



November in Village Creek often brings stunning sunrises and sunsets which frame our beautiful community. This is the month to give thanks for what we have received.

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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
Best Trash.....281-313-2378
customerservice@besttrash.com, and www.best-trash.com

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NEWSLETTER

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A HOUSE DETECTIVE MYSTERY

The Cacophonous Coffee Maker

Gordon R. Watson

About eight years ago, our son and daughter-in-law gave us a coffee maker as a housewarming gift. It is no ordinary coffee maker. It is a DeLonghi Magnifica from Italy. I love this machine. You put coffee beans in the top, and wondrously fresh coffee comes out the bottom. Its only problem is that most think the Magnifica is noisy.

I will digress here to tell a short story. We had a flooring salesman come to our house last year, and I offered him a cup of coffee. He declined. Then he heard our coffee maker brewing my cup. He looked up and said something like, "You have a DeLonghi?"

"Yes."

"I will take a cup." It turned out that he knew a lot about coffee and these machines. I learned more from him about coffee than floors. One thing he told us was to avoid dark roasted coffee. It is oily and clogs the machine. By the way, the reason he knew it was a DeLonghi is that it makes all sorts of unique noises as it creates coffee. First, it hums as it rinses itself. Then it clicks and warms up. Then it grinds, moans, and pumps water through the coffee. My secretary does an excellent vocal imitation of it.

The final product, covered with a layer of foam, is perfect coffee. Of course, as with any machine involving so many moving parts, tubes, and electronics, I have had to repair it a few times. As luck would have it, my daughter-in-law gave us their old nearly-identical DeLonghi for spare parts. I have had to buy a few, but the major parts are interchangeable. The reason she gave up the spare part unit was that it failed, and she didn't want to awaken her young son with its early morning clamor.

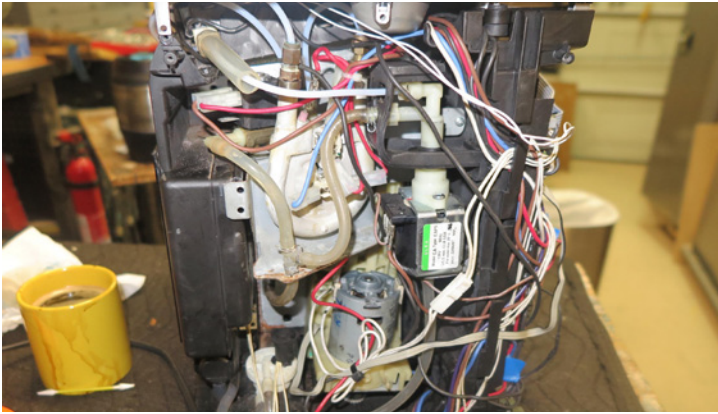
Recently our machine started making a terrible racket well beyond its day-to-day discordance. Functionally, it was okay, but it became embarrassing to serve my neighbor his Friday morning coffee. As with most of my projects, I was able to delay the repair by advising my secretary that the din was normal. As the cacophony increased, I was able to delay further by ordering some food-friendly lubricant (Who knew such stuff was available?). Then I had to order a special vandal-proof screwdriver. Why vandal-proof screws? For some reason, the DeLonghi people didn't want me to remove the unit's bottom, so they attached it with vandal-proof screws. Unfortunately, I needed to remove the lower part of my spare-part-unit because of a technical issue beyond the DeLonghi factory's control. I could not unscrew these screws with ordinary screwdrivers. Finally, to my disappointment, I ran out of excuses. Then to make matters worse, the U.S. Postal Service efficiently delivered them.

Since I hadn't a clue how to start, I watched a YouTube video. Finally, I took a deep breath and got to work. This job was not for the timid. Hiding behind other pieces, I couldn't even see the offending part. I had to remove several wires, undo tubing, and remove fifteen

(Continued on Page 3)

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or so screws. Finally, I replaced the problematic piece. Delonghi calls it the “transmission.” After several hours (without a coffee break), I put the Magnifica back together. It worked fine except, despite being back to its usual din, it didn’t make coffee. It is disappointing for things not to work after a repair, but I must confess that failure has become so routine that I don’t view it as a problem. I took it back apart; saw nothing wrong; and put it back together. It works fine. I have no idea why it didn’t work the first time. While I was curious, it is just sometimes best just to move on and have a cup of delicious, noisily-created, Italian coffee.



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PEEL, INC.
community newsletters

THE MINIMALIST TEXAS HARRIS COUNTY GARDENER

By Flint Sage

Freezing is possible anytime for the next four months. Make sure you drain and cover your backflow preventer (and any exposed water pipe) when a hard freeze is expected. Above all, buy plants for our USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 9a (20 to 25 Degrees F). If already planted, cover sensitive plants. Water the soil beneath plants the day before a freeze. Moist soil is excellent to help keep warmth in. Add mulch under the perennials to protect them from freezing. For the survival of the fittest gardener: Read the plant label and avoid growing plants that are susceptible to freezing here. Cannot remember our zone? All you need is your zip code: Use these words in your search: zip code, USDA, and Plant Hardiness.

By the way, if you have a hard time opening the backflow preventer valves, slip a 1” diameter 24” long PVC pipe over them to give you some hand comfort and leverage.

Note that there is apparently no official definition of a hard freeze except that a predicted temperature below 32 degrees for several hours or consecutive days should be a red flag.

We are blessed that vegetables grow year 'round in Harris County. If you are a vegetable gardener, you can plant these vegetables in November: carrots, lettuce, onion multipliers, parsley, radishes, and spinach.

Pull out those annuals that die and cut back the perennials to desired height.

Watering: Watering can be greatly reduced during the winter. If there is no rain during the month, water everything at least one time. For those who use an irrigation timer, it is a good time to make the “seasonal change” as explained in your instruction manual. Remember that all plants need an occasional drink, even in the winter.

November is a great time to plant trees and bushes. According to Texas Gardener, don’t fertilize in November. Wait for spring. Avoid pruning woody ornamentals this late in the season.

**DON'T STOP ME
IF YOU HAVE HEARD THIS ONE**

Nodrog Nostaw



Frank was a stickler for proper punctuation. His obsession became so overwhelming that he is in the hospital... commatose.

THE VOICE COOKS UP SOME VITTLES

Sweet Potatoes with Chiles

From "The Houston Chronicle". This dish is for those who don't particularly like the sweetness of sweet potatoes. The chiles make this into a wonderfully delicious side for Thanksgiving.



INGREDIENTS:

3 large sweet potatoes
1 cup light sour cream
1 can chopped green chiles
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon Cumin (or to taste)
1 to 2 tablespoons butter, melted

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Bake sweet potatoes until fork tender. Cool to room temperature. Remove skin and mash thoroughly. Add sour cream, chiles, brown sugar, and cumin, reserving 2 tablespoons of the sugar. Mix Spoon into baking dish. Top with remaining brown sugar and melted butter. Bake 20 to 30 minutes or until bully and heated through. Serve immediately.

PLANT OF THE MONTH:

MILKWEED (ASCLEPIAS TUBEROSA)

By Flint Sage



Monarch butterflies need the common milkweed plant to survive. They lay eggs on the plant and the caterpillars eat the leaves. The plant grows about 3 feet high and wide. The fragrant, pink, flowers bloom

during the summer. You may want to remove the pods in late summer as the resulting seeds are quickly wind-distributed. It also spreads underground. This plant likes the sun and well-drained soil. Since it is a wildflower, it tolerates drought. Every plant has its downside. The leaves are poisonous. If you have pets, you should do additional reading. Upon any damage to the stem or leaves, a white, milk-like substance oozes out, which gives the weed its common name. We notice no tendency for this plant to attract fire ants. Above all, the plants are essential to the Monarch Butterfly.

Village Creek Lake Level

By The Editor

As I write this in October, the nearest Harris Country rain gauge shows that we have gotten 67" of rain this year so far. That is a lot of rain! During Hurricane Harvey, the same gauge showed about 29" from that storm alone. We live near the lake and, after the storm, I measured how much more the lake would rise before it overflowed its banks. To be fair, I measured it in just one location, so it is possible there is a lower point somewhere along the shore. My method was to put a stake in the ground at the lake sidewalk and run a string with a string-level attached to the water debris high point. When the string was level, I measured vertically to the grass. The answer: About 56" from the lake surface to the top of the sidewalk. The spillway was at near-capacity at the peak of the storm. I wouldn't interpret this "cushion" as meaning the lake will never overflow. A simple clogging of the spillway, downstream problems, or street drain could cause flooding.

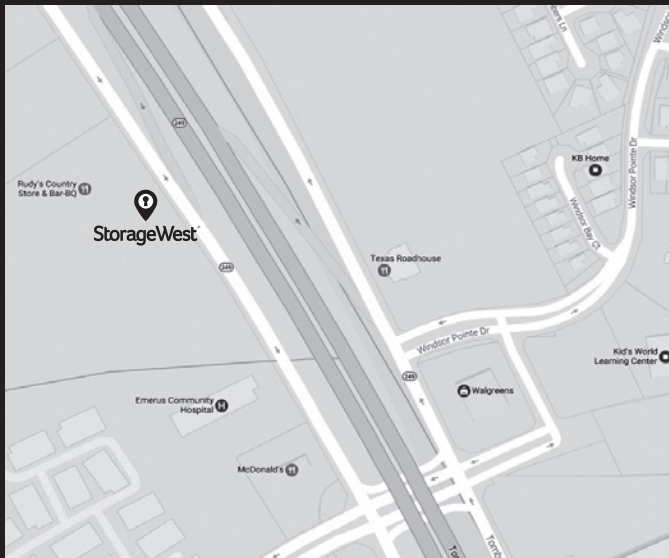
Remaining Village Creek Events for 2017

(confirm at marquee)

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If you are ready for this amazing experience, please give me a call, I'd love to talk with you more about it. I am one of the Houston area STS Local Coordinators, I've worked with foreign exchange students for seven years and have also hosted 13 students on my own. I can tell you anything you need to know about hosting. Please contact Vicki Odom at 832-455-7881 or via email at vicki.stsfoundation@gmail.com.

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