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ON ELDRIDGE NORTH

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News for the Residents of
Lakes on Eldridge North

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Lakes on Eldridge North

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*We appreciate each one of these individuals willingness to
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Lakes on Eldridge North Website:
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Article Submissions

Please e-mail articles and/or photos to loen@peelinc.com.

Submissions must be received by the

10th of the month for the following month's issue.
 (Advertising deadline is the 8th of the month.)



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My husband Rick and I really love living in this neighborhood and are very involved in the community events and organizations here. We can't say enough about how great living in LOEN has been for us, and I love sharing that with my clients!

My team and I always strive to exceed our client's expectations and as a testament to this, most of our business comes from repeat clients and referrals. If you're looking to buy or sell, I would love the opportunity to earn your business!

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COMPASS

Lakes on Eldridge North

IT'S JUST DUCKY

By Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center

Unless you suffer from ornithophobia (a fear of birds) or anatidaephobia (the fear that you are being watched by a duck), you probably enjoy watching ducks. It's a way to get us outside to enjoy nature, it's free and it's year-round. Besides, they're cute, especially the babies. It's so touching to see ducklings paddling like crazy to keep up with Mom. How do they know which duck is Mom? Before they hatch, ducklings hear their mother from inside the shell and then, when they hatch, they know who their mother is.

You'll likely see several different species of ducks in our area but here are two species that are very common.

You will more than likely see Muscovy ducks in area ponds and lakes. The males have fleshy red caruncles (warty bumps) on the face and at the base of the bill. Females have smaller caruncles or have none at all.

Muscovies are not native except in three Texas counties near the Mexican border. With the exception of these three counties, Muscovy ducks are considered invasive which means they can take over habitats, can stress the natural ecosystems and even eradicate native plants and animals. They are prolific breeders and it doesn't take long for their populations to increase dramatically driving away

native species.

Feral Muscovy ducks have become a real problem for many neighborhoods in and around the Houston area. They wander into yards and leave their waste droppings everywhere including sidewalks, porches, driveways, patios, on cars and even in pools. They can destroy landscaping while foraging for food. They can be a hazard for drivers as they waddle across neighborhood streets. Some report that the ducks are aggressive.

In November of 2019, controversy arose in Pearland when city officials gave the go-ahead for residents to legally kill Muscovy ducks on their own property. They had become a nuisance and many homeowners were complaining.

On the other hand, some are happy to have Muscovies around. They eat algae and weeds in ponds, flies, roaches, ants, spiders, small fishes, reptiles and slugs. They also eat mosquitos. For this reason, they are very valuable in keeping unwanted insect populations down. They are "dappling" ducks which means they float and tip themselves forward, butts up in the air, to grab insects, small fish, etc.

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Lakes on Eldridge North

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MALLARDS

Mallard ducks are the most common ducks in North America. The male duck has a bright green head, yellow beak, a light-colored body and dark brown chest. The female is much less colorful and is light brown with dark brown mottling from the neck down.

Mallards begin pairing up in the fall but courtship can extend into early spring. Generally speaking, they are monogamous. I say “generally” because males will engage in “forced copulations.” Several males will chase a female and then forcefully mate with her.

Mallards are omnivores with 2/3 of their diet consisting of plant matter and 1/3 animal protein. They eat small fish, snails, moths, flies, bugs, grass, seeds, grains and fruits. They are dabbling ducks, too, just like the Muscovy.

- Ducks eat gravel, small stones and sand. However, it's not because they're hungry. The rocks are stored in the gizzard and help break down food.

- Ducks have a field of vision of 340 degrees and can see up close and far away simultaneously. They also see in color.

- Ducks have no blood vessels or nerves in their feet so their feet don't feel the cold in icy waters.

- Ducks normally don't fly over 4,000 feet in the air when they migrate. However, they have the capability of flying much higher. A jet once struck a Mallard at 21,000 feet! This is the highest recorded flight of any duck.

- Preening is a method used to clean the feathers of dirt, dust and parasites. When they preen, they also spread a waxy oil on their feathers making them waterproof.

- Male ducks are drakes; females are hens and babies are ducklings.

Before you grab that loaf of bread to go feed the ducks, please choose a healthier option. Bread has little nutritional value. This applies to popcorn, chips, crackers, donuts and cereal as well. Ducks can fill up on these and not eat more nutritional foods. Uneaten bread can get moldy and cause ducks to get sick. It can also add to algae growth affecting water quality. Ducklings can get “angel wing” by eating too much bread. This is a condition causing the wings to point out and making it impossible for the ducks to fly. So, what are healthy alternatives to bread? Peas, cut up grapes, corn, rice, and cut up lettuce and other greens. Dry dog and cat food are good, too.

Many city parks and subdivision ponds and lakes forbid the feeding of ducks so make sure you check.

TWRC Wildlife Center is your source for information on Texas wildlife. Have questions? Call us, email us or check our website.

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Voting With A Message *by Jackie Devine*

750 Harris County polls were operating on Election Day, and 122 were open during early voting, which ran from October 13 through October 30. This year, a number of people living in Cypress participated in the election process. A sampling of various ways included posting information on social media, placing a sign in their yard, or walking the block and campaigning.

For my contribution, as your editor, I choose to work the polls at John Paul Landing Environmental Education Center (JPLEEC). I wanted an up-close and personal way to meet and greet the voters and gain first-hand knowledge of how the political process works. Regardless of media spin, hopefully, what I encountered was not an anomaly or a statistical outlier of the voting process but an accurate representation of what is possible when people come together for the common cause of ensuring our nation's freedoms.

When our team assembled to set up the polling station at JPLEEC on Monday, October 12, we were complete strangers. The Presiding Judge Randi Houston introduced herself, as did Alternate Judge Mark Woodson.

First up to speak, Randi set the tone for all future activities, explaining, "I took on this job because I encountered a bad experience at a primary this year; the clerk kept saying if you have a complaint,

then call this number. I didn't want to complain because I have a business and know what it's like to deal with grievances. So I decided that I could help fix the situation by being part of the solution instead of the problem.

"After extensive research, I found that my skills fit perfectly with the clerk job description, so I volunteered. A few weeks later, I got a call saying they received my application. The interviewer told me that she wanted me to work in the PJ position and asked when I would be available. 'What is a PJ,' I asked. 'That sounds important.'

The lady said, "Oh, I'm sorry, it's a Presiding Judge, and yes, it is important."

Randi continued, "That little girl inside of me said, 'You've got this. You can do it.' But then, in real-time, I was like, 'Yes, you have it, but do you have the time to do this?'

"Although I didn't know what to expect, I knew this would be part of a historical event, and it was the perfect opportunity to witness how elections work.

"I figured that there would be a lot of Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Ys, as well as scores of the high school and college students who would be casting their very first ballot.

I felt this was my chance to help people have a positive and memorable voting experience."

Mark Woodson, the Alternate Judge, who became the Presiding Judge on Election Day, also a first-time poll worker, stepped forward and explained his position. He felt the upcoming election was a critical one, emphasizing that he wanted to do his part in ensuring that we are handing off an intact political system to the next generation.

He outlined the group expectation. It was to be a people-first, party last approach. Black, White, Brown, Democrat, Republican, or Independent, we were free to embrace our own opinions---however, not while we were serving the citizens of Harris County.

Each morning, we gathered for a team meeting to assess the previous events of the day, outline new information distributed through the county, review difficulties voters may have faced, bottlenecks witnessed in the voting process, and give kudos for jobs well done.

Both Randi and Mark operated from a top-down/bottom-up management style. All team members were expected to join in, pull their weight, and assist where needed. Every day all clerks switched positions thus requiring all to work (and think) together. Seamlessly we moved from one position to the other.

Voters were welcomed on the sidewalk outside the entrance and greeted once again in the lobby. We learned their names, applauded them for coming, and celebrated our first-time voters for their effort.

Clerks jumped at the chance to walk portable voting machines out to drive-up voters.

It was a common occurrence to overhear voters say, "That was so much fun, I'm going to vote here again next time."

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