

February 2018

COURTYARD HOMEOWNERS
ASSOCIATION, INC.

COURTYARD CALLER

Official Courtyard Newsletter

Volume 14, Number 2

BOARD MESSAGE

If you missed the annual meeting, you can still volunteer some of your time to the community by signing up on one (or more) of our standing committees. These committees and their chairpersons are listed in the newsletter each month. If you don't think you have time to formally join a committee, please consider helping out from time to time, as matters come up – such as Park clean-ups or one of our social events. Keep an eye out for notices in the Caller, on the website, and watch for event signs posted near the entrances and on street corners. We cannot stress enough the importance of volunteers. Their assistance is invaluable to our efforts to keep the Courtyard a beautiful and welcoming community. Giving a little of your time to work on a community project also brings you together with your neighbors and helps you get to know and appreciate each other a little more. To all of you who already volunteer throughout the year, thank you, thank you, thank you! Please continue! We need you.

Just a few “shorts”: (1) FYI – February 9 & 23 are the Friday “Blue Trash” container pickup days. Save yourself the effort of hauling the blue recycling container out & back on the other Fridays; (2) If you haven't sent in your annual Homeowners' Association dues yet, please do so as soon as possible; (3) Although Courtyard “old timers” know this, WARNING for any of our newcomers to Central Texas -- please be aware that oak wilt season is underway and runs through June, and this is a serious devastating tree disease. If you want to get your oak trees trimmed, wait until the end of June; and (4) Please continue to drive slowly and carefully on our streets, especially in the darker times of the early morning and evening.

COURTYARD FIRE SAFETY

Firewise for 2018

Congratulations, Courtyard Community Homeowners for earning yet another year's recognition as a Firewise USA Community – for 2018.

The wildfire tragedies in California communities amplify the necessity to prepare before a wildfire event. Courtyard Firewise action planning, with regular attention to wildfire risk mitigation, aims to minimize wildfire effect on our homes and lives. Firewise preparation illustrates this repeatedly around the United States. You can find updated information on Firewise “saves” on the Firewise website at www.firewise.org.

Wildfire can still occur in our immediate surrounding wildland interface, affecting our community. Firewise USA provides us with up-to-date action information for homeowners and the community that helps us meet this challenge. Our Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) commits us to a sustained program of wildfire mitigation that is both physically doable and cost-effective. The plan gives priority to educating homeowners. When we understand there is something we can do, we are more apt to act. Individual homeowners learn about important home ignition risk mitigation they can do on their own. And as a community, the Courtyard continues to reduce wildfire fuel in our common areas. The 2018 CWPP actions call upon residents to take advantage of training and participate in events that will increase their understanding individually. And by participating we learn that as neighbors we can help our neighbors and ourselves; we are inextricably linked together in mitigating wildfire risks.

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.

COURTYARD CALLER

CHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Leslie Craven..... 502-1124, 585-1153 (cell)
Vice President, Paul Siegel..... pbsiegel@gmail.com
Secretary, Denise Hogan..... denise.l.hogan@gmail.com
..... 214-403-4454
Waneen Spirduso..... spirduso@utexas.edu
Treasurer, Jim Lloyd 231-0855
Doug Richards 512-527-9001, dougrichards714@gmail.com
Henry Mistrot 459-7313

COMMITTEES

Environmental Control (ECC)
Betty Boon..... 512-626-2253, betboon@gmail.com
Community Park
Terry Edwards..... 214-392-4627
Welcome
Jim Carolan cell (619) 559-1978
..... jccarolan1@gmail.com
Social Committee Chairperson
Joany Price..... 775-8942
Landscape & Decorating
Ed Ueckert 345-6137
Security
Jim Lloyd..... 231-0855
Communications
Leslie Craven 502-1124
Jane Gibson (*Editor - Courtyard Caller*)..... 850-3346
..... janeegib@gmail.com
Compliance
..... Open
Kayak Committee
Fred Wahlers..... cell 214-476-7725
..... fwahlers@sbcglobal.net
Fire Safety Committee
Jim Carolan cell (619) 559-1978
..... jccarolan1@gmail.com
Area Development and Zoning Liaison
Paul Siegel....., pbsiegel@gmail.com

MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Goodwin Management: Marilyn Childress
11149 Research Blvd. Austin, TX 78759-5227
512-502-7509

SUB-HOA CONTACTS

Center Court:
Gary Doucha 401-3105
..... gmdoucha@yahoo.com
Travis County Courtyard (aka "Backcourt")
Allan Nilsson 346-8432
..... arnilsson@earthlink.net
Villas at Courtyard:
Thomas Hoy 231-1270
..... Thomas.Hoy@freescall.com
Wolf Court:
Tim Sullivan..... 346-3146
..... tsullivan@gmail.com



COURTYARD MEN'S POKER & PIZZA GROUP

Are you interested in meeting fellow guys in the neighborhood?

Do you dream of making the final table at the World Series of Poker?

Do you think Pizza is Life?

A good number of men in the Courtyard have expressed interest in setting up a monthly Men's Poker & Pizza Night

We are newly forming the group and encourage all interested parties to reach out

Contact Erik Maye for more information about a Courtyard Men's Poker & Pizza Group

*erikmaye@gmail.com
512-626-2404*



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5747 N. Scout Island Cir.
SOLD - Listing Agent

5901 Inter Council Cv.
SOLD - Buyer's Agent

5704 Scout Island Cv.
PENDING - Listing Agent

call me at 512-775-8942 for a complimentary CMA of your home



Joany Price

*Your Courtyard Neighbor
& Tennis Club Member*

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COURTYARD CALLER



Recluse spiders

Recluse spiders, as their name suggests, are shy and do not like being in the open. They are about the size of a quarter, with a body that is 1/2 inch long. Recluse spiders can be light brown to dark grayish-brown in color. Legs are spineless and body color is fairly uniform. Recluse spiders are known for their characteristic violin or fiddle-shaped marking on the “back” (a.k.a. cephalothorax...the front body section of spiders). Since other spiders may have similar markings, the eye pattern is what really needs to be examined to determine if it is a recluse; three pairs of eyes arranged in a semicircle on the front of the cephalothorax will be confirmation.

Outside homes, recluse spiders can be found in garages or sheds, firewood piles, or piles of stored materials such as lumber, bricks, or rocks. Inside the home, these spiders are found in bedrooms, closets, bathrooms, under furniture, behind baseboards, in attics, or in cracks and crevices. They are most active at night when hunting for food.

Recluse spiders do not tend to seek people out to bite; instead, people are bitten accidentally when rolling over onto a spider while sleeping or when trapping a spider next to skin while putting on clothing. Recluse spiders have a cytotoxin that breaks down tissue around the bite area. Several hours after being bitten a blister forms at the bite site that may grow in size as more tissue breaks down from injected venom. Infected tissue eventually sloughs off; this leaves an open wound that takes often months to heal completely. Other symptoms may also occur such as chills, fever, fatigue, joint pain, or nausea. If problems are experienced after being bitten by a spider, then seek medical attention immediately.

To avoid spider bites, try some (or all) of the following:

- Use sticky taps to capture spiders
- Remove bed skirts from beds (these make it easy for spiders to crawl into the bed)
- Don't leave clothes or blankets on the floor; shake out blankets and clothing before using
- When storing items, either use sealed plastic containers/bags or tape boxes on all seams to keep spiders out
- Wear leather gloves when cleaning in undisturbed closets, attics, garages, or the yard
- Keep stacked, stored items away from the home.

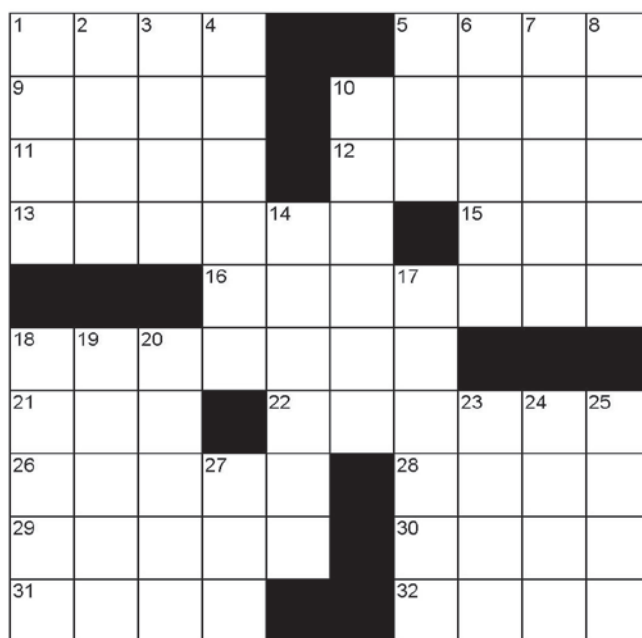
Do not store firewood against the house and only bring in firewood to immediately place on a fire.

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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CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

1. Green seedless plant
5. Syrian bishop
9. Singing voice
10. Tapestry
11. Oracle
12. High School dance
13. Camel seat
15. Kimono sash
16. Moslem
18. Ancient time piece
21. Environmental protection agency (abbr)
22. Naval fleet
26. From Asia
28. Aroma
29. Jeans
30. Back of the neck
31. Tuber
32. Removes the water

DOWN

1. Squash
2. Tub spread
3. Soup
4. Dirty
5. Creative work
6. Sweeper
7. Deer
8. Molded salad
10. Precision cut stone
14. People from Asia
17. Kitchen appliance color
18. Large mammals
19. Defeat
20. Simple
23. 6th month (Jewish calendar)
24. Foolish
25. Greek god of war
27. Place

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NATURE WATCH

RASCALLY RACCOONS

by Jim and Lynne Weber

Although easily recognized by its bandit mask and ringed tail, the Northern Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) is a widespread mammal but not often seen due to its nocturnal habits. It consumes a highly varied diet, is very intelligent and curious, and possesses a far greater manual dexterity and mental ability than cats and dogs, enough to defeat any but the most determined defense of garbage cans or home gardens. Much has been made of the intelligence of raccoons, with recent studies showing they are capable of remembering tasks for up to three years, possessing a mental acuity more closely approximating that of monkeys.

Denning above ground in tree cavities, chimneys and attics, underground in old burrows, storm sewers and crawl spaces, raccoons mate from February to August with 2 to 5 young (or kits) in each litter. Previously thought to be solitary, related females can share a common breeding territory, while unrelated males live together in small groups to guard their mating opportunities against potential rivals. Raccoons have a large array of over 50 vocalizations, including hissing, growling, purring, squealing, and chirping. They can run up to 15 mph, are efficient tree climbers, and can survive unharmed if dropped from heights of up to 40 feet. Raccoons are found throughout all regions in Texas, but they are seldom found far from water, which has an important influence on their distribution and breeding success.

Contrary to popular belief, raccoons do not wash everything they eat, but they do manipulate their food (appearing to wash it when water is available) in order to tactually experience the object rather than actually clean it. In fact, the word 'raccoon' was adopted into English from a now extinct language called Powhatan, which was spoken by the native peoples of Tidewater

Virginia, and translated to mean 'one who rubs, scrubs, and scratches with its hands.'

Raccoons exhibit rascally behavior by stealing food out of pet dishes, eating fish out of backyard ponds, and knocking over trash cans and scattering the contents. Additionally, they can carry and spread disease like rabies and parvovirus. However, since they are scavengers, they play an important role in keeping our ecosystems healthy by cleaning up carrion (keeping our surroundings sanitary), eating other species we humans consider pests (when numbers get out of control), and spreading the seeds of native

plants (by consuming berries and nuts).

You can do your part to keep their destructive behavior at bay by resolving conflicts compassionately. Contain available food sources by putting your trash out in the morning instead of the evening, feeding your pets indoors, and placing netting over ponds containing fish. Close all entry points to your home and other outdoor structures, so they are not used as dens to raise young. If a family of nesting raccoons is found in or around your home, they should not be removed until the end of nesting season in the fall. Separating the young from their mother will mean they will starve to death, and trapping and moving the family will



Northern Raccoon

likely result in death from resident raccoons, and is a Class C misdemeanor in Texas (this applies to transporting or selling live raccoons, coyotes, and foxes from, to, or within the state).

Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, check out our books, *Nature Watch Austin* and *Nature Watch Big Bend* (published by Texas A&M University Press), and our blog at naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com.

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Fun Valentine Facts

- In Victorian times it was considered bad luck to sign Valentine's Day cards.
- About 1 billion Valentine's Day cards are exchanged each year. This makes it the second most popular day of the year for sending cards.
- XOXO- Many believe the X symbol became synonymous with a kiss in medieval times. People who couldn't write their name signed in front of a witness with an X. The X was then kissed to show their sincerity.
- In the Middle Ages, young men and women drew names from a bowl to see who their valentine would be. They would wear the name pinned on their sleeve for 1 week for everyone to see. This was the origin of the expression, "to wear your heart on your sleeve".
- Richard Cadbury produced the first box of chocolates for this holiday in 1868.
- Roses are Red- The red rose is considered the flower of love because the color red stands for strong romantic feelings.



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The goal is to fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9. Each digit may appear only once in each row, each column, and each 3x3 box.



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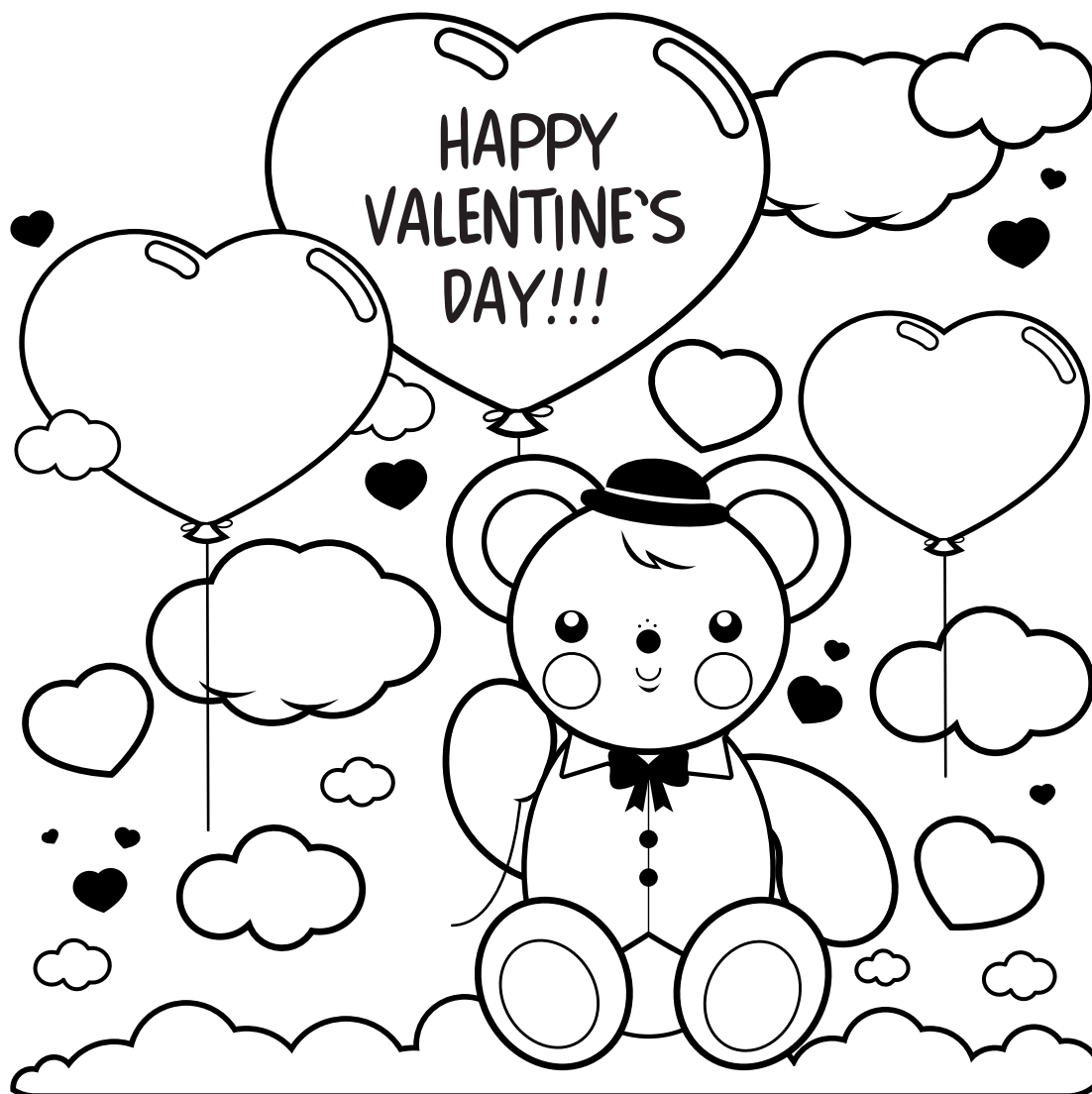
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