

February 2019

**COURTYARD HOMEOWNERS
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

COURTYARD CALLER

Official Courtyard Newsletter

Volume 15, 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. Our committees and their chairpersons are listed on page 2 of the newsletter. If you don't think you have time to formally join a committee, please give some thought to helping out from time to time, as events come up – such as Park clean-ups or a social event. You can always write to an individual committee chair and ask if there's anything going on that you could help with. We cannot stress enough how important volunteers are to this community. Perhaps the nicest part of giving a little of your time for a community project is that it brings you together with your neighbors and helps you get to know and appreciate each other a little more.

Even though it might sound a little early, we could use some residents who are interested in helping to design and decorate the entrance area for the 2019 holiday season. Since it's such a busy time of the year, we need to plan ahead and have our decorations ready well before December. Contact Ed Ueckert, Chairman of the Landscaping & Decorating Committee.

TxDOT: We have not yet received a date for the open house to review and discuss renovation plans for our intersection. We will let everyone know as soon as we hear from them.

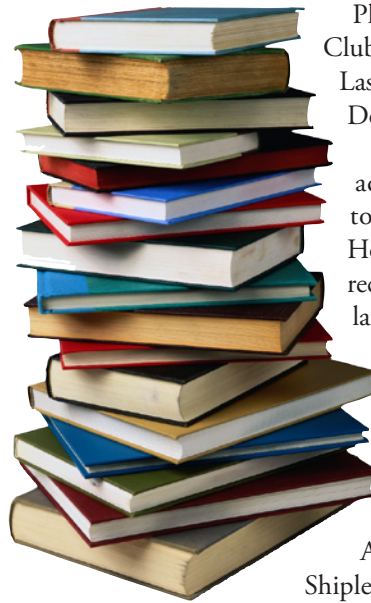
Speaking of communications, please take a minute to check the contact info shown for your property in the Courtyard Directory. (www.courtyardhoa.org) Note that our broadcast emails go to the most current email addresses in our Directory so our ability to reach you quickly in an emergency depends on the accuracy of the information we have.

If you haven't sent in your annual Homeowners' Association dues yet, please do so as soon as possible. And lastly, please continue to drive slowly and carefully on our streets, especially in the darker times of the early morning and evening.

**DRIVE SLOWLY IN
THE COURTYARD**

COURTYARD BOOK CLUB

**Tuesday, March 5, 2019
1 p.m. 5612 N. Scout Island Circle**



Please join the Courtyard Book Club in March as we discuss *The Last Painting of Sara De Vos* by Dominic Smith.

"In 1631, Sara de Vos is admitted as a master painter to the Guild of St. Luke's in Holland, the first woman to be so recognized. Three hundred years later, only one work attributed to

de Vos is known to remain—a haunting winter scene, *At the Edge of a Wood*, which hangs over the bed of a wealthy descendant of the original owner. An

Australian grad student, Ellie

Shipley, struggling to stay afloat in

New York, agrees to paint a forgery of the

landscape, a decision that will haunt her. Because now, half a century later, she's curating an exhibit of female Dutch painters, and both versions threaten to arrive. As the three threads intersect, *The Last Painting of Sara de Vos* mesmerizes while it grapples with the demands of the artistic life, showing how the deceptions of the past can forge the present."—Summary courtesy of Austin Public Library.

Join us in April to discuss *The Girl Who Fell From the Sky*, by Heidi W. Durrow

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

COURTYARD CALLER

CHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Leslie Craven.....	lcraven1@att.net
.....	585-1153 (cell)
Vice President, Paul Siegel.....	pbsiegel@gmail.com
Treasurer, Jim Lloyd	231-0855
Secretary, Denise Hogan.....	denise.1.hogan@gmail.com
.....	214-403-4454
Waneen Spirduso.....	spirduso@utexas.edu
Janet Wright	mightywrights@me.com
.....	469-387-5632
Henry Mistrot.....	459-7313

COMMITTEES

Environmental Control (ECC)

Janet Wright469-387-5632, mightywrights@me.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 Ueckert345-6137

Security

Jim Lloyd.....231-0855

Communications

Leslie Craven585-1153 (cell)

Jane Gibson (*Editor - Courtyard Caller*).....850-3346
.....janeegib@gmail.com

Compliance

Bill Meredith – co-chair.....bmeredith1austin@gmail.com

Leslie Craven – co-chair.....lcraven1@att.net,
..... (512) 585-1153 (cell)

Kayak Committee

Fred Wahlers..... cell 214-476-7725
..... fjwahlers@sbcglobal.net

Fire Safety Committee

Jim Carolan cell (619) 559-1978
..... jccarolan1@gmail.com

Area Development and Zoning Liaison

Leslie Cravenlcraven1@att.net, 585-1153 (cell)

MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Goodwin Management: Marilyn Childress
11149 Research Blvd. Austin, TX 78759-5227
512-502-7509, marilyn.childress@goodwintx.com

SUB-HOA CONTACTS

Center Court:

Gary Doucha.....401-3105
..... gmdoucha@yahoo.com

Travis County Courtyard (aka "Backcourt")

Stuart Hare785-1834
..... stuarthare@me.com

Villas at Courtyard:

Thomas Hoy.....231-1270
..... Thomas.Hoy@freescale.com

Wolf Court:

Tim Sullivan346-3146
..... tsullivan1234@gmail.com

Courtyard Fire Safety A Fire Adapted Community



FIREWISE USA
Residents reducing wildfire risks

The Courtyard Strives to be "A FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITY"

Our Firewise program focuses on the following as we continue to adapt.

- An informed and active community that shares responsibility for mitigation practices.
- A collaboratively developed and implemented Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).
- A visible wildfire reduction program that educates the community about the importance of our community-wide approach and the role of individual homeowners.
- Adequate fuels treatments conducted in and near the community, including development and maintenance of a fuels buffer or firebreak around the community.
- An established and well-known evacuation procedure.

Wildfire-to-Home Ignition Risk Mitigation

Risk mitigation requires continuing community-wide collaboration, an essential component to home survival and creation of fire adapted communities.

• Embers, either via direct or indirect means, remain the major cause of building ignitions during wildfires. Ember ignition via ignition of combustible materials on, in, or near the home are the most serious risk posed to properties during wildfires. Mitigating this risk requires maintaining an effective defensible space around our homes and regularly removing debris from areas on and near the home.

• Hazardous fuels reduction continues around our neighborhood on the interfaces with wildlands to our north and south.

• Neighbor-to-neighbor collaboration is vital. Once homes ignite and burn, they become a source of embers and threaten other homes. Once an initial wildfire-to-home ignition has occurred additional home ignitions often occur.

The Bottom Line

We are "our brother's keeper". While we must look first to our own properties in combating the risk of wildfire devastation, we need to be aware of the threat to our neighbors. We should help our neighbors recognize their wildfire risks and urge appropriate prevention steps. This is essential for The Courtyard Community to become a truly "FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITY".

See the Fire Safety page at <http://www.courtyardhoa.org> for details on Courtyard Firewise and our Evacuation Plan that incorporates Ready-Set-Go! instructions.

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>

Register with WarnCentralTexas at <http://warncentraltexas.org/> to allow emergency personnel in our local area to directly contact you by phone, text or email during a wildfire alert or evacuation, or other disaster or public safety event.

Sign up with the Courtyard Fire Safety Committee at email fire-safety@courtyardhoa.org to schedule a home wildfire risk evaluation and recommendations to improve home protection.

happy
**Valentine's
day**

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Drive-A-Senior-West is Looking for Volunteers

Operating since 1985, Drive-A-Senior-West (DSW) is a volunteer based non-profit organization whose mission is to help senior adults live independently, avoid social isolation, age in place, and enhance the quality of life by providing free transportation and support services such as light home maintenance and repairs, referral services, in-home visits, and reassurance calls. Volunteers serve clients in the following zip codes: 78701, 78703, 78705, 78731, 78751, 78756, and 78759, and provided over 6,000 rides to home-bound seniors last year in this region alone.

DSW is looking for volunteer drivers. It's easy, convenient, and requires no minimum time commitment. Everything is done through your smart phone or computer. Please visit DSW's website for more information and to sign-up. If you have further questions, contact Virginia Jones, volunteer and member of our recruiting committee: (512) 289-6455, virginiajones00@gmail.com; www.driveasenior.org, westaustin@driveasenior.org, main office (512) 472-6339.

REMINDER: Oak Trees Should NOT be Trimmed until July

Please be aware that January was the last opportunity for 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 (see Oak Wilt Disease in Central Texas article in this issue).



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Photos of Sarah Brumgart

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Valentine's Day Trivia

In England, the Romans, who had taken over the country, introduced a pagan fertility festival held every February 14. Nearly a century later in 496 A.D., the pagan ritual was abolished by Pope Gelsius, who established St. Valentine's Day as a celebration of love.

The first photograph of a U.S. President was taken on February 14, 1849 by Matthew Brady in New York City. Which President? ... President James Polk.

In Victorian times, it was considered bad luck to sign a Valentine's Day card.

California produces 60 percent of American roses. However, the vast number of Valentine's Day roses are imported, mostly from South America.

In the Middle Ages, young men and women drew names from a bowl to see who their Valentine would be. They wore the name on their sleeves for one week. Hence, the oft-used idiom of wearing one's heart on one's sleeve.

Cupid is associated with Valentine's Day because he was the

son of Venus, the Roman god of love and beauty.

The Italian city of Verona, where Shakespeare's lovers Romeo and Juliet lived, receives about 1,000 letters addressed to Juliet every Valentine's Day.

In 1866, candy manufacturer NECCO made the first "Conversation Hearts", originally called "Motto Hearts". Eight billion of these little candies are sold between New Years day and February 14.

On Valentine's Day, 2009, 39,897 couples, friends and families got together in Mexico City, and kissed for 10 seconds. It's the world record for the most simultaneous kisses.

If you're looking to add a special touch to your valentines mailing list, consider having them re-mailed from a more romantic destination, like say, Valentine, Texas. Just put your stamped and addressed valentine inside another stamped envelope and mail to: Postmaster, Valentine, TX 79854.



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10 Easy Ways to Make Your Home Safe

A home should be a sanctuary and a safe haven. You can ensure that you and your loved ones remain out of harm's way in the precincts of your homestead.

To avoid all kinds of accidents you should make it an accident-proof dwelling. It's really simple if you observe specific steps to keep mishaps at bay.

Here are 10 easy ways to make your home safe and secure. These will help you take care and protect yourself, family members and house-guests. Employ these effective tips:

1. Keep interiors and exteriors well lit. This is important at nighttime and also in winters when daylight is not very effective. Critical areas that need to be illuminated are the stairs, outdoors and foyers.

2. Never leave electrical problems pending at any point. The slightest fluctuation should be attended immediately. Make it a cardinal rule to switch off appliances after use.

3. Smoke alarms are a necessity and you must have the very best. Practice regular safety drills with your family to ensure awareness of procedures.

4. Keep ordinary appliances safely as they could be dangerous. Especially with kids around. Make electrical outlets safe by safety plugging and child proofing them. Keep sharp objects like scissors, knives, weapons and match boxes out of reach.

5. Ensure locks and bolts on doors and windows are in order and tamper-proof. Keep an eye out for suspicious characters and never invite strangers into your home. Teach your children not to entertain queries from strangers.

6. Do not share information about working or school hours. Teach family members to avoid telling people about schedules and routines. Do not put personal information online and never respond to voicemails.

7. The risk of accidents goes up when you are getting maintenance or repair work done. Ensure safety and precaution and be prepared to react quickly to accidents or injuries.

8. Do not attempt repair work of appliances involving undue risk. Many home accidents are the result of improper tampering with tools like lawnmowers and trimmers.

9. Maintain caution when driving vehicles in or out of your home. If you are backing the car up, watch out for children and pets on the road.

Make sure you don't leave stuff on stairs that may cause people to trip and fall. Be watchful when clearing snow from pathways that you do not heap it up in areas where people might walk.

The Healthy Muscle *By Sarah Brumgart / Whole Life Practitioner*

A healthy muscle is elastic. It can relax, stretch, and contract with ease. If it does not do all these functions equally, it is dysfunctional and usually gets our attention as nagging pain and/or hindered movement. Painkillers might be appropriate in certain cases. But rather than avoiding the pain, which will ultimately only increase and complicate the dysfunction, it is best to take action to remove the cause of it. This will not only relieve the symptoms, but should also make the muscle healthier than before!

As a competitive gymnast and professional dancer, I've had my share of dysfunctional muscles. While I always made sure that "the show must go on," the pain I endured distracted and kept me from enjoying my performance to the fullest. Developing my own style of stretching and strength exercises helped to a certain degree. But when I became a licensed massage therapist, I finally learned the formula for complete recovery is to first relax the muscle with massage, then stretch and contract it. The key to this formula is that it be done **IN THAT ORDER**.

Some pain may be caused by tissue damage or soreness from exercising. Both need time and light massage for recovery. But pain from a "pulled muscle" is caused by a sustained cramp, a "frozen" muscle stuck in a contracted state. From my experience, initially doing repetitive strength work on the locked muscle only tightens it more, decreasing the range of motion and worsening the pain. And no amount of prolonged stretching fully relieves the tautness, either.

Rather, the first step should be to release the contraction of the muscle through massage and return it to a neutral resting state. The second step is then to mildly stretch the muscle so the fibers are elongated back to their original length. And only then would

the third step involve some light strengthening exercises to gently coax the muscle into contracting again, but now without it freezing back into a chronically cramped state. Some more stretching and relaxation should follow, leaving the muscle in a balanced neutral state. (It should also be noted that a muscle too lax can be just as debilitating, causing problems such as weak and deteriorated joints. That is why all three components of the formula should be equally enforced.)

Dietary considerations also affect muscle health, such as drinking enough water, eating properly for your body type, and taking necessary supplements to maintain body chemistry. Negative emotions certainly create a lot of unconscious tension in the body, too. Life is complicated, and physical dysfunction often creeps in without our knowing until pain alerts and "inspires" us to do something about it. If we heed its warnings and follow the formula "relax, stretch, and contract" under the supervision of a professional, we can remedy the situation. And the sooner we do so, the better. Ideally, this same formula should be applied regularly to every muscle group to keep the entire body healthy and resilient all the time.

Sarah Brumgart offers private wellness sessions at her home studio in the Courtyard neighborhood. Her services include massage therapy (LMT 121277), stretching, strength, hatha yoga, energy work, life coaching, artistic advice, psychic insights, and raja yoga meditation.





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SUMMER CAMP

10 QUESTIONS TO ASK

What's the camp's philosophy? Is it one you're comfortable with as a parent? Is it a good match for your child's temperament? Is competition or cooperation emphasized? If it's a camp run by a religious organization, what religious observances or practices are part of the program?

How does the camp recruit, screen and train its staff? Do counselors have criminal background checks? First aid training?

What about return rates? How many counselors are returning this year? The American Camp Association (ACA) says at most camps, 40-60 percent of the staff returns. If the number you're given is lower, ask why. How many campers return? Fifty percent is good, and more is better.



What's the ratio of counselors to campers? ACA guidelines for overnight camps call for a 1:6 ratio for ages 7 and 8, 1:8 for ages 9-14; and 1:10 for ages 15-18. Day camp guidelines call for 1:8 for children ages 6-8; 1:10 for children ages 9-14; and 1:12 for ages 15-18.

How old are the counselors? The ACA recommends that 80 percent of the staff be 18 or older and that all staffers be at least 16 and a minimum of two years older than the campers they supervise.

What medical staff work at the camp and what backup facilities are nearby? While most states have regulations for camps, there is no federal oversight of camps' health and safety. The ACA recommends that an overnight camp have a licensed physician or registered nurse on the site every day, and that day camps should have direct phone access. If your child takes medication, has food allergies or a chronic medical condition, be sure you are comfortable that the camp will be able to handle your child's needs.

What is the camp's approach to discipline and how does the camp handle conflicts between campers? Find out what the camp's rules are and what breaches would result in a camper being sent home. You should be comfortable that the camp's practices are in line with your parenting practices.

What does a typical daily schedule look like? This will help you decide if your child will be happy with the level of physical activity or the amount of time devoted to arts and crafts. Ask how much freedom a child has to choose activities.

Will the camp be transporting the children? What vehicles are used and how often are they inspected? Who drives them and what training do drivers have?

Ask for references. Finally and most important, get the names of parents with children the same age who have attended the camp.

Source: ACA - American Camp Association

https://independencetitle.com/wp-content/uploads/AusSA_SummerCamps_2019.pdf

*Don't miss the opportunity to sign up.
Check out the availability before its too late!*



JO CAROL SNOWDEN

Broker Associate, ABR

512.657.4441 | jocarol@moreland.com

