

# LONG CANYON *Gazette*

FEBRUARY 2017

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF THE LONG CANYON

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 2

## **VHS Band and Vision Dance Company Mulch Sales**

It's time for the 6th Annual Mulch Fundraiser!! We are taking orders for mulch as a fundraiser. The funds raised will go to needed items for the VHS Band and Vision Dance Company: travel, maintenance of the 53' trailer, costumes, uniform repair and cleaning, show design, music arrangement, drill preparation & props expenses.

The mulch is a quality product from a Local Texas company. We are offering two of the most popular kinds of mulch. All mulch comes in 2 cubic feet bags.

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5-26 bags: \$4.90/bag online – \$4.75/bag cash/check

27-51 bags: \$4.65/bag online – \$4.50/bag cash/check

52 bags/pallet: \$240/pallet online – \$230/Pallet cash/check

- All prices include sales tax
- We accept cash and checks – Prices listed here are discounted for cash/check

• Credit cards accepted with online orders at [vhsband.com](http://vhsband.com)

• Pallet Orders are sizes of 52, 104, 156, 208, 260, 312...

• The minimum order is 5 bags

Deadline to order is March 4, 2017!

**Includes FREE DELIVERY** to zip codes: 78726, 78730, 78732, parts of 78641 & 78750. Unfortunately, we cannot deliver outside of these Zip Codes.

**Delivery date is Friday, 31 March and Saturday 1 April, 2017.**

• You do NOT need to be home for delivery.

• You can specify where to stack the mulch in one location in front of the house.

If you have any questions, please contact [mulch@vhsband.com](mailto:mulch@vhsband.com). Thank you for your support of the Vandegrift Band and Vision Dance Company program. Please tell your friends about our fundraiser!

## **Viper Mulch Drive is here!**

### **CREDIT CARD ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS:**

To order using a credit card, go to our website at: [www.vhsband.com/fundraising/mulch](http://www.vhsband.com/fundraising/mulch) or scan the QR code below to be directed to our online ordering page.

**DEADLINE TO ORDER:** March 4, 2017

**Mulch Delivery Date:** March 31 & April 1, 2017



Please enter the student name above in the comments section of the PayPal form. Thank you for supporting the State Champion Vandegrift Band & Vision Dance Company!

Please contact the Mulch Sales Team at [mulch@VHSBand.com](mailto:mulch@VHSBand.com) if you have any questions!





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## Local jazz guitarist Charles Couch and band to play at Viper Nation Gala

*By Courtney Johnson, VNEF Executive Director*

Many Steiner residents know Charles Couch as a neighbor, dad, popular guitar teacher and Steiner Ranch Elementary Watch Dog. But very soon Couch is going to be more widely known for the gifted guitarist that he is, when he and his funk soul jazz trio, “Time Out,” play at the March 4th Viper Nation Gala, at J.W. Marriott.

Couch got his start in serious music training at Berklee School of Music in Boston. After college he lived in New York City, where he played all-night sessions and pick-ups with some of the most gifted musicians he has ever known. But ten years ago, he and his wife decided it was time to move south to start a family. He recalls his first day in their new home, sitting on the Polvo’s patio on South 1st street enjoying a beer in the sunshine. “It was the right choice – and it was snowing back in Manhattan!”

As he began to meet the Austin jazz community, he found time to play at The Elephant Room, Central Market North and Lost Pines. “The jazz community here is very supportive. It’s easy to work with one another. If you are good, you don’t have to rehearse before a gig because there is a standard repertoire. From there, the tunes are improvised and the songs are just vehicles for the players to jam.”

Charles has played with a number of musicians in Austin including Buddy Miles, drummer for the late Jimi Hendrix. But since meeting Leon Roberts and Andy Beaudoin and forming “Time Out,” the trio has played steadily and their popularity is growing. Andy is percussion and received his Masters from the New England Conservatory. Leon strictly plays on a Hammond B3 organ, a unique sound to many people these days.

Charles enjoys seeing the reaction from the crowd. “I love letting people hear this [music] because it’s just not mainstream anymore.” He elaborates with a twinkle in his eye, “[At clubs] kids come in and you can tell they are thinking, ‘okay, I’m moving. It sounds good. Maybe I’ll stay.’”

I was sold the night I checked them out for the gala. Their music was infectious, fun, and danceable but at the same time, people were enjoying easy conversation with one another. Up on stage, Charles, Leon and Andy were clearly having fun jamming out together. It’s the perfect music for a community of friends at the Viper Nation Gala.

For information about tickets and sponsorships for the Viper Nation Gala, go to <http://ViperNationEF.org/viper-nation-gala-2017/>.

## Prevent Oak Wilt – Don’t Prune Oaks Feb 1st – June 30th

*Submitted by Johanna Arendt, Community Liason, Travis County Transportation & Natural Resources*



*Leaves from a live oak showing signs of oak wilt. Photo provided by the Texas A&M Forest Service.*

Oak wilt has claimed the lives of thousands of trees in Central Texas and beyond. Majestic oaks play a large role in this region’s beauty and identity; it would be hard to imagine the Hill Country without them. They are an iconic part of many local businesses and neighborhoods, providing shade, beauty, and higher property values. Following simple preventive measures can go a long way towards stopping the spread of this destructive disease.

From February through June, avoid all pruning or cutting of oaks – this is the high season for oak wilt transmission. Any wounds that

occur from construction, vehicles, wind, etc., should be painted as soon as they’re discovered – ideally within ½ hour of being cut – with commercial tree wound dressing or latex paint. That includes freshly cut stumps and surface roots.

Pruning is least risky during the coldest winter days and extended hot periods in mid to late summer. Any time you prune though, the Texas Forest Service recommends painting all wounds and sanitizing pruning equipment between trees using denatured methyl alcohol (shellac thinner), isopropyl alcohol, or a general purpose household disinfectant such as Lysol, Listerine or Pine-Sol. Household bleach is not recommended.

Red oaks, including Spanish (now Buckley) oak, Shumard oak and blackjack oak, are very susceptible to oak wilt and play a key role in the disease’s transmission. Oak wilt is caused by the fungus *Ceratocystis fagacearum*, which spreads its spores from “fungal mats” that form under the tree’s bark. These mats have a sweet, fruity smell that attracts insects, especially the sap-sucking nitidulid beetle. After feeding and breeding on the fungal mats, these beetles fly away covered in fungal spores. As they visit other oaks, they spread the fungus through open wounds in the bark. The nitidulid beetle is only about the size of a pinhead, but is capable of flying as far as a mile away. While red oaks are the most susceptible to oak wilt, all oaks can become infected.

*(Continued on Page 5)*

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**WOW!!**

**WHAM!!**

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Fungal mats usually form on standing trees, but can also develop on logs, stumps and fresh firewood cut from infected oaks. Make sure to remove and either burn or bury infected oaks to prevent mats from forming, and never store unseasoned wood from infected trees near healthy oaks.

The second way oak wilt can be transmitted is through the roots. Live oaks tend to grow together in dense mottes with interconnected roots, so the fungus can be transmitted easily among them. Oak wilt is occasionally transmitted through red oak roots as well, but the movement is slower and occurs over shorter distances than with live oaks. Root transmission can be prevented by cutting trenches four feet deep between infected and healthy trees, but by far the best option is to prevent infection in the first place.

So make sure NOT to prune oaks between February 1 and July 1, and ALWAYS paint wounds on oaks no matter what time of year it is. For more information on preventing and treating oak wilt, please visit [texasoakwilt.org](http://texasoakwilt.org), the website of The Oak Wilt Information Partnership, a project of the Texas A&M Forest Service, the Forest Health Protection branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin.

## Bring the World to your Child By Hosting a Foreign Exchange Student

By Vicki Odom

If you've read the newspaper lately, you know that the world can be a scary place: wars, economic crisis, revolutions, climate change, border disputes, refugees, and protests. So, how do we teach our children about the world, and the variety of people in it, when most of the examples we read about in the press are so negative?

One life changing way to broaden your child's world view is to volunteer to host a high school foreign exchange student. Foreign exchange programs have been around for almost 100 years, and their mission has always been the same – to educate people about different cultures through person-to-person exchange. What better message to pass on to your children?

There are quite a few misconceptions about foreign exchange programs – especially around who can host. The biggest misconception is that you must have high school aged children when you host a high school exchange student. Nothing could be further from the truth.

"We welcome host families of all shapes and sizes – families with young children, families with no children, empty nesters whose children have left home, single parents and non-traditional families," says Connie Coutu, Regional Manager for Ayusa, a non-profit promoting global learning and leadership through foreign exchange and study abroad opportunities for high school students. "The key requirements for a host family are to provide a safe and nurturing home environment, genuinely love children, and have a desire to learn more about a different culture."

Families with young children find that hosting an exchange student provides their children with an especially unique educational experience in the form of an international big brother or sister. Without even realizing it, children learn about different types of people and different cultural traditions.

"My daughter Kelsie feels as if Isabelle, our exchange student from Germany, is an older sister to her," said Melissa Hughes, an Ayusa host mom from Ashville, North Carolina. "They have confided in each other, have had movie nights together, and have gone to the mall together - much like natural sisters would do. Kelsie will never forget Isabelle and they have already planned future get-togethers when they are older."

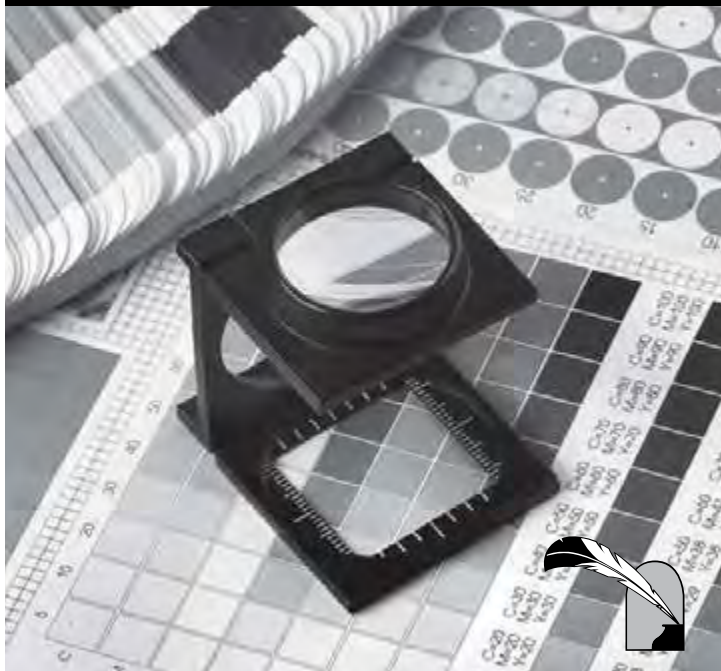
Volunteer host families provide foreign exchange students a nurturing environment, three meals a day and a bedroom (either private or shared with a host sibling of the same gender). Each host family and student is supported by a professionally trained community representative who works with the family and student for the entire program. All interested host families must pass a criminal background check and a home visit by an exchange organization.

"In Tunisia, we always hear about Americans and American life style, in movies, media, songs, everything, and I know it is different, and I wanted to figure out this difference myself," said Asma, a bubbly high school student from Tunisia who spent a school year living with the O'Donnell family in Anchorage, Alaska.

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Foreign exchange students come from all over the world. Ayusa matches host families with students from more than 60 different countries including Argentina, China, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Japan, Lebanon, Norway, Pakistan, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia and Turkey. All high school foreign exchange students are fully insured, bring their own spending money, and are proficient in English – and all high school exchange programs are regulated by the U.S. Department of State.

Interested host families are required to fill out an application, pass a background check and interview with a local exchange program representative in their homes. Once accepted to a program, host families can view profiles of students to find the right match for their family.

“Hosting an exchange student is a life-changing experience – for the student, the host family, and the host community,” says Coutu. “There is no better way to teach your children about the world around them than through welcoming an international high school student into your home.”

Ayusa is currently accepting applications for families to host an exchange student for the 2017-2018 school year. For more information about hosting a high school foreign exchange student, please contact Ayusa at 1.888.552.9872 or by visiting the website at [www.ayusa.org](http://www.ayusa.org).

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