

# From the Mayor's Desk

### WELCOMING THE NEW YEAR

The coming year is going to be very busy at City Hall. For the last couple of months we have been talking about foundational planning and growth management tools. We have commenced work under the Gap Strategies contract with early meetings between the consultants and the staff so they can meet their counterparts and set up administrative procedures for the project. We are looking forward to this work accelerating and putting in place the tools we need to maintain our quality of life.

### MASTER DRAINAGE PLAN

While we are beginning the foundational planning work with Gap Strategies, the next project in line is being teed up. We qualified six engineering firms to submit proposals to address the drainage issues that have plagued the city for decades. In December, we invited all six firms to a mandatory workshop with our staff. We are asking them to propose approaches for dealing with these issues. There are multiple parts of the project and the individual firms may propose on the entire project or on parts of the project.

At the end of the mandatory workshop, the firms drew for positions to present their approaches to the selection committee. The qualifications will be scored and a firm or firms will be invited to enter into negotiations to perform the work. We will select the firm(s) with which to enter negotiations on January 17, 2017. Just as a point of information, we are required by law to select engineering firms on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualifications and then attempt to negotiate a contract at a fair and reasonable price.

#### The scope of work will include but is not limited to:

• A detailed study and analysis of drainage in the city's existing limits and extra-territorial jurisdiction with an understanding of outside influences to include developed conditions • A comprehensive system inventory and structural assessment of the city's multiple drainage basins, outfalls (places where water enters the creeks). This inventory and assessment should include GIS integration (digitized mapping tools)

• Identification of known and unknown problem areas inclusive of source/cause and ownership responsibility (public/private)

• Accurate Hydraulic and Hydrographic modeling, systems analyses and simulation, stormwater management, planning and design floodplain management, and capital improvement plan development and benefit cost analysis

• Consideration and recommendation of type of modeling city should consider to understand drainage and floodplain management

• Develop thoughts and strategies for updating and operational management of the city's MS4 (water discharge quality) permit

• Develop prioritized and constructible Capital Improvement Projects plan with emphasis on providing the best "bang for our buck."

• Identify and describe funding mechanisms available to the city to implement the capital improvements required to resolve issues

• Develop drainage infrastructure specs to be incorporated into the city's subdivision regulations and/or drainage design criteria guidelines.

As you can tell, this project is a very significant piece of work. This type of engineering work has been needed in our city for decades. The heavy rains we had earlier this year, with the resulting flooding issues, brought the need back to the forefront. The council committed to doing this type of work during our budget cycle. I will emphasize that this phase is developing the plans and computer modeling tools we need to fix issues. The scope does not include designing or constructing drainage improvement solutions.

(Continued on Page 2)

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### **ARTICLE INFO**

The Fair Oaks Gazette is mailed monthly to all Fair Oaks Ranch area residents. Residents, community groups, churches, etc. are welcome to include information about their organizations in the newsletter. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, recipes, special celebrations, and birthday announcements are also welcome.

To submit an article for the Fair Oaks Gazette, please email it to *fairoaksranch@peelinc.com*. The deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the issue.

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 From the Mayor's Desk (Continued from Cover)

### THE ARBORS PRESERVE

As we reported last month, our City Attorney is working collaboratively with the attorneys for the developer and Fair Oaks Ranch Homeowners Association (FORHA) to prepare documents to complete ownership transfer, assuming the FORHA board votes to accept the property. This work has been progressing quite well with all parties participating in a cooperative spirit. The attorney for the developer has indicated that the initial transfer of all of the preserve property to the Unit Homeowners Association for The Arbors will be completed before the end of the year. Assuming FORHA's board votes to accept the property, the transfer will be made from that entity to FORHA. The attorneys are also working to amend the Development Agreement to extend the time allowed for the final transfer to occur so FORHA will have adequate time to determine the property tax impact before making a decision.

### **ROAD AND BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION**

Those of you who travel Meadow Creek Trail probably have a sense that the new water pipeline work has been completed. The crews have gone on to Rolling Acres and are working the pipeline installation there. As we move from there to Ammann Road, the working conditions will become even more challenging. Please plan extra time for travel as some areas of construction will require flagmen to coordinate moves of traffic through only one lane on parts of the project. This is a very narrow section of roadway, so please be considerate of the safety of our crews and our contractor crews when you go through these areas.

The drainage work on Robin Dale/Intrepid is going full blast now with crews installing box culverts. We are looking forward to completing this work and alleviating drainage issues that have existed for decades. In January we will begin full depth reclamation of several roads.

TxDOT is continuing their work on the bridge at IH10 and FOR Parkway. I will remind you that updates on this bridge construction can be found at http:txdotsanantonio.blogspot.com/.

Information on our road reconstruction project can be found at:

- The project website FairOaksRanchRoads.org
- The city website FairOaksRanchTX.org
- The Fair Oaks Ranch Homeowners Association website:

### FORHA.org

If you would like to have this information and information about other city activities "pushed" to you electronically, you can sign up for updates and alerts at FairOaksRanchTX.org/list.aspx.

### **RESIDENT VOLUNTEERS AT WORK**

Here are some updates on our ongoing initiatives staffed by a combination of residents and city staffers:

• The Home Rule Charter Commission has approved a draft document that will be shown to the residents prior to their final vote. The Commission is planning a Town Hall at City Hall on January 12th at 6:30 p.m. to show the draft to citizens and answer questions. The working draft will be placed on the city website prior to the

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### From the Mayor's Desk (Continued from Page 2)

meeting as well as a summary of the provisions and a Question and Answer document to present basic information about the charter. This has been a months long labor of love for the 11 volunteers working on the charter. After citizens have one final opportunity for input at the Town Hall meeting, the Commission will take a final vote and, if approved, will forward the document to City Council to get it placed on the ballot for the May, 2017 elections.

• The Communications Committee was officially chartered at the December 2, 2016 council meeting. The committee is ready to present a recommendation on website redesign to the council, but we deferred consideration until January to allow time for staff and our City Attorney's office to prepare an appropriate contract for this type of work.

• The Wildlife Education Committee presented an update on their work at the December 15th council meeting. In addition to the update, the committee discussed two proposals with council regarding spending funds from their budget. They recommended investing about \$3,900 in a game camera survey to develop an initial wildlife assessment, including specific assessment of feral hog presence. The council was in agreement with performing this proactive review and city staff will assist with contractual arrangements and landowner permissions needed. To further our goals of working with Fair Oaks Ranch Elementary School to educate students (and their parents) on wildlife and plants in the area, the committee recommended funding FORES with \$1,000 which will allow them to address a backlog of students waiting to participate in these after school activities.

### SPECIALTHANKS

All of us know that we live in a very special community. We discover just how special the community is when one of our own folks has to go through a pretty rough time.

Many of you have followed Officer Riley Gobeil's ongoing health issues and have stepped up to help Officer Gobeil's family. I would like to close with a special shout out to two people who really stepped up to help.

Mr. Gary Skinner, the owner of Conroy's Irish Pub, offered up his business at Fair Oaks Village as the site for a November 30th fundraiser. The citizens of Fair Oaks Ranch and some brother officers from San Antonio and Boerne responded in such a generous fashion that we literally overwhelmed Gary's wait staff and kitchen. Kudos to Gary and all of his workers who worked very hard to get everyone served. Our food was great and I'm sure everyone else's was too. If you make it by Conroy's for a meal, be sure to let Gary know we appreciate his support.

The other shout out goes to Ms. Rina Grona, one of our residents at The Ranch, who organized this fundraiser at Conroy's. Rina is a real force of nature and her generous spirit is a model for all of us to follow.

My very best to all of you and your families as we start this New Year on The Ranch!

Garry Manitzas Mayor – Fair Oaks Ranch

# FAIR OAKS RANCH

# TREE CAVITIES

I took some time to go over the articles of the past couple of years. I have covered many topics that I commonly deal with during consults with clients regarding their trees. This month and next month I will cover three related concerns that I address at just about every appointment: tree cavities/hollows, and next month -fungi that grow on trees and rot that they cause. I hope the next three articles will effectively demonstrate the relationship between them.

It is very common for trees to be hollow to some degree – especially if they are of considerable size and age. In most cases, it is a result of one primary, precipitating event – lightning. Other precipitating events can be wind sheering of large branches, improper pruning of large branches and unhealed deer rubs on trees when they were young.

Regardless of the cause, the present question is: Now that there is a cavity - What is to be done? Some "home remedies" I've come across in my years of caring for trees are quite interesting – from filling them with rocks (maybe as much of a way to get rid of the rocks from view as a tree remedy), concrete, filling them with expanding foam, and mechanically removing everything inside the tree possible.

First, it is critical to not do any of the first three in any circumstance! There are many reasons for this, but the principle one is that what will result is more moisture will remain inside the tree for longer, facilitating rot. Rot is by far the worst debilitator of tree health and structural

integrity. As with most cases, Mother nature knows best - air flow is the best way for moisture to dissipate. Removing non-structurally assisting material in the cavity (i.e. organic liter: rotting wood, leaves, sticks, squirrel stashes, etc.) will help by eliminating those objects which will sponge and hold moisture in the hollow longer. Do not try to pry out hard heartwood though by any means. In those cases where a proportional and moderate-sized drill hole can assist with air flow and future water drainage from a cavity, as well as also function as a port for evacuation of organic litter by water-flushing of the cavity (least intrusive, damaging means of cleaning decades of litter out at once Ive found and employ regularly), in some cases a drilling injury is warranted. To keep out animals from the cavity - a chicken wire mesh with stout fence staples holding it in place will work quite effectively.

The goal of cavity "repair" is to allow the tree a better environment to slow the rot – thereby enabling the tree's response of wound wood and callus growth, as well as changing the density and location of its new growth in order to compensate for the changes in wind pressure resistance resulting from its cavity.

Questions or comments this article or previous articles have generated, may be directed to me at:

kevin@arborcareandconsulting.com

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Greetings from the Trinity Glen Rose Groundwater Conservation District (TGR). We are collaborating with residents across the TGR District in offering the opportunity to sign up for the TGR e-newsletter. There are many important reasons your family and/or business should consider doing so.

A quality, reliable water supply is the lifeblood of every community, and it is the responsibility of homeowners, businesses and various water agencies to make sure excellent water is always available in San Antonio. Much of the water that is used in Fair Oaks Ranch comes from the Trinity Aquifer. In fact, Fair Oaks Ranch and many other areas located north of Loop 1604 are located on top of the Trinity Aquifer and are included in the Trinity Glen Rose District. The Trinity Glen Rose District is responsible for ensuring that the Trinity Aquifer is protected and preserved for use by the community into the future. And as we've always found, well-informed water users are always the best allies in making sure our water supply is safeguarded.

So, how should you stay up to date on all water matters in your area? The easiest way is to subscribe to the Trinity Glen Rose e-newsletter.

In our newsletter, TGR will be supplying great information about how homeowners and businesses can conserve water each day. For example, in the November newsletter, we explained how you should be preparing your landscape for the winter, which in turn makes it ready for the spring growing season. Properly maintained landscapes saves thousands of gallons of water each year per customer.

You will also get first notices about new water rebate programs. In the spring, we will be partnering with local communities to offer various types of rebate programs. But, the Trinity offer will most likely be offered to a limited number of applicants. So, if you're not on our mailing list, you might miss the opportunity entirely.

We'll also be collaborating with local businesses who are doing great work in water conservation to offer special premiums to people living in the Trinity Glen Rose area. And all of our subscribers will have access to those savings!

Those are just a few reasons why we'd love for you to go to our website and subscribe. The information you will receive will always be helpful and to the point. With your help, we can ensure that the Trinity Aquifer is always a quality resource for our community. And that starts with being informed and involved.

Thanks so much for your willingness to conserve and protect the Trinity Aquifer.

Just go to www.TrinityGlenRose.com to subscribe today.

# Tennis Tip of the Month: THE FOUR FUNDAMENTALS OF TENNIS

When it comes to improving your game, there are four fundamentals that can be condensed to four simple words so that they are easily remembered! Spectators who do not play tennis often feel that the game looks fairly easy. Yet, once they step onto the court and start hitting the ball, it seems to fly everywhere except between the lines. Here's a simple tip (actually, four) for all of us to learn and remember if we want our game to improve.

Tennis Tip: Hitting the ball properly and accurately requires seeing it clearly, getting in the right position, setting up to hit the ball properly and then, of course, hitting the ball properly, staying in correct position. To simplify, here are the four key words (fundamentals):

**1.** *Eyes:* Seeing the ball clearly requires keeping your eyes on the ball. You can't hit what you don't see. Watch your racquet strings connect with the ball and you will maximize your chances for an accurate shot.

**2.** *Feet:* As you move to the ball to get in position your feet should keep moving but in smaller and smaller steps. Think of staying on your toes and being light on your feet so that you set yourself up to hit the ball just in front of your body.

**3. Shoulders:** As you are setting up or closing in to hit the ball, your racquet should be taken back so that your shoulders turn, allowing you to swing freely through the ball with power.

**4.** *Knees:* As your racquet is taken back, the knee bend helps you to coil your body so that you stay low as necessary in order to uncoil with power and correct height, getting behind and under the ball. Staying low at first and then allowing your body to gently rise as you come out of the swing (follow through) gives that "up and out" relaxed feeling you get when hitting the ball properly.

So, the next time you play, just remember eyes-stay on the ball until you finish the stroke; feet-take those small steps to get in perfect position; shoulders-turn as you take racquet back early and knees-bend so you stay low until you finish the shot. When you allow yourself to do this, you will begin hearing your opponent say, "Wow, what a shot!" If you have a question on these key fundamentals, feel free to call or text me. Walter: 512-497-9971

I have always considered tennis as a combat in an arena between two gladiators who have their racquets and their courage as their weapons. ~Yannick Noah

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# FAIR OAKS RANCH

### TEXAS A&M GRILIFE EXTENSION Fungus Gnats

Fungus gnats often become a problem in homes due to an overwatering problem. Since this time of year can bring poinsettias or other plants into the home, fungus gnats are a pest to watch for.

Fungus gnat adults are small, black, long-legged flies with long antennae. Most adults are about 1/16 an inch but some can get up to ½ an inch. They are weak fliers and generally remain near potted plants, growing media, foliage or leaf litter.

Larvae, or immatures, have a black head capsule and long whitish body without legs. They feed on organic matter such as mulch, compost, grass clippings, plant roots and fungi. When conditions are very moist, fungus gnat larvae can become abundant and may leave slime trails on media that looks similar to trails left by snails or slugs.

While these gnats are a nuisance they are fairly easy to manage. Indoors, it is a good idea to use yellow sticky cards as a monitoring tool. Potato pieces may also be used as a monitoring tool for fungus gnats. To do this, imbed a peeled potato cube into media and inspect the underside of the potato and the media directly below it twice a week for fungus gnat larvae.

To manage fungus gnat populations, work on reducing excessively moist conditions. Avoid overwatering and make sure that there is good drainage. The surface of container soil should be allowed to dry before watering again.

If using compost, make sure that items have been fully composted. Compost piles should be turned regularly and kept away from doors or windows. Inspect all doors, windows, vents and screens for a good seal to reduce the number of gnats that may enter a structure.

Bacillus thuringiensis var. israelensis or the nematode Steinernema feltiae can be applied in containers to control larvae. Either spray on the media or apply as a soil drench. Biologicals work best when they are applied early in an infestation. If a population is already large, they may not provide the control desired.

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# IT'S ANOTHER NEW YEAR...

**"Happy New Year!"** That greeting will be said and heard for at least the first couple of weeks as a new year gets under way. But the day celebrated as New Year's Day in modern America was not always January 1.

ANCIENT NEW YEARS: The celebration of the new year is the oldest of all holidays. It was first observed in ancient Babylon about 4000 years ago. In the years around 2000 BC, the Babylonian New Year began with the first New Moon (actually the first visible crescent) after the Vernal Equinox (first day of spring). The beginning of spring is a logical time to start a new year. After all, it is the season of rebirth, of planting new crops, and of blossoming. January 1, on the other hand, has no astronomical nor agricultural significance. It is purely arbitrary. The Babylonian new year celebration lasted for eleven days. Each day had its own particular mode of celebration, but it is safe to say that modern New Year's Eve festivities pale in comparison. The Romans continued to observe the new year in late March, but their calendar was continually tampered with by various emperors so that the calendar soon became out of synchronization with the sun. In order to set the calendar right, the Roman senate, in 153 BC, declared January 1 to be the beginning of the new year. But tampering continued until Julius Caesar, in 46 BC, established what has come to be known as the Julian Calendar. It again established January 1 as the new year. But in order to synchronize the calendar with the sun, Caesar had to let the previous year drag on for 445 days.

THE CHURCH'S VIEW OF NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS: Although in the first centuries AD the Romans continued celebrating the new year, the early Catholic Church condemned the festivities as paganism. But as Christianity became more widespread, the early church began having its own religious observances concurrently with many of the pagan celebrations, and New Year's Day was no different. New Years is still observed as the Feast of Christ's Circumcision by some denominations. During the Middle Ages, the Church remained opposed to celebrating New Years. January 1 has been celebrated as a holiday by Western nations for only about the past 400 years.

**NEW YEAR TRADITIONS:** Other traditions of the season include the making of New Year's resolutions. That tradition also dates back to the early Babylonians. Popular modern resolutions might include the promise to lose weight or quit smoking. The early Babylonian's most popular resolution was to return borrowed farm equipment. The tradition of using a baby to signify the new year was begun in Greece around 600 BC. It was their tradition at that time to celebrate their god of wine, Dionysus, by parading a baby in a basket, representing the annual rebirth of that god as the spirit of fertility. Early Egyptians also used a baby as a symbol of rebirth.

**AULD LANG SYNE:** The song, "Auld Lang Syne," is sung at the stroke of midnight in almost every English-speaking country in the world to bring in the new year. At least partially written by Robert Burns in the 1700's, it was first published in 1796 after Burns' death. Early variations of the song were sung prior to 1700 and inspired Burns to produce the modern rendition. An old Scotch tune, "Auld Lang Syne" literally means "old long ago," or simply, "the good old days."

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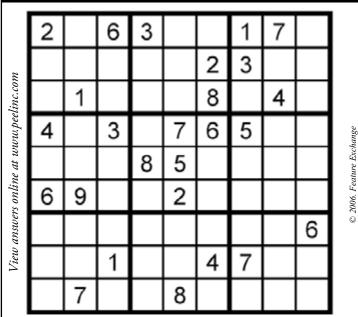
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# FAIR OAKS RANCH

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