



AT&T Construction in the Neighborhood



As many of you have noticed, AT&T has been working in the neighborhood lately digging and laying new lines. They are in the process of installing the infrastructure to provide their fiber optic internet service in our area. For

those of us who have been frustrated at the lack of internet options, this is great news! Fiberoptic internet is drastically faster and more reliable than service provided over coaxial lines, and the price will be comparable to other internet service providers. You can find out more about the service at www.att.com/gigapower.

In the meantime, however, many residents have expressed frustration about the damage to their yards. At the time of writing this article (July 11) I called and spoke with Tim Logan with GW Communications, which is the company in charge of the installation project. He is the manager in charge of the project and was extremely nice and willing to speak with me and answer my questions. Tim explained that (as of July 11), the project is slightly behind schedule due to some supply and weather issues, but that he expects the project to be complete within 2 to 3 weeks, weather-dependent (the project will likely be complete by the time this issue is published).

I asked Tim about their responsibilities in regard to restoring residents' yards to their previous condition after work is done. Essentially, this is a utility easement issue. Some homeowners and residents may be unclear about utility easements: they are designated sections of residential lots where utility lines, such as power, water, gas, and data cabling, are buried. Utility companies, in turn, have the legal authority not only to enter your property (even when you're not home) to perform necessary

work on the lines, but are also authorized by law to move or disrupt any structures or installations (such as landscaping or swimming pools) that are installed on utility easements. Note that under Texas law, utility companies are only required to make the area "safe" after completing work (usually meaning filling holes back in with dirt); they are not legally required to repair or restore any structures or installations to their previous condition. It is the homeowner's responsibility to ensure that any structures, landscaping, or other underground equipment (such as pool piping) is not located on a utility easement.

While AT&T is not legally required to go to lengths to restore residents' property, ultimately they don't want to make us too mad because they want for us to buy the fiber optic internet that they're spending quite a bit of money to install in our neighborhood; therefore, AT&T and GW Communication are making more of an effort to restore residents' property than is strictly legally required. Tim explained that his crews should be filling holes smoothly, replacing disrupted sod, and in some cases replacing mulch in flower beds.

During the course of this extensive work, it's likely that some minor damage to fences, gates, lawns, or other improvements is going to happen. Tim invited residents to email him with a location and description of the issue and a photo if possible and he will do his best to rectify problems such as these. A reminder, however, that if during the course of work an unauthorized structure or installation that is located on a utility easement was damaged, neither AT&T nor GW communications are legally obligated to fix it.

Residents may either call the AT&T Construction Complaint line at (281)374-3725, or they may email Tim.Logan@glassandwire.com with the description and photo of the problem.

Tim also explained that AT&T is likely to begin marketing the fiber optic internet throughout the internet approximately 2-3 months after the line installation is complete.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

EMERGENCY911
Harris County Animal Control 281-999-3191
Poison Control 800-222-1222

NON-EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Pct 4 Constable Non-Emergency Dispatch..... 281-376-3472
Atascocita Volunteer Fire Dept. 281-852-2181
Harris County Precinct 4 281-376-3472
Texas No Call List Registration 866-TXN-OCAL
Emergency Roadside Assistance..... 800-525-5555

SCHOOLS

Humble ISD 281-540-1775
Whispering Pines Elementary..... 281-641-2500
Humble Middle School..... 281-641-2500
Humble High School 281-641-6300

UTILITY NUMBERS

Report Power Outage - Centerpoint..... 713-207-7777
Report Street Light Outage - Centerpoint 713-207-2222
Report Gas Leak - Centerpoint 713-659-2111
Centerpoint (Gas) 713-659-2111
Call Before You Dig 811
Water - SiEnvironmental..... 832-490-1600
Emergency Number 832-490-1601
Electricity - Multiple Providers..... www.powertochoose.org
Trash - RR&R of Texas..... 866-516-9805
MUD District www.TrailoftheLakesMUD.com

PUBLIC SERVICES

Humble Post Office..... 281-540-1775
DPS Office..... 281-446-3391
Harris County Clerk (Will Clayton Pkwy.) 281-540-1173

NEIGHBORHOOD MANAGEMENT

Community Asset Management
www.CommunityAssetManagement.com
Pam Valentine..... pvalentine@cam-texas.com

ATASCOCITA FOREST COMMUNITY ASSOC.

Email the Board board@atascocitaforest.org
Website Questions/Problems..... website@atascocitaforest.org
Newsletter questions..... newsletter@atascocitaforest.org

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JULY YARD OF THE MONTH



Yard of the Month: July 2017 Winner
3810 Liles Ln - Daniel Lopez & Ana Noriega

The AFCA Board is pleased to recognize Daniel Lopez and Ana Noriega at 3810 Liles Lane as the July winners of Yard of the Month! Congratulations and thank you for helping to keep our neighborhood looking beautiful! Yard of the Month runs from March – September. Residents may view a photo gallery with each month's winner on our website: www.atascocitaforest.org > 2017 Yard of the Month.

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Noise Issues in Atascocita Forest

Noise complaints are among the most common we hear from residents. Excessive barking, revving engines, fireworks, or sounds from the Sheriff's Department training grounds nearby are the most frequent issues about which residents complain. We would like to take this opportunity to provide some clarification regarding noise laws and restrictions in our neighborhood, tips for how to be a considerate neighbor concerning noise, as well as appropriate actions that residents can take when faced with a noise nuisance.

The Atascocita Forest neighborhood is not located within any city's limits; we are in unincorporated Harris County. This means that there are no city noise legal ordinances for our area, nor are there legal "quiet hours" at night or in the early morning. Harris County does not have the legal authority to institute ordinances as a city does; instead, it relies on the state laws that address issues such as noise. According to Texas Penal Code Ch 42, Sec 42.01, a person has committed an offense (class C misdemeanor) if he or she intentionally or knowingly makes noise exceeding 85 decibels in a public place (other than a sports event) or in or near a private residence. A noise is deemed legally unreasonable if it exceeds 85 decibels after the offending person receives a notice from a legal entity (such as a judge or police officer) that the noise is a public nuisance. Also note that

the Texas state law does not make any distinction between daytime noise and nighttime noise; the "legal" level is 85 decibels, regardless of the time of day. As a point of reference, 85 decibels is about as loud as a food blender or a garbage disposal.

If a neighbor is making noise that you deem is unreasonable (including excessively barking dogs) your course of action should be to determine the street address of the offender and contact the Precinct 4 Constables. The standard procedure is for law enforcement to contact the individual(s) making the loud noise and advise them to stop (and possibly issue a warning). If the individual(s) refuse and continue to create a disturbance, the officer can issue a citation and the individual will have to appear in court. In the vast majority of cases, a visit from law enforcement is enough to curb noise nuisances. Please keep in mind that if the law enforcement officer does not observe the noise offense him or herself, then they cannot legally issue a citation for it.

Regarding the neighborhood specifically, residents are welcome to report noise issues to the HOA (in addition to law enforcement) and we can send a resident complaint letter to the offending address. We have found, however, that law enforcement is generally much more effective at dealing with these issues as they have legal authority to

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issue citations.

Seeing as we live in a relatively densely populated suburban area outside of city limits, noise is going to be a factor that we all have to deal with from time to time. We have to be able to distinguish between major interruptions to our ability to function and enjoy our homes, and minor, temporary irritations. But with that being said, it's also important for everyone within a residential community such as ours to be mindful of our neighbors and conduct our activities with consideration of those who live around us.

One of the best things we can try to do as a community is to communicate with our neighbors in a polite and respectful way about these kinds of issues. More often than not, a noise offender may not realize that the noise they are making is bothering you. A polite and friendly conversation may be all that is needed to stop the problem and establish or improve your relationships with your neighbors. If you are uncomfortable with confronting the issue so directly, a polite anonymous note on the door is another option as well. It won't work all the time, but it's worth a shot. In many cases, your neighbors will be more likely to be considerate of you if they know who you are and you have a positive acquaintance.

And on the flip side, if you are planning to conduct a noisy activity, such as having a party, tuning the performance of your engine, or powerwashing, a polite and considerate conversation with your

neighbors can go a long way (and may prevent unwanted visits from the police). If you let your neighbor(s) know what you're planning to do and when, and ask if that activity would cause undue disruption, you might be surprised how accommodating and forgiving your neighbors can be.

Get Connected with Atascocita Forest!



AtascocitaForest.org (official website)



FB Group: Atascocita Forest Neighbors
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Nextdoor.com: Atascocita Forest
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ATASCOCITA FOREST

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION Chiggers

Chiggers are the immature stage of a mite. They climb onto people walking through infested areas, crawl upwards, and wander around the body seeking a good site to settle down and feed. Feeding preference for these mites is in areas where skin is thinnest or where clothing fits tightly, such as the ankles, waist, behind the knees, and the groin area.

Chiggers do not burrow into skin as many people believe, so “smothering” them with nail polish is useless. When chiggers feed, they inject a digestive enzyme that breaks down skin cells which are then eaten. Itching and redness is caused by our body reacting to the enzymes injected into our skin. Itching typically begins 3-6 hours after being bitten, peaks at 24 hours, and can last up to two weeks.

The best way to avoid getting chiggers is to avoid infested areas. Since this is not always possible, here are some other things to try:

- Wear protective clothing- tightly woven items that fit loosely; including long sleeves & pants; shoes or boots
- Tuck pant legs into boots
- Avoid sitting on the ground
- Remove & launder clothing ASAP after being in infested areas

- Shower/ bathe after being in an infested area; scrub vigorously with a washcloth

- Use an insect repellent with DEET or picaridin

To treat chigger infestations around the home try the following:

- Keeping lawn trimmed
- Maintain vegetation; do not allow weeds to grow up & keep brush cleared
- Targeted residual pesticide sprays, usually pyrethroids

For chigger bites:

- Do not scratch pustules; opening pustule might lead to infection
- Oral antihistamines or topical anti-itch creams to relieve itching sensation

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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August is here, and that means that school will be starting at the end of the month! In Humble ISD, the 2017-2018 school year starts on Monday, August 28. Please note that Humble ISD has implemented an online registration system to register or re-enroll your child in school, which is available at www.humbleisd.net/Page/58361 (or by clicking the Enrollment in Humble ISD link in the Quick Links navigation section on the Humble ISD homepage).

If this is your child's first school year in the district, you will need to complete the New-to-District Online Registration and Enrollment, which is available in English and Spanish. Please note that you will also need to make an appointment with the Campus Registrar for your child's school campus to complete the registration and provide paperwork. You will need: proof of age and identity, the parent or guardian's driver's license or passport, immunization records (signed or stamped by health care provider), proof of residency in Humble ISD, previous school records, and standardized test results (if available / applicable).

If your child is returning to Humble ISD, log into the Home Access Center (HAC) and click the Registration button, then click on the Update Registration tab. Click the New link to open the 2017-2018 registration form. The annual student update for the 2017-2018 school year begins on August 2, 2017.

Please note that the InfoFinder system to identify bus routes for your child will not be available until August 18, 2017.

If you have any questions or need any assistance, the school offices are open during the summer from 7:30 AM – 5:00 PM Monday – Thursday. All Humble ISD buildings are closed on Fridays.

Whispering Pines Elementary Important Dates:

- August 2: MANDATORY online registration via Home Access Center (HAC)
- August 10 & 11: Packet Pick-up (9 – 11 AM & 1:30 – 4 PM)
- August 14: Support for setup of HAC accounts
- August 14 & 15: Return Registration packet with current proof of residence to receive Teacher assignment
- August 24: Pandamation at 5:30 – 7PM. Visit your child's classroom, meet the teacher, and drop off supplies

Humble Middle School:

Registrar – Keesha Stewart-Pugh

- August 2: HAC update
- August 16: Address Verification Camp at 9AM – 12PM & 3PM – 7PM

Please note that new student enrollment requires an appointment with the registrar; walk-in registrations will not be accepted. Beginning August 2, complete the new-to-district registration on the website and then make your appointment.

Balloons are Dangerous!

By Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center

Really?

I can remember in grade school how we all attached notes to balloons before letting them go in hopes that the balloon would be found by someone far, far away. It was exciting to think that maybe someone from New York or California would find it and contact me. It never happened. I've been to weddings and graduations where helium balloons were let go as part of the celebration. What I didn't know is the enormous amount of damage these balloons can do to our environment. I know now. If you think about it, helium balloons are nothing more than floating litter. Would you throw a deflated balloon with string on the ground? Most people would not. It makes for ugly trash especially on our beaches.

According to an article in February of this year on the Huffington Post website, balloons are among the top 3 most harmful pollutants threatening marine wildlife but they also harm domestic animals such as cattle, dogs and sheep.

Seabirds are most at risk. Deflated balloons are mistaken for jellyfish or squid and are eaten by the birds. Not able to digest the balloon, it will clog the bird's stomach and the bird will eventually die of starvation. Choking is also a threat.

The ribbons or strings that are attached to the balloon are a hazard to birds because they can become entangled in them when the balloon lands in a tree. They may also use the materials to build a nest causing a risk factor for the hatchlings.

In its natural state, latex is biodegradable but when processed for balloons and treated with chemicals, plasticizers and dyes, it can no longer be classified as natural. It can take a balloon from 6 months to 4 years to decompose. Think of the damage it can cause in that time. Shiny mylar balloons can take even longer.

How can you help? Explain the dangers of releasing helium balloons to your children. Don't plan balloon releases at any of your celebrations and if you know of someone who is planning this, please discourage them from doing so.





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