

January 2018

**COURTYARD HOMEOWNERS
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

COURTYARD CALLER

Official Courtyard Newsletter

Volume 14, Number 1

BOARD MESSAGE

Happy 2018! Just want to remind everyone that the Courtyard's annual meeting is set for **Sunday, January 28 at 6:00 p.m.** in the lobby of the office building located at the intersection of Courtyard Drive and North Scout Island Circle. We wish to again stress the importance of having a quorum present at the annual meeting so that we can conduct necessary business and avoid the costs and delay of having to schedule a second meeting. Written materials about this meeting will be mailed to you this month. When you receive them, please take a few minutes to read them, and then sign and mail your proxy right back in. In this way, if you cannot attend in person, your vote will count. Remember that sending in your proxy does not prevent you from attending in person and voting directly that night. If you have any questions about this, contact any Board member or Marilyn Childress at Goodwin Management Company.

The terms of two current HOA Board members end January 2018, and we will be voting to fill those positions at the annual meeting on January 28. We are very happy that both of those members, Waneen Spirduso and Paul Siegel, have volunteered to serve another term. For those of you who don't know Waneen or Paul, Waneen is a retired UT professor, has lived in the Courtyard for twenty-nine years, and has "loved every minute of it." Over the years Waneen has served on the Environmental Control Committee, chaired the Compliance Committee, was among the founders of the Kayak Committee in late 2007 and chaired that committee from 2008 until July 2017. Paul has been a resident of the Courtyard for seven years, joined the Board three years ago and has been our Vice President since joining. Before coming to Austin, Paul served as General Counsel for Pennzoil-Quaker State Company in Houston and established the corporate practice section of a large Texas law firm before retiring in 2004. Paul also served on the board of several organizations, including

his local HOA, where he was the president for eleven years. We are very fortunate that these talented individuals have offered to continue their service to the Community.

Although we can't argue with her reasons, we regret to announce that Director Cathleen Barrett decided to retire at the end of last year to spend more time with her family. Cathleen has served on the Board for seven years, four years as the editor of the Caller, and will be greatly missed. Cathleen – thank you so much for all the time you have given our Community, and we wish you well. It was a pleasure to work with you.

Now for the good news – we are very happy to announce that Denise Hogan volunteered and was appointed to serve the remaining two years of Cathleen's term. She will also serve as Secretary for the Board until the February 2018 meeting when 2018 officers are elected. Denise – welcome aboard and thank you for offering to serve.

As you are probably aware, the Board approved an increase of \$14.00 to the 2018 annual dues. This is slightly less than five percent (5%) and raises our dues from \$286 to \$300. This increase comes out to a little more than 4 cents a day. If you have any questions, note that our Treasurer, Jim Lloyd, will be reviewing the 2018 budget at the annual meeting and will be available to discuss your questions. If you don't think you will make it to the meeting, feel free to contact Jim or any Board member before the meeting.

Drivers – please continue your efforts to drive slowly in the Courtyard – especially in this darkest time of the year. Walkers and runners can help by wearing light and/or reflective clothing, carrying a flashlight, and not taking up more space than is needed to get by on our streets. Everyone benefits when we all make the effort to keep our neighborhood safe.

COURTYARD CALLER

CHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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COURTYARD BOOK CLUB

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2018 AT 1 P.M.
5612 N. SCOUT ISLAND CIRCLE

*Please note: The meeting date for January has been changed
to Tuesday, January 9, 2018.*

Join the Courtyard Book Club in February as we discuss *A Gentleman In Moscow* by Amor Towles.

"House arrest has never been so charming as in Towles's second novel (following *Rules of Civility*), an engaging 30-year saga set almost entirely inside the Metropol, Moscow's most luxurious hotel. To Count Alexander Ilyich Rostov, the Metropol becomes both home and jail in 1922, when the Bolsheviks spare his life (on the strength of a revolutionary poem written in 1913, when the count was at university). Forbidden to venture out, Rostov explores the intricacies of the grand structure and befriends its other denizens: precocious nine-year-old Nina Kulikova, a bureaucrat's daughter who demands instruction on how to be a princess; Emile, virtuoso chef of the Boyarsky, "the finest restaurant in Moscow"; Andrey, the Boyarsky's French expatriate maître d'; and the beautiful actress Anna Urbanova, who becomes the count's regular visitor and paramour. Standing in for the increasingly despotic Soviet government is the Bishop, a villainous waiter who experiences gradual professional ascent—he becomes headwaiter of the Boyarsky, finally putting his seating-chart and wine-pairing talents to use. But when the adult Nina returns to ask Rostov for a favor, his unique, precariously well-appointed life must change once more. Episodic, empathetic, and entertaining, Count Rostov's long transformation occurs against a lightly sketched background of upheaval, repression, and war. Gently but dauntlessly, like his protagonist, Towles is determined to chart the course of the individual."

The reading list for 2018 includes: *Burial Rites* by Hannah Kent; *I'll See You in Paris*, by Michelle Gable; *The Martian* by Andy Weir; *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly; *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance; *Sea Wolf* by Jack London; *Finding Gobi* by D. Leonard & C. Borlase; and *Captured* by Scott Zesch.

For more information about the Courtyard Book Club or for details about upcoming contact Lou Blemaster at 512-551-2659 or email loublemaster@gmail.com.

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COURTYARD FIRE SAFETY

Be Ember Aware Summary



WIND-BLOWN EMBERS ARE THE BIGGEST THREAT TO HOMES

Key Point: Fire will exploit the weakest link. Many homes with adequate Firewise defensible space can still burn to the ground because embers can enter through attic vents, find their way under roofing materials, or ignite flammable materials around the home (like litter in the gutters, wood stacks, and wood fencing).

Solution: Reduce the risk to your home as much as possible. Install and maintain ember resistant vents and roofing, and remove flammable materials from around the structure.

Few homes burn due to direct contact with wildfire flames. Many believe that by simply clearing the brush, all will be well. **Wrong!** Wildfire experts agree that embers are the primary cause of structure fires. They come in swarms as thick as killer bees on the rampage. These embers can find their way into any opening, any crack, any open window or vent opening large enough to admit them, and they are nearly always less than a half-inch in diameter, usually much smaller.

Embers are the exclusive propagators of "spot" fires downwind of a fire front. "Downwind" can be in almost any direction, as the fire creates its own winds, even whirlwinds. It's natural to think those ugly flames are the main culprit, but unless the fire front is closer than about 30 feet of a structure, it is unlikely to cause ignition. As you may have read in our 2017 Be Embers Aware series of articles, embers from wildland fires can travel far greater distances than the depth of any defensible space boundary.

Some homes do court disaster because of too much flammable vegetation or other materials in close or in contact with the home. However, most Courtyard homes have landscaping that creates a Firewise defensible space that minimizes risk from a raging fire front. What we must worry about are embers.

It may not be possible to save your home if it is engulfed by millions of embers, or even one - **in the wrong place**. The actions recommended in the 2017 Be Embers Aware series and our on-going Courtyard home ignition zone risk evaluations provide the knowledge you need to defend against embers.

For an excellent tutorial on how the community homeowners can respond to the Wildfire risk, see ***Making Your Home Firewise*** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6jV-gM9EwQ>

To sign up with the Courtyard Fire Safety Committee to **schedule an evaluation** by one of our trained teams, email fire-safety@courtyardhoa.org.

HOW TO AVOID WATER BILL STICKER SHOCK

If you've ever been unpleasantly surprised by a skyrocketing water bill, you know the havoc that water leaks and billing errors can have on your finances. The City of Austin offers some excellent tips and free conservation tools to help residents avoid or mitigate the damages caused by latent water usage. Go to www.austintexas.gov/waterleak for more information.

Here are some things you can do if you suspect there is a problem with your bill or water usage.

- Compare your current bill's water usage with the same month from previous years.
- Check your water meter. (The website provides instructions for locating and reading your meter.)
- Perform a Slow Leak Test. Stop using any water and watch the small triangular-shaped dial located on your water meter for a few minutes. The dial will move or spin if there is a leak. Small or slow leaks will cause the dial to spin very slowly while more significant leaks will cause the dial to turn quickly.

Where to look for leaks.

INSIDE

- Toilets. If your toilet has a leak, you could be wasting about 200 gallons of water every day! Check for toilet leaks by adding several drops of food coloring to the tank. If the toilet is leaking, color will appear in the toilet bowl within 30 minutes.
- Faucets & Showerheads. Check all faucets and showerheads for drips. A slow drip can waste as much as 20 gallons of water each day. Austin Water offers free conservation tools, including a water-efficient showerhead & faucet aerator.
- Washing Machine & Dishwasher. Look for water on the floor near your washing machine or dishwasher, it could mean a leak. Water Heater. Water dripping down the side of the tank could mean the pressure relief valve is stuck.

OUTSIDE

- Sprinkler/Irrigation system. Check the irrigation system for damage, especially before turning the system back on for the spring and summer irrigation season and after mowing your lawn.
- Soggy Spots. Soft, soggy, spots in your yard or uneven plant growth might be a sign of a leak in your underground water pipes.
- Home Foundation. Standing water around the foundation could mean your underground pipes have become damaged.
- Lookout for Algae. A buildup of algae on the ground or walls around the outdoor spigot may be the result of an undetected leak.
- Pool Levels. Use a grease pencil to mark the desired water level, watch for a drop of 6 inches or more per month. This amount typically indicates a leak. Be sure to check the pumps as well as the area around the water pump for any signs of escaping water.

VARICOSE VEINS, NOT JUST A COSMETIC ISSUE

By Michael M. Di Iorio, MD, RPVI, RVT, RPhS, Medical director of South Austin Vein Center.



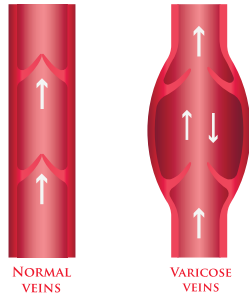
If you suffer from problems related to varicose veins and spider veins you are not alone! Venous insufficiency, also known as venous reflux disease, is the most common cause of varicose veins and affects nearly 30 million adults in the United States.

Veins serve an important function bringing blood back to the heart. We have two sets of veins in our legs, deep veins and superficial

veins. These veins have one-way valves that normally direct blood flow in one direction, toward the heart. When these valves fail blood can flow the wrong way and pool, increasing the pressure in the veins. This is called venous insufficiency and is the driving force behind the development of varicose veins.

Varicose veins are not just a cosmetic issue. They can cause pain, throbbing, heaviness, leg fatigue, restless leg and swelling often worse at the end of the day.

In more advanced cases patients can develop skin discoloration and even ulceration.



Risk factors include increasing age, a family history of varicose veins, professions that require long periods of standing or sitting, obesity and in women, pregnancy.

Unfortunately, venous insufficiency and varicose veins are a progressive problem and will only get worse over time. But don't worry treatment is available and covered by most insurances.

Diagnosis begins with a thorough examination



of the legs followed by a venous ultrasound. Ultrasound allows the vein



specialist to see under the skin, giving a clear picture of how the veins look and are functioning. Treatment may include one or a combination of minimally invasive procedures. These include endovenous ablation which closes the diseased vein down from the inside with heat, or alternatively, placement of a medical adhesive in the vein to seal it shut. Large ropey veins sometimes need to be removed through tiny incisions in a procedure called ambulatory phlebectomy and sclerotherapy is a procedure where medication is injected into a vein causing it to collapse and eventually be reabsorbed.

All of these procedures are performed in an outpatient setting and often take less than an hour. Pain is minimal and recovery is quick with most people returning to normal activities the same day.

If you would like more information on venous insufficiency and varicose vein treatment please visit www.southaustinvein.com



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REMINDER

LAST MONTH TO TRIM OAK TREES

January is the last opportunity for your oak trees to be trimmed until July of this year. The season not to trim oak trees is from February through June when the oak wilt carrier beetle is most active. Oak Wilt is a serious threat to the oak trees in central Texas.

Also, please remember that our Declaration requires that no tree, shrub or planting of any kind be allowed to overhang or otherwise encroach upon any sidewalk or other pedestrian way from ground level to a height of seven (7) feet. The City of Austin as well has a requirement that all trees overhanging streets have a minimum clearance of fourteen (14) feet above street level.



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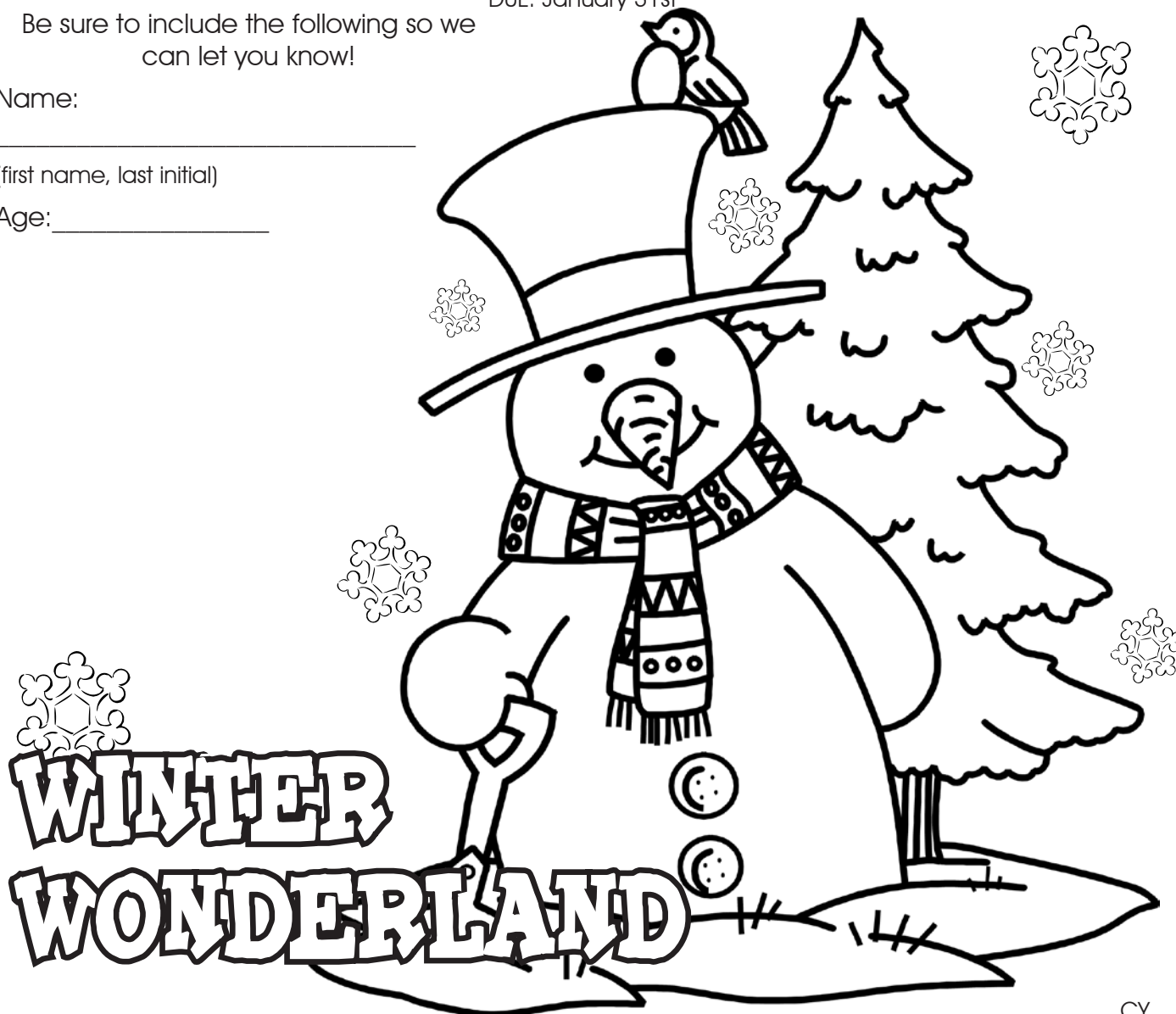
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