminum cans)

Digging? Two days prior to ANY digging in your yard, call 811 or use http://www.lonestar811.com/

NEWSLETTER

Publisher - Peel, Inc	81
Advertisingadvertising@PEELinc.com, 888-687-64	i 44
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The Enigma of the Light Bulbs

Another House Detective Mystery By Gordon R. Watson

It was one of those rainy Tomball mornings. It gets so humid in the spring that the clouds just can't take the weight anymore. Water just falls, less like rain and more like a waterfall. I once read that if all of the moisture in the Earth's atmosphere were to rain down, it would cover the Earth only in 1" of water. Tomball gets more than its share. Over a three or four hours, I have seen as much as 8" of rain fall. In a typical year, we get about five feet of rain. Think of that!

My windshield wipers snapped from left to right, barely able to keep up. My thoughts wandered as Elvis sang on AM.

I was on my way to another case. I pulled up in front of the house located outside of the limits of Tomball. One large oak tree covered the yard completely. Beautiful. I noticed that the doorway was protected by a gutter and a porch. Nice. The doorbell rang, and the client came to the door. She explained that a circuit breaker had tripped, but that wasn't the whole story. I asked her to stick with just the facts. She had tried to remove the lightbulbs from two light fixtures, but they wouldn't budge. She showed me the electrical panel. One of the breakers had tripped. I tagged it to assure someone didn't turn it back on. Then she guided me to the two affected rooms. There were the remnants of three light bulbs stuck in their bases, shards of glass waiting to cut someone (probably me). Detective work is dangerous. Very.

I made sure that the light switch was off, and went to work. I checked the loose wires with my Fluke VoltAlert checker, just to make sure that there was no stray current around. You can never be too careful around electricity.

Getting a broken lightbulb which is stuck in a socket can be a challenge. Not too many things in life can cut and shock you at the same time. I have heard of people removing them by jamming potatoes or soap onto the broken bulb, and there are even tools designed for this purpose. I tried a heavy leather glove first. That didn't work, so I used pliers and even some needle-nosed pliers. Finally, I got them all out with a minimum of blood spilled. I replaced the bulbs, and flipped the breaker back on. Lights!

Generally, light bulbs will not stick in bases where the bases are down. They will stick where the bases are sideways, up, in high heat conditions, or outside. The best thing to do with such bulbs is to add a tiny bit of dielectric grease to the bulb threads. Hardware and car parts stores carry such grease, which is specifically formulated for light bulbs and other electrical connections. Ordinary grease might be conductive, drip, and even catch fire.

I drove back to the office to fill out the paperwork. The rains continued. Windshield wipers clicked. Tires sloshed, and the sky lit up with a bright flash...followed by a thunderous boom which shook the car. It was just another spring day in Tomball.

The Voice LANDSCAPE CORNER

By The Editor

This month, remove the dead Crape Myrtle flowers to force more flower growth.

Vegetables: Heat tolerant vegetables can be planted now. Among these are sweet potatoes, pumpkins, squashes, and southern peas. Plant sunflowers. They are so fast growing. Kids love the big ones. Plant them at least 12" apart.

Trees: Fertilize this month and keep 4" of mulch around the drip line (but keep mulch away from the trunk). Upper horizontal roottops should almost show.

If you haven't applied your spring lawn fertilizer, apply one pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet soon. What does Texas A&M say about buying fertilizers? Check out their web site on this subject.

From: http://aggieturf.tamu.edu/answers4you/fertilization.html We can expect the average temperature in May to be about 85, so we are definitely into the watering season. The Houston area has had a very good rainy season so far, but make sure you make up for those weeks when it doesn't rain. The best way to determine if your lawn needs water is to step on a sharp shovel to see how far it is easy to insert. If you cannot shove it 4" to 6" easily, the lawn probably needs to water. Remember that our lawns, during summer, require between 0.75 and 1 inch per week. This must come from either rain or irrigation. Got a continuously wet spot in your yard? It is likely an irrigation valve leaking internally...far away from the actual soggy area.

Until next time, Happy Gardening!





MANY VILLAGE CREEK ROOFS ARE DAMAGED FROM JANUARY 8TH, 2016 WIND & HAIL STORMS. THE HAIL SIZE WAS APPROXIMATELY 3/4" BUT HAS DAMAGED ROOFS THAT ARE AT LEAST 12 YEARS OLD DUE TO THEIR DETERIORATED CONDITION.

LIMITED TIME LEFT TO FILE A CLAIM!

HAIL & WIND STORM DAMAGE?

FIND OUT IF YOU QUALIFY FOR A NEW ROOF COVERED BY YOUR INSURANCE (EVEN IF YOU'VE BEEN DENIED) DON'T GET LEFT OUT!!!



(VILLAGE CREEK RESIDENTS ONLY)

* includes basic roof maintenance of caulking around roof flashings & general roof inspection for up to one hour. Does not include material. May also be applied to complete roof replacement.

CALL (281) 376-7474 FOR A FREE ESTIMATE WWW.ANDERSONRESTORE.COM

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Digging a hole? Call 811 for a Free Locating Service

By The Editor

Digging? Call 811. No matter how small the hole, 811 wants you to call them. If you are planting a tree, installing an irrigation system, putting up a fence, or doing anything in your yard requiring a hole, there is a risk of hitting a gas line, power line, telephone, cable, or some other utility. To avoid this, you must call for a free locator at phone number 811 or use their web site www.call811.com. The agency is Lonestar 811, and they are open 24/7. You must call them at least two working days ahead and not more than 14 days. Keep in mind that 811 will send out several different locators for the different utilities such as gas, electricity, cable, and telephone.

What they will not locate are those lines which were installed by the home owner (you or previous). Frankly, they won't know where to look for those. I once helped my son with an irrigation job where 811 located all of the lines, but neither they nor we were aware of a natural gas line that had been run in a shallow manner around the house by a previous home owner. We actually hit and cut it because it was buried only a foot below the surface. Fortunately, it didn't result in an explosion or fire.

Note that it will help the locator if you identify where you are digging with a white flag or white paint and advise him of this.

When you dig, for the safety of you, your family, and your neighbors, call 811. http://call811.com/before-you-dig/do-i-really-need-call

Tomball Art League (TAL) - May 14

Join us at the TAL meeting May 14. This will be the last meeting before summer break. Take this opportunity to get acquainted and learn more about the league. TAL meets at 9:30 a.m. the 2nd Saturday of the month (with some exceptions) in the Amegy Bank building-2nd Floor; Hwy 249 @ Medical Complex Dr. in Tomball. For more info: thetomballartleague.com



*Did you know only about 5 - 10% of breast cancer cases are thought to be hereditary?

Don't take chances - get your annual mammogram starting at age 40.

Now offering 3D mammography and genetic testing!

Evening and weekend appointments are available for your convenience. Please call 281-897-3121 for availability.

- I **Women's Imaging Center at Cy-Fair Hospital (FM 1960 at Jones Road) *Genetic testing available here
- 2 ****Cy-Fair Urgent Care & Imaging Center** (at Spring Cypress & Grant)
- **3** Cy-Fair Emergency & Imaging Center (at Barker Cypress & FM 529)
- 4 Cy-Fair Emergency & Imaging Center (Beltway 8 & Tanner Rd.) Opening May 2016

281.897.3121

* According to the American Cancer Society **Tomosynthesis, (3D mammography) an FDA approved imaging technology designed for early breast cancer detection, is available here.



CyFairWomensImaging.com

Easter Bunny Parade and Celebration

By The Editor

The weather was perfect, and hundreds attended the annual Village Creek Spring/Easter Event. It began with a lively and boisterous parade, headed up by a Constable driving his glistening, and wondrously lighted car. He signaled the start with a whooping siren. His shiny car was followed by a puffing train full of frolicking, animated and happy partiers, including the fluffy Easter Bunny. The large parade of walkers, strollers, wagons and bikes ended at the Pool House where an excellent carnival of bouncing buildings and carousel was waiting. Lawns were filled with many hundreds of Easter Eggs. Tables were filled with goodies. The happy Easter Bunny took time from her busy schedule for picture taking and providing toys and treats to masses of happy kiddos while parents relaxed and looked on in obvious envy. Meanwhile, a twisting and turning tour train took joyous passengers on a relaxing trip through magnificent Ligustrum Trail with its splendid landscaping, maturing trees, pleasant homes, and mysterious nooks and crannies.

Thank you to the volunteers who made this a truly wonderful family event. They are from top left: Jimmy Rawles, Caren Seal, Katherine Elkins; Middle: Sharon Dillard/aka, the Easter Bunny! Bottom left: Patricia Perry, & Social Committee Chairman, Lisa Rawles.





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Tomball Plant of the Month The Celeste Fig

By The Editor

The Celeste fig is a spreading bush type of tree which can grow to 20 feet and nearly as wide. Celeste is one of the hardier of the figs. Ours is about six years old and about 6' tall and just as wide. They grow best in full sun. They have shallow roots, so they should be watered regularly (we use a drip system). They also benefit from mulch. With maturity, they will appreciate some regular, small amounts of nitrogen fertilizer.

Ours has produced some excellent fruits which make good preserves or eaten directly off of the tree. Birds love them, so expect to share with them. The mature Celeste fig should not be pruned much, if at all, as pruning will inhibit the fruit crop. A very cold winter could also reduce the fig crop.





By The Editor

Colon Cancer (Quoted from the American Cancer Society Web page)

"Colorectal cancer (commonly known as colon cancer) remains the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States among men and women, and is expected to cause about 49,190 deaths during 2016. However, routine testing starting at age 50 can actually prevent many cases of colorectal cancer, or find it at an early stage. But because many people are not getting tested, only about 4 out of 10 are diagnosed at this early stage when treatment is most likely to be successful."

Go to Cancer.org for and click on "Colorectal Cancer: Catching it early" for additional information.

Editor's note: Although 50 is the common age when colonoscopies are suggested, earlier ages may apply if you have certain risk factors. Ask your doctor when you should get yours and when it should be repeated.

Other than just taking the step to do it, the most difficult part of the colonoscopy (in the past) for most people was drinking the awful-tasting liquid required to cleanse the system. New solutions are available which are quite tolerable. Make sure you ask your doctor about these.

The actual procedure is usually done with general anesthesia, so you won't remember anything about it. Please ask your doctor to schedule yours.



The Voice is Fix'n Viddles Sausage and Green Chili Strata

By The Editor



The Steinbeck House in Salinas, California is John Steinbeck's childhood home in Salinas. This recipe is from their restaurant, and has been a favorite of the editor's family over many decades. It's perfect for large breakfasts, but would go well as a main dish for any meal.

pound pork sausage (or slightly more)
 slices white bread, cubed
 cup diced green chili
 cups Cheddar Cheese, grated
 eggs
 cups milk
 tsp. salt
 tsp. chili powder
 tsp. pepper

Brown sausage and drain. Oil oblong 9 x 13 baking dish. Layer half the bread on the bottom of the dish. Spread half the chili on top of the bread. Spread half the cheese on top of the chili. Distribute all the sausage over the cheese. Repeat the layers of bread, chili and cheese.

Mix together the rest of the ingredients and pour over the layered casserole. Store in the refrigerator overnight. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until puffed and browned.

Thank a Veteran

By The Editor

Less than 1% of Americans are currently in the Armed Forces, and only 7% of the population are veterans. There are 22,658,000 veterans in America today. Of these, 8% are female.

Did you know Veterans Administration provides burial and memorial services for Veterans, their spouses and other eligible family members? With recent additions, there is a Veteran's cemetery within an hour of most homes in the U.S. These services are provided at VA national, State and tribal cemeteries to help families through the loss of their loved one at no cost. Some benefits are also available for Veterans who choose burial in a private cemetery.

Do you have questions about Veteran's issues? http://www. va.gov/. The Voice also highly recommends visiting the Tomball VA Outpatient Clinic, 1200 W. Main Street, Tomball, TX 77375, and phone: 281-516-1505. You will find them very helpful for any VA question.

ONGOING BOOK CLUBS AT THE NORTHWEST BRANCH LIBRARY

We have two ongoing book clubs at the Northwest Branch Library. Each has a theme. One is the Inspirational Book Club, and the other is the History Mystery Book Club. The Inspirational Book Club meets on the third Thursday of the month at 2:00 PM. The History Mystery Book Club meets on the third Monday of the Month at 2:00 PM.

If you're looking for a book club to join, then we might be the option for you. Come to the next meetup, socialize and learn about the next title.

> Here's our calendar if you wish to look ahead: https://host4.evanced.info/harris/evance...

We are located at 11355 Regency Green Drive, Cypress, TX 77429. If you have any questions our number is 281-890-2665. Ask for our librarian, Gwendolyn.



The Smoke Detector

The House Detective By Gordon R. Watson

Smoke Detectors can be a pain in the neck, but they do save lives. They also have a limited lifetime (normally ten years). As they age, they may begin driving you crazy with false alarms or low battery indication. Most of our homes here have wired systems with individual battery backups. Replacements for these are available at hardware stores, and they usually are quite easy to install.

While batteries most likely will last more than a year, we all should have a plan to replace them all at the same time once a year. Replacing them individually as each has a low battery alarm is a recipe for frustration.

Hint: When you replace any battery or smoke alarm, write the date of installation on each with a felt-tip pen. That may help you decide when they should be replaced next time. Also, after a battery is replaced, push the "TEST" button to assure it works.

ooringAmerica The Woodlands 281-363-1962 Cypress 281-370-8022 0700 Kuykendahl Rd. | The Woodlands, TX 77381 13422 Grant Rd. | Cypress, TX 7742 www.flahertysflooring.com

Building Permits in Harris County

By The Editor

I sent a note to Harris County regarding Building Permits. These are excerpts from a response received from Ms. Soumya Rege:

"All sections of Village Creek fall in the jurisdiction of this office." "Harris County has not adopted a Building Code, so, construction

code issues are neither regulated nor inspected thru this office. Trade permits (structural, electrical, mechanical, plumbing etc.) are neither required nor inspected. Harris County does, however require, that all new home construction, or substantial improvement/damage repair comply with IRC 2006, and inspections be conducted by a 3rd party inspector, the results of which are required to be entered on a website this office maintains. Substantial improvement or substantial damage repair is defined as improvement or damage repair that costs 50% or more than the pre-improved or pre-damaged appraised value of the structure."

"Please visit www.eng.hctx.net/permits/Residential for more information regarding what requires a permit. On the left side, under "Permitting", then "Residential Plan Review", then "Residential" you will find the "Residential Flyer". This contains information regarding what requires a permit and what does not."

Ms. Soumya Rege, RA, PMP, CFM 713/274-3920 or 713/274-3777 or email: residential@hcpid.org Manager, Residential Permits Harris County Permits Office

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- Pressure Washing
- Fence Repair/Replacement
- Custom Staining
- Gutter Repair & Replacement
- Crown Molding

- Wallpaper Removal
- Wood Replacement
- Interior Carpentry
- Wallpaper Removal & Texture
- Garage Floor Epoxy
- Roofing
- Faux Painting



Got a Visitor Driving to Tomball? Use EZ Plate

By The Editor

You can arrange to allow your visitors to use EZ Tag Toll Roads which will be billed to your credit card. It is fairly easy to do this, but you will need some information from your visitor as follows:

- 1. State and License plate number.
- 2. Start day and end day (45 days maximum).
- 3. Year of car.
- 4. Color.
- 5. Make.
- 6. Model.
- 7. Nickname of car (optional).

Go to your EZ Tag account at www.hctra.org. Log in. Click EZ Plate Vehicles. Click Add a temporary vehicle. That's it!

The Case of the Locked Door

A House Detective Hint By Gordon R. Watson

Locked bathroom doors can almost always be opened from the outside. All of them that I have ever seen required a thin, round, rigid, metal wire (such as an icepick) to do the job. Yours may be different. I strongly recommend that you learn how to open yours BEFORE you have an emergency. Some of them require a bit of experience in order to do the job. It would not be pleasant to learn how to do it with a screaming child or unconscious adult inside. If you have trouble figuring out how to do it, go to YouTube and look up the make of your lockset (usually on the door side of the jamb). Search for "opening a locked bathroom door."



<u>The Voice</u>

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to get your home sold for more. Your profit is my priority.

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