

THE RIVER REVIEW

October 2017

Volume 11, Issue 10

Photo by Mia Sanchez



NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF RIVER PLACE



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Homeowner's Corner

When You Just Shouldn't Do It Yourself

A do-it-yourself project can be an empowering way to save money, provided you know what you're doing. But making even one simple mistake could put a strain on your back or your bank account. Often, it's best to put safety first and call a professional. Here are four types of home improvement projects that are best left to the experts.

1. Plumbing or electrical projects -- There's a reason these are skilled trades. Both systems are complex, no matter how straightforward a repair may initially appear. Even small leaks can cause serious water damage, and faulty electrical wiring can lead to a house fire. Don't risk flooding or electric shock. Call a plumber or hire an electrician to make sure these jobs are done right the first time.

2. Renovations with possible code violations -- Structural changes require a licensed contractor. Not only can shoddy craftsmanship severely affect your home's value, but it can also put your family in danger. Accidentally removing a load-bearing wall, for example, could cause an entire room to collapse. Why take the risk?

3. Repairs involving heights -- More than 130,000 ladder-related injuries are treated in emergency rooms each year. Whether you're looking at a roof repair or trimming a tree, consider calling a professional before attempting to complete the job yourself.

4. Time-sensitive projects -- Weigh your work and family commitments before embarking on a home improvement project. Even if you're confident in your abilities, the added pressure of a tight deadline can lead to unnecessary and often dangerous mistakes.

Remember, just because a DIY project looks simple doesn't necessarily mean it is safe. When in doubt, err on the side of caution and call a professional.

Simple Tips to Save Home Energy and Money

While summer has technically ended, there will still be some warm days in which our AC units will be running. Besides, there are many factors that affect energy consumption besides just your AC unit. The key is not to ignore this fact to the point your electric bills are more than they need to be. Sometimes we feel that, since October is here, the AC won't be running very much so electricity costs will trail off. And Austin Energy's new year round rate, as of January 2017, will help customers save some money. But remember, these seasonal savings apply primarily to the hotter months.

Costs for electricity use are based on a five tier pricing system for customers living within the Austin city limits. So the goal should be to land on the lowest possible tier so that your rate for usage is the lowest possible. The more electricity a customer uses, the higher the tier and the resultant rate for usage.

So, keep these common tips in mind if you want to lower your costs:

1. Change your AC filter monthly during summer and every other month other times.
2. Set temperature at 78 or higher when possible;

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IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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EMERGENCY	911
Fire	911
Ambulance	911
Sheriff – Non-Emergency	512-974-0845
Hudson Bend Fire and EMS	
Emergencies	512-266-1775
Information	512-266-2533

SCHOOLS

Leander ISD.....	512-570-0000
Cedar Park High School.....	512-570-1200
Vandegrift High School.....	512-570-2300
Four Points Middle School.....	512-570-3700
River Place Elementary.....	512-570-6900

UTILITIES

River Place MUD.....	512-246-0498
City of Austin Electric	512-494-9400
Texas Gas Service	
Custom Service	1-800-700-2443
Emergencies	512-370-8609
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ARTICLE INFO

The River Review is mailed monthly to all River Place 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 River Review please email it to riverreview@peelinc.com. The deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the issue.

Let's Say Hello to the Walker Family!

Let's all say hello to Danielle and Grant Walker, our River Place neighbors currently residing on Josh Lane. Danielle is a busy stay at home mom while Grant is employed as a Senior Director of Real Estate Investments at the Teacher Retirement System of Texas. They are blessed with two wonderful children, Jackson, age 7 and Ainsley, age 5. Both are attending River Place Elementary, Jackson in the 2nd

grade with Ainsley starting kindergarten this year. The 5th member of the household happens to be Chloe, the cat.

The Walkers have lived in River Place for two years now, having moved from North Austin. They were attracted by the good school system and our beautiful neighborhood full of friendly families with children.

Living here, the Walkers feel a strong sense of community;

people are friendly and social. They feel there are also lots of opportunities for sports and other activities for children of all ages. And who doesn't love our great parks and trails? Lastly, seeing their own little ones being able to attend good schools with their friends is something they originally hoped for and now is actually happening!

The family enjoys a variety of sports and hobbies. While Jackson plays basketball, flag football, soccer and swims, he also loves watching the San Antonio Spurs basketball games and collecting basketball cards. Ainsley likes T-Ball, swimming and dance. Grant serves on the River Place HOA Board, likes to watch the Spurs games, and does some fishing whenever he can. Last but certainly not least, Danielle likes to read as well as spend time with friends and family. She volunteers at River Place Elementary School in their children's classrooms and with the PTA. She also volunteers at a local nursing home and with Partnerships for Children, a non-profit children's organization.

As we can all see, the Walkers are active and involved in our River Place community. If you happen to see them around the parks or trails, I'm sure they would appreciate a friendly hello!





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1 degree = 3% on your bill.

3. Unplug chargers and turn off power strips when not in use. Phantom loads can account for as much as 10% of your home energy use.

4. Keep curtains and drapes drawn on windows with direct sunlight. Sunlight can raise indoor temperatures by 5 to 10 degrees very quickly.

5. Fans can help you feel 2 to 4 degrees cooler but make sure to turn them off when not in the room.

6. Make sure closet, bathroom and bedroom lights, TVs and fans are turned off when you leave an area of your home.

7. Use high efficiency, long lasting light bulbs when possible.

8. Set refrigerator and hot water heaters at temperatures that get the job done but without going overboard. Low to medium settings are usually enough.

Visit savings.austinenergy.com for more energy saving options. It all adds up!



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Make Sure Your Halloween Has More Treats than Tricks

Halloween is supposed to be a night filled with fun and candy, but sadly the American Automobile Association (AAA) says October 31st is the second deadliest day of the year for pedestrians. Toni Odumosu, M.D., who practices at the Memorial Hermann Convenient Care Center, says parents and kids should follow these safety tips to make their Halloween a safe and enjoyable night.

1. Walk safely. Make sure children travel in groups, utilize sidewalks when available, and look both ways when crossing the street. Parents should accompany trick-or-treaters under the age of 12. Those children allowed to walk without an adult should stick to areas where they are familiar with their surroundings.
2. Keep costumes creative and safe. Ill-fitting costumes or masks that make it difficult to see can be a recipe for an injury. Make sure costumes aren't too long and opt for face paint rather than masks, if possible. If the mask is a must, make sure your child can see in all directions when it is worn.
3. Consider your accessories. Children should not carry sharp

objects or anything that could be mistaken for a weapon.

4. Stay well lit. Whether you trick-or-treat before the sun goes down, or carry flashlights, it is important that cars and other groups can see you. Consider putting reflective tape on dark-colored costumes.
5. Check the candy. Children are eager to tear into their loot, but parents should sort through the candy at the end of the night. Throw away anything that is not in its original wrapper. Children under the age of four should not consume hard or sticky candy, so that should be taken out as well.

"I also caution parents against allowing sugar overload. Kids want to eat their entire collection of candy in one day, but they will regret it later. Ration the candy to avoid stomach aches. Some dentists also offer "trade-in" programs where kids can swap the sugary treats for toys. I know it may be a hard sell for parents, but remind kids who make the swap that they can celebrate Halloween year-round with their new toy" encourages Dr. Odumosu.

FACT:

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In And Around River Place

River Place Short Cut to Vandegrift Still in the Works: With congestion and resultant accidents being of primary concern in the River Place community, all agree that a secondary access to the Vandegrift HS area is needed. As a reminder, Four Points Drive would simply be extended across River Place Blvd. all the way (about a mile) to the high school and middle school. Leander ISD has worked in various ways to acquire support and funding for the project.

Next on the docket was a meeting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS), held on September 13. As of this writing, we could only gather that the meeting was quite positive and that FWS and the ISD would work together to implement an effective habitat conservation plan. The FWS had previously reviewed the request and the LISD feels that impact on the environment would be minimal. This of course has been a major concern all along.

Cost of the road is expected to reach \$3 million and involves building along a corridor that also contains electric transmission lines and buried water mains. In spite of obstacles, LISD feels they are quite close to settling the various issues. Let's hope so. This project is sorely needed.

Please Put Cars in Garage Overnight: Please be advised that

Certified Management of Austin (CMA) inspects all of River Place for parking violations after midnight. They warn us that all cars must be parked in your garage unless you have an approved decal parking variance. No street parking is allowed. If you have guests visiting you, you may contact CMA so your account can be noted so as to avoid receiving a violation letter.

Waivers are not granted because garages are being used for storage, work or hobby areas, animal shelters or any other non-vehicle uses, including boat parking. Violations result in one warning followed by fines. This is in consideration of your neighbors and hopefully, through the cooperation of everyone, we can keep River Place looking beautiful.

Additionally, when cars are parked outside at night they become bait for middle-of-the-night thieves and vandals looking to rummage through or possibly damage them. So let's all comply and keep our community looking great and also free of this sort of mischief.

Vandegrift High School (VHS) Highly Rated: In U.S. News and World Report's Best High Schools rankings, VHS ranked in the top 2% of public high schools in the nation and improved its rating over prior years. Its students' performance in science, technology, math

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and engineering helped secure the recognition. The results, from the 2014-15 school years, were taken from a total number of 22,000 schools. VHS also ranked 47th out of 589 Texas high schools.

While VHS received a gold medal for its improving performance, Vista Ridge and Cedar Park, two other Leander ISD high schools, received silver medals. It's great to know that area high schools are doing so well academically. Educational quality is important to all of us!

UPS Customers Beware: Leslie Modisett of River Place reminds of the perils of UPS delivery—they put her package on top of her mailbox even though it would fit inside and, in addition, her gate was open so they could have left her package by her front door. Other residents as well have complained about delivery problems and stolen packages. Sure, they're in a hurry to get our items delivered but it seems as though there's been a rash of problems lately. So let's all keep a lookout for any mistakes and do our best to help our neighbors safely get their packages. Thanks!

Free ACT/SAT Practice Tests: Krysta Aguilar of River Place once again reminds us of free ACT/SAT practice tests: For High school Juniors: Free practice ACT/SAT tests will be given all year long at the Northwest Hills College Tutors Learning Center! The exam mimics the setting and timing of the actual tests, and families will have a chance to meet with one of our experts to go over the scores in detail.

KIM ORTIZ

PHOTOGRAPHY

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City of Austin Water Bill Overcharges: Eddie Burns and other residents warn us that COA may be overcharging customers for water usage. Eddie's bills, admittedly not a huge amount, were running about \$15 per month more than his usage. The problem turned out to be an incorrect "wastewater average" being applied to the account each month. Numerous problems have been reported though including incorrect meters, incorrect meter reading and unexplained accounting errors. So keep an eye on this. We know our water bill charges, especially being tiered, are certainly high enough!

TENNIS TIP OF THE MONTH: CHANGE A LOSING STRATEGY

This recent 2017 US Open we saw Roger Federer and Juan Martin del Potro play each other in a match that baffled the commentators as well as the spectators. Roger kept repeating an approach that was getting him nowhere. What happened?

Tennis Tip: A mistake that is made all too often in tennis is to fail to recognize a losing strategy and then change it. Even Federer, with all his Grand Slam wins and only a couple of losses this year, found himself in such a frame of mind that he failed to realize he was doing exactly that. With del Potro's wrist surgeries forcing him to hit many backhands with a defensive one handed slice, Federer still chose to attack del Potro's forehand, his absolute best shot.

To make matters worse (as del Potro crushed many forehand winners), perhaps the thought that he must hit really penetrating shots actually caused him to miss or hit short quite often. Why didn't he change his strategy? Perhaps his self confidence or stubbornness caused him to feel that, sooner or later, it would come together. Even Federer later said that he was not in the right mind frame.

So bottom line, we must each have a back up strategy to the one we go into the match with. And perhaps even a second one. And be ready to change if you begin to lose. That important recognition and decision is the only thing that can turn things around for you. It might also help your self confidence to know that you have other plans if your initial approach doesn't work.

So remember, even the very best players can make the mistake of sticking to a losing strategy. On the other hand, any of us can plan to change and change our plans. If you have a question on this tip, feel free to call or text me.

Walter: 512-497-9971

"Play like you're in first; train like you're in second." ~ Unknown

RIVER REVIEW

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