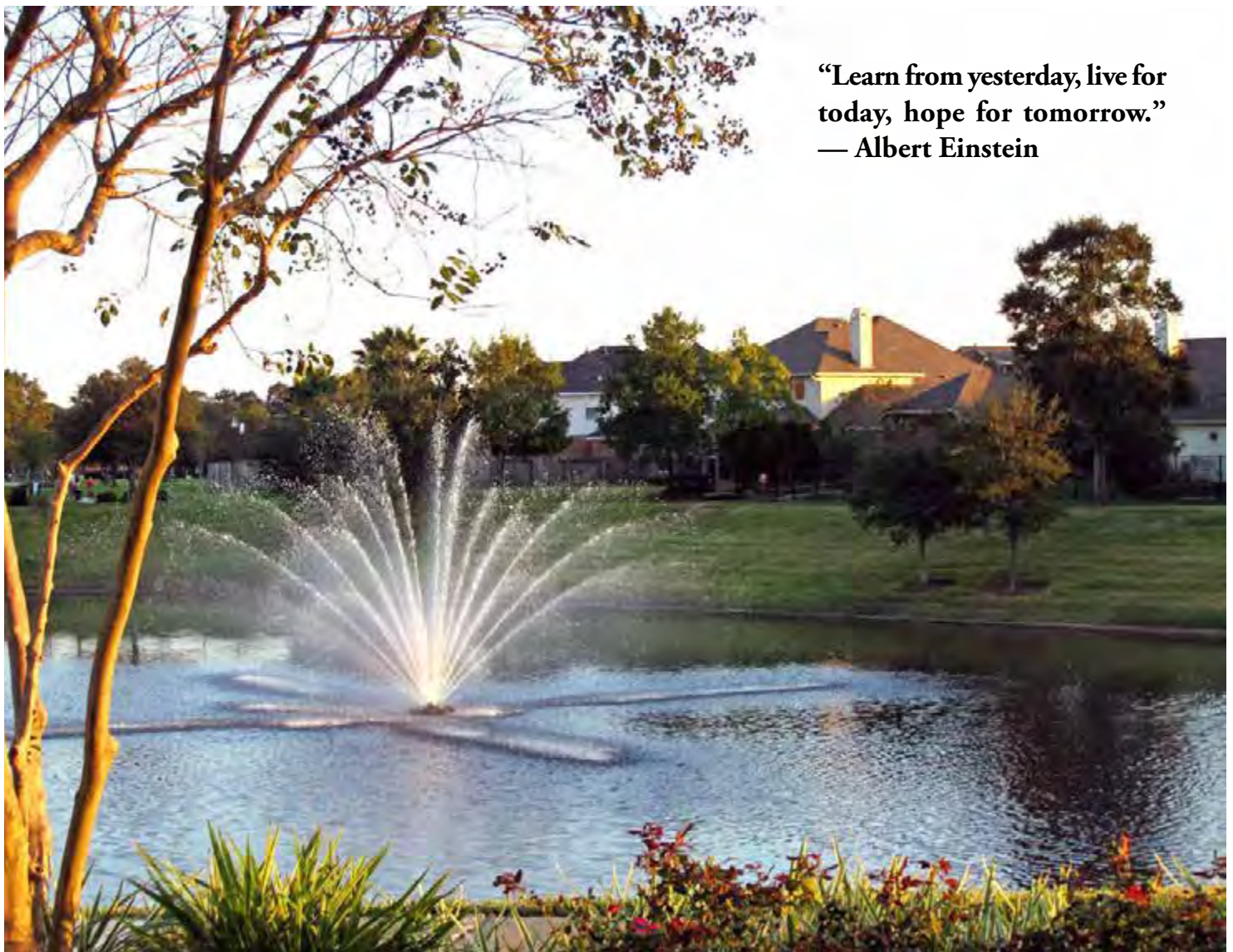




The Voice wishes all a healthy, safe, and productive New Year. Not every year is perfect, but we hope 2017 is as good as it gets for you and those you love.



The photograph was taken at sunset of Village Creek's Lake by Shayne Watson

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

IN CASE OF ANY EMERGENCY DIAL 911

SCHOOLS

Tomball ISD 281-357-3100, www.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

Village Creek Management Company....spectrumam.com
832-500-2221
 Village Creek Website Unrelated to the Board.....
VillageCreekCommunity.com
 Harris County Animal Control281-999-3191
 Lost/Found Pets Nextdoor.com
 Harris County Veterinary Public Health.....281-999-3191
 Municipal District Services (24 hrs)281-290-6503
 ... For water leaks, water outages, water quality, or sewer
 leaks or stoppage.
 Street lights out & power outages.....
 www.centerpointenergy.com/outage
 Harris County traffic signal outages.....713-881-3210
 Republic Waste.....713-849-0400
 Trash on Tue and Fri. Heavy items on Fri only.
 Recycle Fri (#1 through #7 plastics; aluminum, steel & tin
 containers; glass bottles and containers; newspapers;
 cardboard; and mixed paper)
 Digging? Two days prior to ANY digging in your yard, call
 811 or use <http://www.lonestar811.com/>

NEWSLETTER

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Stop Those Unwanted Phone Calls

By The Editor

I recently noticed on nextdoor.com that one of our residents, Debby, suggested using nomorobo.com to essentially eliminate unwanted robot calls. These are those calls where, when you lift the receiver, there is a five-second delay before the salesperson starts talking. I went to their website and followed their instructions for the simple activation process. It works! We still get these calls, but the phone will only ring once. Personal calls will ring several times as usual. Thanks, Debby and nomorobo.com!



DON'T STOP ME IF YOU HAVE HEARD THIS ONE

There is a proposal before Congress to ban both guns and cigarettes. No one is sure who funded the lobbyists for this odd combination. The newspaper reporters are looking for a smoking gun.

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Thank You!

Thanks to Lisa Rawles and her Social Club volunteers for presenting a wonderland of Christmas cheer with the Village Creek's Cookies-with-Santa event. The "North Pole" was decked out in whimsical Christmas adornment. The delightful sounds of holiday melodies enhanced the celebration, and the fragrance of cookies and hot chocolate teased the senses with anticipation of their superb tastes. Tantalizing gifts, imaginatively chosen and lovingly packaged for the children, beckoned on tables where they were placed carefully in a methodized array by Santa's elves. Smiles abounded in response to the joyous holiday festivities. Snow gently fell like cotton outside.... wait...that's a different story.



Cookies with Santa

Volunteers:
Jimmy Rawles,
Sharon Gabbert,
Sherry Watson,
Lisa Guillotte
Rawles, Loryn
Edwards, Conner
Elkins, and
Katherine Brewer
Elkins.



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Main Hospital 800.681.2733
ER 281.897.3150
- 2** 5655 W. Sam Houston Pkwy. N.
at Tanner Rd,
Houston, TX 77041
281.949.3800
- 3** 7015 Barker Cypress at F.M. 529
Cypress, TX 77433
281.949.3600
- 4** 8470 Hwy. 6 North at West Rd
Houston, TX 77095
281.949.3799

URGENT CARE

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necessary

- 5** 9110 Barker Cypress at West Rd
Cypress, TX 77433
281.517.9900
- 6** 14044 Spring Cypress at Grant Rd
Cypress, TX 77429
281.949.3703
- 7** 9138 West Rd at Beltway 8
Houston, TX 77064
281.949.3737



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The Voice

The Minimalist Gardener

By Flint Sage

Continue with your freeze protection effort through the remainder of the winter. When the weatherman predicts a “hard freeze” (or similar), shut off and drain your backflow preventer. Water landscape plants, trees, and vegetables before the freeze. Try not to water foliage. Water is very good at retaining heat in the soil to help prevent freezing. Maintain a layer of mulch on bare areas to retain heat and moisture and to keep weeds down. Best of all, read plant labels before you buy. If they won’t tolerate freezing, consider planting something different.

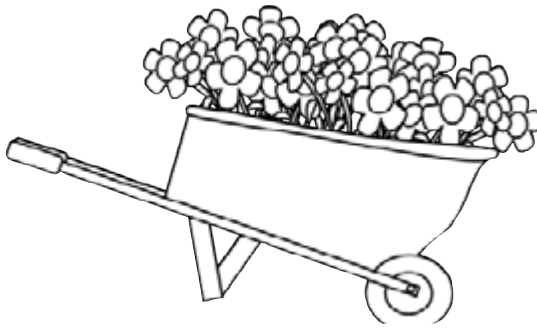
Lawns: Very little water is required, but water plants and lawns once a month if it doesn’t rain.

Plant roses anytime. If planting in January, choose bare root.

Plant annual flowers such as calendula, cyclamen, dianthus, ornamental kale, cabbage, pansies, and petunias. Plant bluebonnet transplants into garden beds.

Pruning: Avoid pruning frost-damaged trees and bushes until February or March. Crape Myrtles are trees and should be allowed to grow as trees. Unless you have a good reason, please don’t cut off any branch larger than a pencil. There are many varieties of crape, so select a shorter variety if height is a problem.

Plant cool-season seedlings such as asparagus, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, Chinese cabbage, collards, turnip greens, Irish potato, kohlrabi, leaf lettuces, onions, and swiss chard. Sow seeds this month for beets, carrots, English peas, greens, leaf lettuces, radishes, sugar snap, snow peas, and turnips.



MEET THE EDITOR



Gordon Watson has been the editor of The Voice and Village Gazette for about four years. He was born and lived in Eastern Montana, but moved to Salinas, California when a teen. He received an A.A. degree from Hartnell College in Salinas and enlisted in U.S. Navy. There he worked as a Cryptographer in Washington, D.C. Just prior to his fourth year, he volunteered for and served on

the U.S.S Oxford, a Technical Research Ship, off of Viet Nam. After the Navy, he received two degrees from California State Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo: a B.A. in English and a B.S. in Engineering Technology. He also received a California Standard Secondary Teaching Credential and is a Registered Professional California State Mechanical Engineer (Retired).

He has been married to Sherry for 47 years, and they have two children and one grandson. After thirty years, he retired as the Site Mechanical Systems Engineer at IBM in San Jose, California. He and his wife have lived in Village Creek for about seven years. He has served on the Village Creek Landscape and Pool Committees.

He enjoys playing football and other games with his wife and grandson; woodworking; traveling; gardening; photography; and writing for The Voice, TheHouseDetective.org, and VillageCreekCommunity.com. He occasionally writes jokes for the Houston Chronicle’s “Jokes on Us.” Some of the unpublished jokes have become “Don’t Stop Me if you’ve Heard This One” in The Voice. He enjoys being the Editor of The Voice and hopes that he can provide a few moments of enjoyment to those who read it.

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Day or Two Trips Outa Town

By The Editor

My wife and I recently went to Natchitoches, Louisiana for a few days. Unlike Texas's Natchitoches, Natchitoches in Louisiana is pronounced Nack-a-Tish. The trip takes about four hours normally, but we took back roads, so it probably took a bit longer. The trip was far less stressful by not taking Interstates. Oddly, the two-lane roads we took often had 75 mph speed limits, and there was very little traffic. Make sure you don't pass up many gas stations. We found a gas station in one small town that had no on-site employees: just unattended gas pumps requiring a credit card!

Natchitoches has a population of about 18,000 and was the first permanent settlement within the 1803 Louisiana Purchase. Several cotton plantation homes still exist in the area. Two are open to the public: Melrose and Oakland. Oakland is known to have the most remaining outbuildings of any American plantation. Natchitoches is also home to the Northwest State University of Louisiana with about 9,000 students.

Be sure to have a Natchitoches Meat Pie. This tasty food is a sort of pastry folded over ground beef and baked. Delicious! Also be sure to go to the Kaffie-Federick General Mercantile store. It has pretty much any hardware you need, and it is right on Front Street. It will

take you back to the 1940's.

A great time to see the City is from late November through January 1st when the city is covered with Christmas lights for the Christmas Lighting Festival, but I think it is worth visiting anytime. We stayed at a bed and breakfast and thoroughly enjoyed that. Natchitoches is located on Cane River Lake. It makes a splendid backdrop for the City's annual Christmas lighting event.

Old (200 year old) oak trees are very common here and at the Melrose Plantation. These are the same oaks that we have at Village Creek.



A large advertisement for TexasDirectAuto.com. The background is a light gray with a subtle sunburst pattern. In the center, the text "SELL US YOUR CAR!" is written in large, bold, black capital letters. Several puppies are integrated into the text: one is perched on the top of the 'L' in "SELL", another is peeking out from behind the 'U' in "US", and a third is sitting to the right of the exclamation mark in "CAR!". At the bottom left, there is a small graphic of a Texas state flag. To the right of the flag, the website address "TEXASDIRECTAUTO.COM" is written in a white, serif font. The entire advertisement is enclosed in a black rectangular border.

The Voice Cooks up some Vittles

Loaded Egg Frittata

This recipe is from Anisha Bandorawalla. She says it makes a great dish for breakfast, brunch or even a quick snack. It works great for lunch or dinner too: just add a side salad! Anisha is a Personal Wellness Chef in Houston and helps people promote health with food. You may browse more of her recipes and photographs at her website and Facebook pages as well. <https://www.facebook.com/HeARTfulEarthCuisine> and <https://heartfulearthcuisine.wordpress.com/>

Ingredients

4 eggs (I used local farm fresh pastured eggs from Whitehurst Heritage Farms in Houston or from Vital Farms in Austin)
2 kale leaves torn and chopped to bite size pieces (or use spinach or your favorite green)
3-4 baby belle or crimini mushrooms sliced (optional, but I would add these for nutrients!)
6-8 grape tomatoes sliced (any tomatoes will work diced small)
1/4 leak finely chopped (or use some diced onions)
1/2 teaspoon olive oil or oil of your choice
Salt and pepper to taste

As always, substitute your favorite vegetables of choice or what you have on hand! I had these ingredients in my fridge. I also add bell peppers, fresh herbs or even cooked potatoes to my frittata!

Cooking Directions

Whisk the eggs, add all the chopped vegetables, salt, and pepper, and mix well. To a heated pan add the oil and egg vegetable mixture. Cook until eggs are 90% done (I cover the pan for part of the time) and make quarter slices in the pan with a spatula. Flip all the slices over and cook for a couple more minutes. Serve hot or even at room temperature. In Spain, they served the Spanish tortilla (eggs with potatoes and onions) at room temperature or even cold at times!)





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THE HOUSE DETECTIVE : The Mystery of the Holes in the Electrical Plug

Gordon R. Watson

It was a slow day in the office. It was all but snowing outside, and the phone was silent. The office fragrance was of coffee, paper, and an electric heater. My secretary was typing letters on the 1935 Smith Corona as I browsed through papers in my office chair. The radio was on, and I was listening to an expert take questions about anything from arc welders to zippers. A caller asked the announcer what the holes in electrical plugs were for. The announcer who, incidentally, was somewhat of a pompous, know-it-all, said they were punched in to save copper. I had recently taken a receptacle apart, so knew better.

There are very few inventions where the first version (or nearly first) one was pretty darn good. One of these is the electrical receptacle and plug used in the U.S.A. While I don't know who invented this combination (though suspect Edison was involved), they certainly were invented at the same time. They are sort of like a screw and a screwdriver: one doesn't work without the other. They began showing up in homes in the 1930's or so. Basically, this combination allowed people to have a practical way to connect an appliance such as a lamp to 110 volts without getting killed. The metal prongs in the plug are short enough that it is almost impossible to get a shock as the plug slides in. But I digress. What is the purpose of the holes in the metal prongs? There are matching protrusions in the receptacle which snap into the plug's holes as it slides in into the spring connector, sort of locking the two, temporarily, together. A little trivia: Hospitals use "Hospital Grade" receptacles which assure that plugs are so tight you will struggle to unplug them.

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