



The Jester Warbler

Official Publication of Jester Homeowners Association, Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings Neighbors –

As I write this message, I am heartened by the cooling weather and am looking forward to the Fall months. I trust this finds everyone well and continuing to support each other - finding ways to safely and creatively live in the pandemic setting.

I want to encourage safety above all for the neighborhood and one of the most critical to our wellbeing is to be mindful of speed. It's easy to get distracted BUT imperative to stay within the limit of 30 mph. The speed monitoring signs remain in place and that data feeds to the City of Austin effectively capturing the driving behavior of our Jester neighborhood. While I applaud those who strive to take care, I observe a significant number who still pay no heed to the flashing lights to slow down when speeds are high enough not to register a number. Children and families are on our streets more these days walking, running, biking and enjoying our beautiful neighborhood so please be mindful and take care to slow down!

I would also encourage every household to participate in the Firewise effort and schedule a free evaluation of the outside of your home with safety tips for fire prevention. The devastating fires raging in the East should give us pause to consider prevention in our heavily forested area.

There have been a few comments coming forward about theft and vandalism. While this is rare in our neighborhood, it does still happen. That being said, it is imperative to be mindful ... if vehicles have to be parked outside of the garage, do not leave any valuables in sight and always lock the doors. – and if anything does occur, please file a report with the police. They cannot do anything if they don't have pertinent information.

As your Board, we are continuing to diligently work for the well-being of our neighborhood - to keep it beautiful and safe. We continue to request more involvement from you – the residents – as it takes all of us working cohesively together to achieve the desired outcomes. We have had the same limitations of social distancing etc. but will be holding a virtual open meeting in the coming weeks so watch for that announcement on the website (jesterhoa.com) or by email blast.

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Please be sure that our management company (Goodwin) has your current contact information so that you are informed. It is your responsibility to update information and you can do so by visiting your resident portal on Townsq. (if unfamiliar, we will post more information on the neighborhood website.)

I want to acknowledge Ed Mokarzel for his years of service to the neighborhood as a dedicated member of the JHOA Board of Directors and wish him the best as he leaves his position. I know he will continue to be an active participant in the neighborhood so we look forward to that.

I would also like to welcome Suzanne Brown to the Board to fill the remainder of that term. A huge thanks to Suzi for her willingness to volunteer her time to join us in our endeavors – she has served a term on the Board in the past so we are pleased to have her experience and commitment.

Please let us know if you would like to volunteer on one of the committees – we strongly encourage and welcome more participation.

We are only as strong as we are united.

Christi Campbell

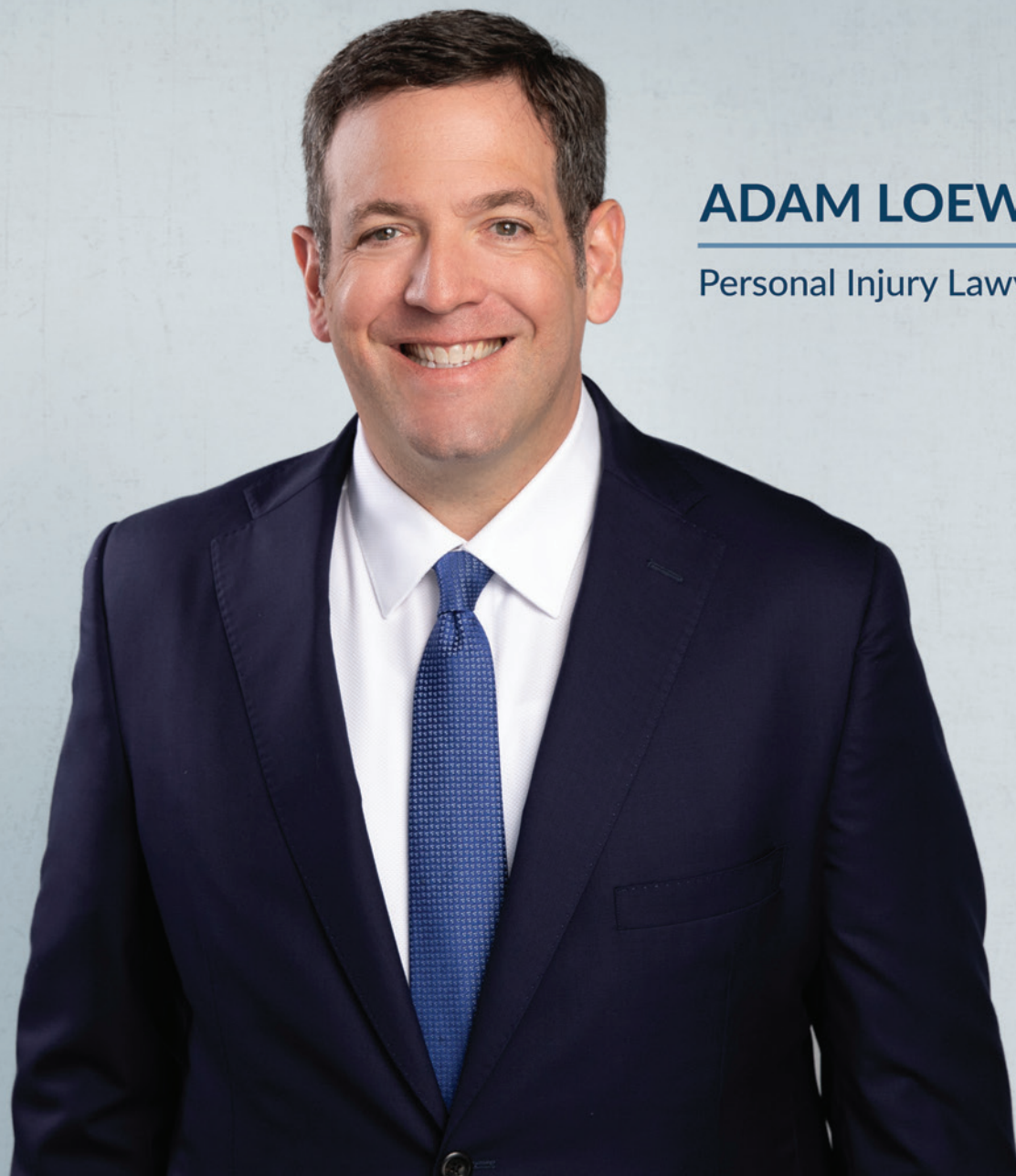
Jester HOA President

INTRODUCING NEW WARBLER EDITOR

A new resident to Jester, Hope Teel, answered the call regarding our need for an Editor for The Warbler.

She has a degree from the University of Texas in copy editing and design and freelance wrote for a magazine for about two years, so she comes well equipped to take the helm. We are excited to welcome Hope!

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ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

Interested in submitting an article? You can do so by emailing teresa@jesterhoa.com or by going to: www.peelinc.com/articleSubmit.php.

All news must be received by the 12th of the month prior to the issue.

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info on the neighborhood!

Rock Stacking, Rock Dams...No Big Deal???

It's BIGGER Than You Can Imagine - Read Why

by Carol Philipson

Covid 19 has made more people realize the beauty and importance of our parks and wildlands. Many have never visited, while others regularly enjoy these greenspaces but have no idea the impact each visit can make. Stacking stones along trails in creekbeds seems harmless..No Big Deal. Well, it's bigger than you would ever imagine.

WHERE'S MY HOME?

We've all seen rocks stacked in all shapes and sizes, man-made creeks and dams creating small pools for children to sit and play. It may seem harmless, but with every rock moved it may displace an amphibian, insect, reptile or aquatic wildlife. 20 rocks moved eliminates 20 potential homes plus expedites erosion as it exposes soil to harmful elements.

WHERE'S MY WATER?

A creek's water is essential for all wildlife. Natural dams are part of the ecosystem. Man-made dams disrupt the natural ecosystem, preventing essential water to wildlife downstream. A creek is like a blood vessel. Unrestricted flow insures a healthy biological environment for fish, plants, insects, and wildlife. The spaces under and between stones serve as mini-habitats for bugs, snakes and salamanders. Beyond the visual disturbance of natural environments, each rock in a stream is blooming with life. Everything from aquatic plants to micro-organisms are attached to those rocks.

WHERE'S MY TRAIL?

Before people stacked stones as an artistic expression, park rangers and game wardens built stone cairns as trail markers to keep hikers from getting lost. When people stack stones everywhere suddenly the one marking an important bend in the track could cause hikers to get lost! Social media has popularized rock stacking as a meditative practice which has dramatically escalated on public lands. In Acadia National Park, volunteers destroyed nearly 3,500 rock stacks, on two mountains alone, in 2016 and 2017.

PUT THEM BACK WHERE YOU FOUND THEM – LEAVE NO TRACE

Stacking rocks can have less impact as long as you put them back where you found them. When you're done marveling at your handiwork, snap a pic and dismantle the masterpiece. We marvel at nature's beauty, no need for human interference of natural graffiti and vandalism of habitat... "Leave No Trace".

Dark Sky Awareness

by Dale Bulla



Because we are surrounded by preserve land, it is important that we do all we can to protect our wildlife including preserving the dark skies.

The **dark-sky** movement is a campaign to reduce light pollution. ... Light pollution has also been found to affect human circadian rhythms. The **dark-sky** movement encourages the use of full-cutoff fixtures that cast little or no light upward in public areas and encourages communities to adopt lighting regulations. The city of Austin adopted such

an ordinance in 2006 and updated it in 2013.

So if you do have outside lighting, be sure that the light is directed downward so that it lights the ground and isn't directed upward. Our wildlife will benefit as well as protecting our ability to see the night sky.

Night skies are fading and natural darkness is disappearing. An estimated 80 percent of Americans have never seen the Milky Way. The culprit: the growing glow of artificial lights.

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department has partnered with the McDonald Observatory, the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) and local astronomy groups to promote stargazing in our state parks. We hope to raise awareness of preserving night skies with star parties, self-guided constellation tours and light pollution education programs.

In addition, we are reviewing our own lighting, and making changes to protect the night skies over our parks.

Light pollution

Poorly designed or installed outdoor lighting leads to light pollution. Light pollution is light that is too bright, is misdirected, or is shining where it's not wanted. Why is it a problem? Because light pollution:

- Produces glare that limits our ability to see at night, making us less safe and secure rather than more.
- Creates light trespass (light shining where it isn't wanted).
- Wastes money when we light areas unnecessarily, including the sky.
- Obscures our view of the stars and planets.
- Impacts the health of all life, both human and animal.



NATURE WATCH

PROPHETS & PHANTOMS

by Jim and Lynne Weber



While most think of fall as a time when nature is waning and lifecycles are nearing their end, some things are just beginning. This is the time of year when some of our most mysterious-looking insects, the praying mantids and the walking sticks, lay their eggs in anticipation of the next generation to hatch in the spring.

The scientific order for praying mantis (Mantodea) comes from the Greek meaning prophet, so named for its typical prayer-like stance. This term is often misspelled as 'preying mantis' since mantids are a predatory species. Several species exist in Texas, all of the genus *Stagmomantis*. Adult mantids are green to grayish brown, may reach 2 to 3 inches in length, and have well developed wings. They have two grasping, spiked forelegs in which prey are caught and held securely while eaten. Their hunting relies greatly on their vision, and they can rotate their head nearly 300 degrees. Consuming mostly insects, mantids are ambush predators that wait perfectly still until prey ambles near, and then strike with surprising quickness and agility.

Praying mantids are experts at concealment, using their protective coloration to blend in with or mimic foliage, better snare their victims, and avoid predation themselves. They do show a rocking behavior in which the insect makes a rhythmic, repetitive, side-to-side movement. It is thought that this behavior may help them resemble vegetation blowing in the wind, but also allows them to discriminate objects from their background by their relative movement. As generally sedentary insects, this behavior most likely replaces flying or running as a way to determine relative objects in their visual field. When threatened they will stand tall, spread their forelegs, and fan their wings out wide to appear larger, and if further provoked will strike with their forelegs and attempt to pinch or bite.

In the fall after mating, female mantids lay between 10 and 400 eggs, depending on the species. The eggs are typically laid in a frothy mass on the underside of a leaf or on a twig, which hardens to a tan or gray foam-like material called an 'ootheca.' If this egg case survives the winter, the nymphs emerge in the spring with voracious appetites, often devouring each other in their race to become mature adults.

Members of the Phasmatodea order of insects are commonly known as walking sticks, stick-bugs, ghost insects, leaf insects, and stick insects. This scientific name comes from the Greek 'phasma' which means apparition or phantom, and refers to many species closely resembling sticks and sometimes leaves. At 16 species, Texas walking stick diversity is second only to California. In fact, one species in Texas is the Giant Walkingstick (*Megaphasma dentricus*), which is the longest insect in the United States and grows to almost 7 inches!

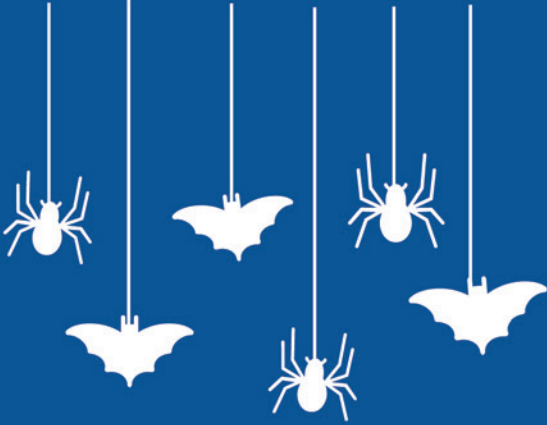
Our most frequently seen phasmid is the Common or Northern Walking Stick (*Diapheromera femorata*). Adult males can be 3 inches long and are mostly brown, while females are larger at 4 inches and more of a greenish-brown. Their long, thread-like antennae are about to-thirds the size of their body. As part of their natural camouflage, their bodies are often further modified to include ridges resembling leaf veins and bark or bud-like tubercles, making them very difficult to spot. They are wingless, molt several times and may eat their shed skin as they grow to adult size.

Phasmids feed mostly on the leaves of trees and shrubs, and often exhibit the same rhythmic movement as mantids, presumably to blend in to their surroundings and as protection from predators. At this time of year, the females lay anywhere from 100 to 1200 eggs individually, sticking them to vegetation or simply depositing them on the ground. These eggs resemble tiny plant seeds and remain dormant until spring.

While no doubt strange-looking and mysterious, mantids and phasmids are harmless to humans and beneficial components to keeping balance in our natural landscape.

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, look for our books, *NatureWatch Austin*, *Nature Watch Big Bend*, and *Native Host Plants for Texas Butterflies*, all published by Texas A&M University Press.





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REMINDER: DRYER VENT FIRES **2,900 Fires Occur Per Year** **Easy Prevention!**

by Carol Philipson

While performing the FREE FireWise Home Evaluations, I have noticed quite a few dryer vents totally plugged with lint. It's something we never think about cleaning.

As reported by the US Fire Administration:

- 2,900 home clothes dryer fires are reported each year causing an estimated 5 deaths, 100 injuries, and \$35 million in property loss.
- Failure to clean the dryer (34%) is the leading cause of home clothes dryer fires.
- More clothes dryer fires occur in the fall and winter months, peaking in January.

Prevention is easy. Just clean the outside dryer vent plus the dryer hose connected to the dryer, which can accumulate lint especially if it's lying on the floor.

To schedule your FREE FireWise Evaluation, www.jesterhoa.com

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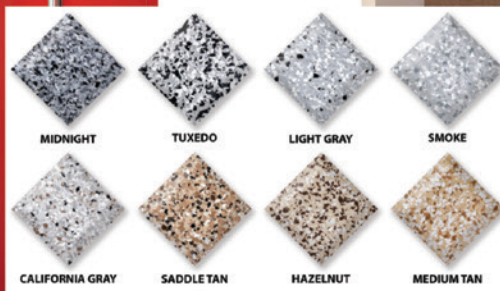
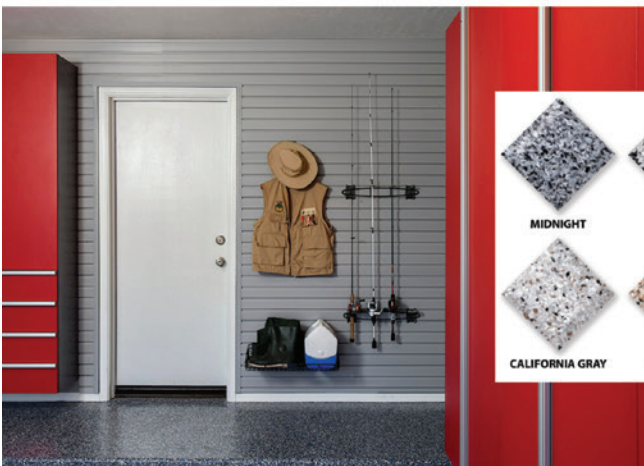
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