

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 6  
JUNE 2020

# MERIDIAN

## *Community Monitor*

NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF MERIDIAN



### **A BIRD THAT SAYS ITS NAME**

By Cheryl Conley,  
TWRC Wildlife Center

*Read More on Page 3!*



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## WELCOME

### *A Newsletter for Meridian residents*

The Monitor is a monthly newsletter mailed to all Meridian residents. Each newsletter is filled with valuable information about the community, local area activities, school information and more. If you are involved with a school group, play group, scouts, sports activity, social group, etc. and would like to submit an article for the newsletter you can do so online at [www.PEELinc.com](http://www.PEELinc.com) or you can email it [meridian@peelinc.com](mailto:meridian@peelinc.com). Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, special celebrations, birthday announcements and military service are also welcome. Our goal is to keep you informed!

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*(Continued from Cover)*

A few years ago, when I took my dog out for her last potty of the night, I heard the most beautiful bird singing. Just a few seconds later, another bird responded with the same beautiful song. I had no idea what species it was but after some research I learned it was a whippoorwill. The whippoorwill actually got its name because of its song—three syllables with emphasis on the first and last syllables.

Whippoorwills are nocturnal. They feed exclusively on insects and start foraging 30 minutes after sunset and continue until it's too dark to see. They continue their foraging at first light and stop just before sunrise. If the moon is bright, they may hunt all night. They have large mouths and can swallow insects up to 2 inches long.

The most interesting fact about the whippoorwill is that they don't build a nest. The female will lay her eggs on the ground and cover with dead leaves or debris. Often times she'll find a spot on the north or northeast side of a shrub or plant so she's shaded during the heat of the day. Mom is responsible for incubating the eggs during the day and both Mom and Dad share the duty at night. Amazingly, whippoorwills time their breeding patterns to coincide with the lunar cycles so that the eggs hatch when there is at least a half moon. It is believed that the extra light helps in caring for her young. Within 24 hours of hatching, the baby birds instinctively move apart. The parents will also push the babies to keep them apart. It is thought that this is done to make it harder for predators to see them. The male stands guard over the nest and will hiss and spread his wings if he thinks there is a predator nearby. Another tactic used to protect the young is he will fake an injury away from the babies to draw attention away from them. While he draws the predator away from the young, the babies scatter and freeze.

At about 8 days, the down-covered babies molt and the female leaves them in the care of the male. If conditions are right, the female will often find a spot nearby and lay 2 more eggs.

TWRC Wildlife Center cares for injured, orphaned and displaced wildlife brought to us by the public. Due to the Corona Virus, we've had to alter our admission procedures. If you find an animal needing help, please call us. We will advise you on how to care for the animal until you can bring it to us: 713.468.8972



**Help Keep Our  
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Beautiful  
Please Clean Up  
After Your Pet**

## BICYCLE SAFETY

Bicycling certainly has become a popular exercise option (or for some just to get out of the house) during the Covid Virus. Families and individuals were spotted within the neighborhood and on the walking/jogging/riding trails that surround us. Thus, this is a good time to remind everyone of bicycle safety, not just now...but anytime, such as riding for exercise/recreation, to school/work, etc.

### **EXCERPTS FROM THE USAA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION**

Bicycling is fun, good exercise and good for the environment. You and your family can enjoy years of safe bicycle riding when you understand the risks involved and take steps to prevent accidents and injuries. Covid 19 got a lot of people out walking and others pulling their bikes out of the garage to kill the boredom of being cooped up in the house.

#### **5 Keys to Safe Bicycling**

1. Wear a bicycle helmet.
2. Be visible.
3. Stay alert.
4. Know and obey traffic laws.
5. Be predictable.

#### **Wear a Bicycle Helmet**

You should always wear a bicycle helmet. Do not assume you will be safe from injury just because you are going a short distance or riding on an unpaved surface. Many serious bicycle accidents occur on residential streets or bike paths and do not involve vehicles.

#### **Inspect Your Bicycle**

- Lift the bicycle by its seat and spin the rear wheel. It should spin freely without wobbling, slowing quickly, or touching the brake pads.
- Apply the rear brake smoothly to stop the wheel. The brake pads should touch the wheel rim evenly. When released, the brake should spring back into place.
- Lift your bicycle by the handlebars, and spin the front wheel. It should spin freely without bobbling or touching the brake pads.
- Apply the front brake smoothly to stop the wheel. The brake pads should touch the wheel rim evenly. When released, the brake should spring back into place.
- Inspect brake pads. Replace them if they become worn or cracked. They should be at equal distances from the wheel rim.
- Check the spokes on both wheels. Replace broken spokes before riding.
- Check the tire tread. There should be no worn patches.
- Make sure tires are properly inflated.
- Check your handlebars. Stand in front of your bicycle holding the wheel tightly between your knees and try to move the handlebars back and forth or up and down. They should not move.
- Lift the frame near the handlebars and turn the front wheel back and forth. It should swivel freely.
- Make sure brake levers are secure.

- Apply the brakes and try to move the bicycle forward or backward.
- Make sure the ends of the handlebars are protected.
- Make sure the seat is secure and does not move from side to side.
- Clean reflectors and headlight. Make sure they are securely attached.
- Lubricate the chain if needed.
- Take your bicycle for an annual tuneup and safety check to ensure it remains in good condition.

#### **On the Road**

When riding your bicycle on public streets, you are required by law to follow the same rules as any other vehicle driver. You also have the same rights as drivers of other vehicles.

#### **Be Predictable**

- Use hand signals to communicate your intentions to other vehicle drivers and bicyclists.
- Communicate verbally (ex: "passing on your left").
- Ride in straight line and avoid sudden swerves.

#### **Teach Children Bicycle Safety**

Is your child ready to ride? According to The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), most children are not ready to ride a two-wheeled bicycle until 5 or 6 years of age. Along with physical skills, your child must demonstrate the mental readiness and self-control for understanding and obeying safety rules.

#### **Set Clear Rules**

Children – and all bicycle riders – should always wear a bicycle helmet when riding. In addition, you should set age-appropriate limits on when, where, and how children may ride. Be prepared to take away children's riding privileges if they do not follow these rules.

#### **Be A Good Example**

Practice what you teach about bicycle safety. Be diligent about wearing a bicycle helmet, stopping at stop signs and following other important safety rules. Your children will learn more from your example than from your words. Ultimately you should be able to practice bicycle safety while having fun!



## Lettuce Recycle!

by Dena Houston



### QUESTIONS FROM OUR READERS – PART 1

Every week, I receive questions about recycling. I always answer each question personally and then try to include the question and answer in Lettuce Recycle. If any reader has any recycling questions or comments, please send them to [recycling@hpwbana.org](mailto:recycling@hpwbana.org). Below are some of the questions (and the answers) I have received in the last year.

**WHAT DO I DO WITH CARDBOARD BOXES THAT WON'T FIT INTO MY BLUE BIN?** Flatten them, tie them up, and set them next to your blue bin. The driver of the recycling truck might not pick them up when he services your blue bin, but he will call a truck to come get them that day.

**IF I DON'T KNOW IF SOMETHING CAN BE PUT INTO THE BLUE OR GREEN BINS, SHOULD I THROW IT IN ANYWAY AND LET IT BE SORTED BY THE CITY?** The answer is NO! If you are unsure about whether or not something can go into either of these bins, put the items into your trash cart. Recycling contamination is very costly.

### PLEASE REMEMBER WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!!!

**WHAT DO I DO WITH PLASTIC BAGS FOR FERTILIZER, COMPOST, AND SOIL?** These bags are treated with special polymers to make them hold more weight. Many of them also contain materials that are considered contaminated, e.g., Dillo Dirt. Therefore, they cannot be recycled at the plastic collection bins at the grocery stores or at the Recycle & Reuse Drop-Off Center. They must go into the trash carts.

Below is a “cheat sheet” for recycling that I have created to provide a basic understanding of what can and cannot go into the blue curbside bin. I hope this helps.

### RECYCLING CHEAT SHEET FOR THE BLUE BIN

Nothing smaller than a credit card.

No mixed materials (no plastic soap pump with metal spring, no candy wrappers, no orange juice cartons, no paper coffee cups).

No contaminated paper products (no wet paper, even if dried out; no pizza boxes; and, no food product on paper).

Nothing that can wrap around sorting machinery or that poses a danger at the recycling facility (no plastic bags, wire coat hangers, rope, garden hoses, hypodermic needles, or aerosol cans with anything in them). Empty aerosol cans DO go into the blue bin.

Lid rules: All glass jars need to have their lids removed. Keep all plastic lids on plastic bottles and containers. All separate lids smaller than a credit card go into the trash. All separate lids larger than a credit card go into the blue bin.

*Here is a very informative City of Austin recycling website:  
[www.austintexas.gov/what-do-i-do](http://www.austintexas.gov/what-do-i-do)*



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## HOST AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT



In a time when life has come to a screeching halt, we begin to feel isolated and divided from the rest of our communities and the world as a whole.

Help us make 2020/2021 the #YearOfUnity!! Our goal is to help Texas recover and thrive by reconnecting with the world around us once again!

We have so many international teens from many different countries who are eager and ready to experience life in America and they dream of the host family who will choose to welcome them this fall. What better way to introduce your family to another country and culture without having to travel half way across the globe!

### **What is a host family?**

- Minimum age requirement of 25. Must be able to pass a background check and have a stable home life.
- Hosts come in all shapes and sizes! Married, single, with / without children .... all kinds of families are welcome!
- With the help of a Local Coordinator, Hosts are able to choose a student who fits with their family's interests and hobbies. They can begin communicating with their student once the placement is finalized in the database!
- Hosts receive monthly contact as well as 24/7 support during their hosting experience!

- Students cover all of their own personal expenses and carry their own medical insurance.

- Students arrive about 10 days prior to school starting and they depart about 7 - 10 days after school ends. Some have signed up to come for a semester (Aug. - Jan.) and most have signed up to come for the full school year (late Aug - late May/early June)

Hosts provide students with:

- 3 shared meals a day. Students cover lunch if they choose to buy hot lunch at school.
- Students can share a bedroom with a host sibling of the same sex and within 4 years of age from each other. Student must have their own bed.
- The ability to attend American public high school. Hosts would help with transportation to extracurricular activities, within reason and based on availability.
- The love of your family! Students are to be treated as a family member and will share in household chores and daily life with the family.

Help us bounce back from isolation and 2020/2021 the YearOfUnity! If you would like to hear about our student applicants to see if we have a match for you, please contact me directly at 832-455-7881, or email me at [vicki.stsfoundation@yahoo.com](mailto:vicki.stsfoundation@yahoo.com)





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