



VOLUME 14 ISSUE 12
DECEMBER 2020

RANCH RECORD

Official Newsletter of The Steiner Ranch HOA

WHERE IN STEINER RANCH?



*Santa is coming to
Steiner Ranch
12-5-2020!*



May you and yours stay safe, healthy and happy this holiday season.



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COMMUNITY INFO

STEINER RANCH

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS OFFICE

12550 Country Trails Lane

Austin, Texas 78732

512-266-7553 – Telephone

512-266-9312 – Facsimile

www.steinerranchhoa.org

OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday (Closed from 12-1:00pm) 9:00am – 5:00pm

Saturday & Sunday **CLOSED**

(Currently office closed to walk-ins because of Covid19)

STAFF

General Manager

Joe Ristuccia steiner@ciramail.com

Lifestyle and Communication Manager

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COMPLIANCE, ARCHITECTURAL

Compliance/ACC Coordinator steiner@ciramail.com

SRMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Email the SRMA BOD board@steinerranchhoa.org

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Travis County ESD No.6/Lake Travis Fire Rescue

Administration Office 512-266-2533

Travis County Animal Control 512-974-2000

STEINER RANCH CONTACTS

Steiner Ranch Community Association

Office 512-266-7553

SCHOOLS

Leander ISD 512-570-0000

Vandegrift High School 512-570-2300

Canyon Ridge Middle School 512-570-3500

Laura Welch Bush Elementary 512-570-6100

Steiner Ranch Elementary 512-570-5700

River Ridge Elementary 512-570-7300

UTILITIES

Travis County WCID # 17 512-266-1111

City of Austin Electric 512-494-9400

Texas Gas Service

Custom Service 1-800-700-2443

Emergencies 512-370-8609

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New Service 1-800-464-7928

Repair 1-800-246-8464

Billing 1-800-858-7928

Time Warner Cable

Customer Service 512-485-5555

Repairs 512-485-5080

TDS (Trash & Recycle) 512-329-1752

Austin/Travis County Hazardous Waste

..... 512-974-4343

OTHER NUMBERS

Lake Travis Postal Office 512-263-2458

Coyote Sightings 311

Five Star Commercial Community Management

Balcones Canyonlands Preserve <https://www.traviscountytx.gov/tnr/nr/bcp>

NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

Peel, Inc. 512-263-9181

Advertising advertising@peelinc.com

From the Association Office

FROM THE ASSOCIATION OFFICE

- 4 Key Community Meeting Dates
- 5 Landscape 2.0 Initiative Update
- 6 Association Staff Update
- 8 Holiday Decorations
- 8 Christmas Tree Recycling
- 8 Christmas and New Year Trash Pick-Up Schedule
- 8 Keep Steiner Beautiful – Holiday Trees
- 8 Fireworks & Firecrackers are Prohibited
- 9 Prune Trees Before February
- 9 Community Compliance Reminder

STEINER ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

- 10 Holiday Decorating Contest
- 10 Volunteer Appreciation Virtual Dinner
- 11 Santa is Coming to Steiner Ranch
- 11 Ranch Record Cover Contest
- 12 MultiCultural Festival
- 15 Steiner Ranch Fire Memorial
- 16 Firewise News
- 16 Halloween Home Decorating Contest
- 18 Steiner Ranch Cycling News
- 18 News from the Trails Committee
- 20 Reducing Wildfire Risk on the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve

IN EVERY ISSUE

- 4 Steiner Ranch Events
- 4 Cover Photo
- 22 Teenage Job Seekers
- 22 Classifieds

UPCOMING STEINER RANCH HOA EVENTS

12/05 – Santa's Parade and Workshop

12/10 – Volunteers' Dinner

12/13-23 – Holiday House Decorating contest

Events are tentative & subject to change or cancel at any time. Events are planned by the Steiner Ranch Event Planning Committee, and are for Steiner Ranch residents in good standing with the association and their guests only. Final approval to participate in any Steiner Ranch program or event is dependent upon HOA approval. For more information, please contact Desirre Ghebremicael at: steiner@ciramail.com

For the most up to date information, follow us at: Facebook. [com/SteinerRanchHOAevents](https://www.facebook.com/SteinerRanchHOAevents) or visit the Steiner Ranch HOA website at: www.steinerranchhoa.org



Monthly HOA Community Meetings

Steiner Ranch Master Association Board of Directors

Meets on the third Tuesday of each month at Towne Square Community Center at 6:00pm.

Steiner Ranch Residential Owners Board of Directors

Meets on the last Thursday of each month at Towne Square Community Center at 6:00pm.

Steiner Ranch Neighborhood Association

Meets on the second Tuesday of each month at Towne Square Community Center at 7:00pm.

Trail Committee

Meets on the third Wednesday of each month at Bella Mar Community Center at 6:30pm. The committee also holds monthly trail work days on the fourth Sunday of each month. Meet-up location and time varies monthly. If you are interested in lending a hand, visit the Steiner Ranch Trail Committee Facebook page for the most up to date information. You may also join their newsletter by subscribing at:

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/steinerranchtrails>

Event Planning Committee

Meets on the second Tuesday of each month at Cups and Cones at 9:30am.

Because of the COVID19 Pandemic and the local order to limit gatherings to 10 people only, all Association meetings are conducted remotely. Meetings links are sent to residents' email addresses on file at least 72 hours before the meeting.

COVER PHOTO INFORMATION & CONTEST

Have a photo you would like to see published in the next Ranch Record? For consideration, send pictures to communications@steinerranchhoa.org no later than the 8th of the month prior to publication. Your photo might just be next month's cover!

This month's cover photo was captured by Caden Zayne Little and features a Steiner Ranch Trail for the Where in Steiner Ranch Contest. For details about the contest, see page 11.

By submitting your photo you agree to allow your photo to be published in future issues of the Ranch Record and/or other Steiner Ranch communications.

Steiner Ranch Landscape 2.0 initiative update from the SRMA Board of Directors

Dear Steiner Ranch Residents,

As committed, we are providing frequent updates to residents on the progress of various community and amenities enhancement projects that the Steiner Ranch Master Association Board of Directors approved. Below is the follow up on the **Landscape 2.0 initiative**.

Coleman & Associates, an Austin based consulting firm with 33 years of experience and a team that includes 7 designers retained by the SRMA Board in August 2020, conducted an in-depth assessment of multiple major large-scale communities in the Austin area as well as an evaluation of Steiner Ranch homeowners' needs. Their quest was to make comparisons of these large master planned communities to Steiner Ranch and recommend signage and landscape upgrades. They made significant progress on the project and are currently in the process of getting bids for the designs.

Here is the latest on overarching situation evaluation, recommended solutions and tentative timelines:

Current Situation Evaluation and Problem Statement

- Our larger community is 30 years old with various landscape segments outdated including front entrances, various inside monuments, mail kiosks, and key intersections along Quinlan.
- Front entrances structures, design, lighting, signage, plant material are outdated and are not on par with newer larger communities that are sprouting across Austin Metro & Central Texas.
- Inside each subsection, many monuments (with few exceptions) are outdated, eroded, inconsistent theme, missing / ineffective lighting, plants & vegetation nearing the life span or altogether missing in some monuments.
- Majority of mail kiosks (with few exceptions) are in similar state as stated above.
- 3 key intersection along Quinlan (Steiner Ranch, University Blvd, Country Trails) need significant improvements also. Vegetation in some common areas / amenities are nearing their life span, & in other areas they are missing or eroded.
- Just filling out empty beds & monuments with just new plant material will not yield badly needed wow factor for 30-year-old community.

Coleman & Associates recommended solutions and SRMA Board approved

- Successful neighborhood entrances utilize combination of impactful structure, signage, planting design & cohesive materials to achieve wow factor and lasting impact.
- Above approach when tailored to Steiner Ranch front entrances and various community monuments will modernize, provide consistent theme and lasting dramatic makeover of our community landscape environment.
- Design plantings that can be appreciated from 40-60 mph at front entrances & monuments.
- Create a strong and specific plant palette that prioritizes the plant

species desired to create the unification throughout the community.

- Create a plant palette that delivers color and seasonal interest.
- Identify the types of gravel and additional hardscape elements that are consistent in color, size and method of installation that supports updated signage and strong natural rock outcroppings.
- To provide an enhanced pedestrian & automobile experience & to screen/direct views, ornamental trees will be added.
- Renew and replenish empty or scattered planting beds with more robust plantings. Utilize existing landscape improvements including bed build-up and soil preparations.
- Use a well, thought-out balance of evergreen plant material, perennials, and deciduous materials (such as ornamental grasses) that will ensure that the planting design will provide strong visual interest in every season. Focus on using crisp edges and stronger lines, which will reinforce the form and texture of planting areas and create stronger forms in future plantings.

Below are two schematic designs recommended by Coleman & Associates and approved by the SRMA Board for bids:



Front Entry Design to be adapted for each main entry location at Quinlan & Steiner Ranch Blvd



New design example at community monuments (each monument will have updated vegetation and plant material along with natural topography making them unique)

Continued on Page 6

From the Association Office

Continued from Page 5

Cost & Execution Timeline

- Board has allocated \$400k to \$500k towards the project. Board will continue to explore further investment feasibility as project warrants it.
- Consulting firm has completed design documents and have put out for bids. Board expectation is that project be executed in phases beginning January 2021 over 12+ months. Estimated completion in late 2021 or early 2022 contingent on weather and other factors. These are best estimates only and schedule will be firmed up once bids and contracts are approved.
- Overall phased implementation will start with front entrances, key monuments, intersections along Quinlan, mail kiosks and common areas as needed. Sequence of implementation may vary depending on various factors including weather encountered along the way.

Benefits

- Once this comprehensive project is completed, our broader community will have a newer, cohesive premium, clean look & feel with appealing contemporary aesthetics.
- We will remain competitive in large scale master planned communities in Central Texas
- Will help with maintaining our property values.

What help are we requesting from our Residents?

- Commercial grade large community landscape environment re-design and implementation for our 30-year-old community is very complex, is highly subjective and fraught with pitfalls. To get full value of our investment, we MUST rely on consulting firm recommendations in solution design & implementation. We urge community to be patient throughout this transformative journey.
- Please continue to provide any issues and gaps with landscape areas and monuments to Steiner Ranch staff email Steiner@ciramail.com Staff will continue to aggregate the information and share with board and consulting firm.

Landscape 2.0 is one of several key initiatives that represents the SRMA Board of Directors Vision for continued investments and improvements to the Steiner Ranch Community. We will continue to provide monthly updates to our residents on the progress on the various key initiatives.

Best Regards

Board of Directors – Steiner Ranch Master Association

For more Information on the SRMA Board, Vision, Projects, Communications, please visit the HOA website at steinerranchhoa.org.

Association Management Staff Update

The Steiner Ranch Homeowners Association is pleased to announce the hiring of the Community Association General Manager. The previous Community Association General Manager, Mrs. Melinda Schoch, has resigned effective 10/22/2020 as she moved out of state. We thank Mrs. Schoch for her service to the Steiner Ranch community and wish her well in her future endeavors.



Joe Ristuccia, PCAM, CMCA, MBA

Steiner Ranch Association Community General Manager

Joe Ristuccia joined the Steiner Ranch HOA management team on Monday, October 19th, 2020 as Community Association General Manager. Mr. Ristuccia is highly qualified for this role and he comes to Steiner Ranch with 20 years of industry experience.

Ristuccia's industry experience covers large-scale HOA's, commercial properties; and both developer and residential controlled communities. He has earned the designation of Certified Manager of Community Associations (CMCA), Association Management Specialist (AMS), and Professional Community Association Manager (PCAM) through the Community Association Institute. Additional, Ristuccia has an MBA degree through the University of St. Thomas.

The Steiner Ranch Homeowners Association looks forward to welcoming Mr. Joe Ristuccia to the Association management team.

Steiner Ranch Homeowners Association

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From the Association Office

Holiday Decorations

As you plan your outside decor for the upcoming holidays, please observe the following Steiner Ranch rule regarding holiday decorations on the exterior of your property:

Holiday decorations (excluding Christmas) may be put out up to fourteen (14) days in advance of the holiday in question. Decorations must be removed no later than seven (7) days after the holiday. Christmas decorations may be put out beginning November 1st and must be removed by January 15th.

Have a wonderful holiday season!



Keep Steiner Beautiful Holiday Trees



After Thanksgiving, creative, festive, sweet and fun decorated trees magically appear along Quinlan Park Road, Bella Mar Trail, Flat Top Ranch Road, and other parts of the neighborhood. It's an Austin holiday tradition which has been adopted in Steiner Ranch.

If you plan on decorating a tree this year, please do your part to keep Steiner beautiful by maintaining the tree throughout the season, as the HOA will not maintain decorated tree. Please fasten decorations securely in place and consider using biodegradable decorations. Remember that decorations must be removed by January 1st.

Please note that no advertising or marketing material is allowed for tree decorating purposes.

Should the HOA have to devote excessive resources to holiday tree décor clean up, this tradition may be in jeopardy. Keep the tradition alive and remove your decorations!

Don't Ring In 2021 With Fireworks in Steiner Ranch!

FIREWORKS & FIRECRACKERS ARE PROHIBITED

Steiner Ranch Fireworks Policy



Residents are reminded that fireworks within Steiner Ranch are PROHIBITED by the Steiner Ranch Master Association and Steiner Ranch Residential Owners Association. There are several reasons for this:

1) The use of fireworks places homes at serious risk of fire.

2) The topography and green space of Steiner Ranch is conducive to fires.

3) Rules regarding management of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (which borders Steiner Ranch) impose significant restrictions on activities that may affect wildlife therein. Serious penalties for violation can be imposed by Travis County and/or City of Austin officials.

4) Homeowners are entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of their property.

Should you believe a violation is occurring, please contact the Association Office, at (512) 266-7553 or visit ciranet.com and report it under the Resident Portal or simply send an email to steiner@ciramail.com immediately following an occurrence. Physical and/or photographic evidence is helpful in substantiating a violation.

Recycling and Waste Processing Services



Christmas and New Year Trash Pick-Up Schedule

Trash & recycling pick-up during the week of Christmas will be as follows:

If your regular trash pick-up day is on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, then your service will remain unchanged. If your regular trash pick-up day is Friday, then your pick-up day will shift to Saturday.

Service will remain unchanged and proceed as regular the week of New Year.

CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING

Texas Disposal Systems (TDS), trash provider for Steiner Ranch, will offer curbside Christmas tree pick up from December 26 – January 8. Trees must be free of décor and must be 4 feet in length for pick up. Any cut tree pieces must be bundled with rope or twine.

Do not drop trees at the entrance of the WCID Water Treatment driveway off of Quinlan Park Road and Logan's Way. Christmas tree recycling at this location is no longer an option.

Prune Trees Before February

Residents are reminded to trim trees in need of attention before February, as the risk of oak wilt infection is greatest from February through June. For those who don't know, oak wilt is a destructive fungus affecting oak trees which causes tree mortality. Unfortunately, the fungus has been identified in Steiner Ranch.

Because the risk for oak wilt is low between July and January, now is a good time to trim trees to allow for visibility of pedestrians, traffic and traffic signs. Limbs which extend over sidewalks and roadways pose a potential hazard and should be addressed, too.

Regardless of seasonality, residents are encouraged to follow proper pruning techniques. TexasOakWilt.org recommends the following:

- Always paint fresh wounds on oaks, including pruning cuts and stumps, with wound dressing or latex paint immediately after pruning or live tree removal at all times of the year.

- Clean all pruning tools with 10% bleach solution or Lysol™ between sites and/or trees.

- Debris from diseased red oaks should be immediately chipped, burned or buried.

- Pruning should be completed before February 1 or after June 30.

If uncertain about trimming, consult with a Texas oak wilt certified arborist, an oak wilt specialist from a city, county or state government agency such as the Texas Forest Service or Texas AgriLife Extension Service, or visit texasoakwilt.org.

The Steiner Ranch Master Association and Steiner Ranch Residential Association each have Oak Wilt Policies in effect. To view each policy in its entirety, visit the HOA website and click the 'Oak Wilt Policy' tab located under the 'FAQ' drop down menu.

Community Compliance Reminders

Please be mindful of the following rules, which are part of Steiner Ranch governing documents:

- Trash containers are to be stored out of sight and should not be visible from the street.

- Parking on the street overnight is not allowed.

- Boats and watercraft must be stored in an enclosed space at all times. Storing watercraft in driveways or on the street is not allowed.

- Items should not be left in driveways. This includes mulch bags, garden hoses, and sports equipment.

- Any alterations to the exterior of your property (front, back and sides) must be submitted to the HOA office for review and approval.

Please note that compliance inspections as well as bi-monthly overnight parking compliance inspections have now resumed as of October 1st, 2020. You may see the daytime inspector driving in a RealManage car taking photos throughout the community. Likewise, you may see the overnight inspector in an ACT Security vehicle also taking photos throughout the community between the hours of midnight and 4:00am.

Should you need to report a violation or problem visit ciranet.com and submit it under the Resident Portal. Otherwise simply send an email to steiner@ciramail.com. Physical and/or photographic evidence is helpful in substantiating a violation or problem.

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Steiner Activities & Events

READY TO SPREAD SOME HOLIDAY CHEER?

Get your decorations out and start planning your festive holiday display today, help share the spirit of the season and enter the Steiner Ranch HOA Holiday House Decorating Contest!

NEW THIS YEAR:

Residents will vote online for their favorite in each category

Most lights - Most cheerful - Most unique - Community Favorite

To help residents find these fabulous decked out homes and cast their vote for their favorite, please register your home at the link below:

<https://forms.gle/bUKoXitk6yCCP6VWA>

*****Deadline to enter the contest is December 12th*****

Judging will take place December 13 through December 23. Winners will be announced on December 24.

Winners will receive a yard displays and a themed basket for their efforts and will be announced on the Ranch Record and the HOA Facebook Page.

GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN!

Volunteer Appreciation Virtual Dinner



To recognize volunteers who support the Steiner Ranch HOA, the Event Planning Committee will host a virtual appreciation dinner on December 10th, 2020. Community HOA volunteers- please check your email for an invitation. Many thanks for your time, service and support!





Santa is Coming to Steiner Ranch

The Steiner Ranch Boards and Committees are excited to announce that Saturday, December 5th, 2020, Steiner Ranch will have its own Santa's parade featuring the 8 reindeer and Santa's sleigh. The Parade will start at Towne Square at 10am and end at Cups & Cones. Santa's Workshop will be set up at Cups and Cones from 11am to 12pm, where everyone is invited to a free cup of hot chocolate and candy canes. Don't forget your Santa's letter to drop off in the mailbox at the workshop for Santa and his Elves to take back to the North Pole.

Make it unique and a memorable way to kick off the holiday season by cheering Santa along the parade route, walk to the nearest viewing point along the route and make some jolly noise and wave hello!

Please follow CDC safety recommendations and be sure to practice social distancing. See below for the map of the Parade Route.

We hope you'll join us at this jolly event!



Ranch Record Front Cover Contest

Unfortunately, none of the entries received for the November Ranch Record Front Cover Photo contest were correct, therefore we have no winner in November. The featured trail was Phoenix Pass.

This is the last month to enter the contest! Take your chance and enter one last time to WIN!

Contest Rules:

- Contestants will need to identify the exact location and correct name of the identified trail or trail feature and send an email at communications@steinerranchhoa.org.
- Entries will be accepted for each featured monthly cover between the 1st and the 7th day of the month.
- Received entries will be entered in a drawing for a \$50 Tiff's Treat gift card each month to be delivered directly to your inbox.
- Participants must be Steiner Ranch residents, registered on CiraNet and be in good standing. Vague name and/or description will not be accepted.

We would like to thank our sponsor, Tiff's Treats for graciously donating the gift cards. Winners will be announced in the following month Ranch Record and contacted via email.



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Steiner Activities & Events

Steiner Ranch Multicultural Festival



Steiner Ranch is a unique and diverse community with residents coming from many parts of the world. In order to strengthen our sense of community, increase awareness and foster cultural acceptance, celebrate each member's unique heritage and culture, and bridge the understanding of what makes us unique and yet very similar, the Event Planning Committee presents to you the Steiner Ranch Multicultural Festival.

The event started in November 2020 and will go through December 2021. Each month we will feature a Steiner family or group of families sharing their unique culture and heritage on the Ranch Record. We hope you will join us in this exciting journey, and you will contribute to the Festival. To participate, please contact us via email at communications@steinerranchhoa.org.

DECEMBER HIGHLIGHT – THE LEVINE FAMILY

Submitted by Stephanie Bodney Levine

We are the Levine family, and we are thrilled to be included in the Steiner Ranch Multicultural festival. I am originally from Overland Park, KS, and my husband Doug is from Long Island, NY. We met at UT Austin almost 30 years ago and are both pediatric physical therapists. We have three wonderful kids. Sydney is a Junior at UT Austin in the school of Fine Arts, Noah is a Senior at Vandegrift, and Jordyn is a 6th grader at Canyon Ridge. Due to the age spread, we spent 15 years in a row at Laura Welch Bush Elementary! We moved to Austin 17 years ago and fell in love with Steiner Ranch as soon as we drove over the hill on 620. The amenities, the beautiful natural surroundings, the top-notch schools, the family-owned businesses, and the community who supports each other through all things good and bad have been the highlights of living here. This community has been wonderful while raising our kids and has truly been a safe and special space for us.

Some of the cultural and traditional activities we celebrate are secular, and we celebrate like most other Americans. We love Independence Day, Halloween, and Thanksgiving. The Jewish Holidays we celebrate are scattered throughout the year and are based on the lunar calendar so their dates change yearly.

Passover, or Pesach, in the Spring is a family favorite, and we celebrate with our extended family, family by choice, and anyone who would like to be included. It involves a symbolic meal called a Seder, and always is centered around the storytelling of the Exodus of our ancestors from Egypt. We purge our home of bread products (or simply avoid them) for seven days, and only eat special unleavened bread called matzoh to remind us of the Exodus. Our ancestors had to leave quickly and could not wait for their bread to rise, so we remember them in this way. Food is a really important component of all of our festivities!

We also observe Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (the Jewish High Holy Days) in the fall. These are sort of “reset buttons” for us, where we examine ourselves at the outset of the Jewish New Year and start over. On Rosh Hashanah we eat apples dipped in honey and blast a shofar (a ram's horn) to welcome the beginning of a sweet new year. Hanukkah is another family favorite, and it is usually in December. It is our Festival of Lights, and we celebrate by lighting

candles with our family on a Hanukkah (a special menorah) at sundown for eight nights. The holiday commemorates the miracle of oil lasting for eight nights when there was only enough to burn for one night. Thus, we light candles and fry things in oil. It's the best excuse to eat fried food EVER! Each family member has their own Hanukkah and lights their own candles. Our family usually celebrates as best we can, since schools do not close for Hanukkah. If we are lucky, it falls during Winter Break and we can really celebrate each night, but this is rare. When we can, we invite family and friends, and we cook up a batch of latkes (potato pancakes).



(From left to right: Sydney, Stephanie, Jordyn)



(From left to right: Jordyn, Doug and Sydney)

Continued on Page 18



*Happy Holidays from your friends at
the Ranch Orthodontics.*

Across from the Randall's-In Quinlan Crossing

Steiner Activities & Events

Continued from Page 12



(Noah and Jordyn)



(The Levine's Hanukkahs)

Our most consistent tradition is that of clogging the disposal with potato peels while making latkes. I'm not sure our ancestors can relate, but it seems to be a modern-day tradition in our house. We have experimented with zucchini latkes and sweet potato latkes, and sometimes we have cook-offs with our extended family. They are delicious in any form, and we traditionally eat them dipped in applesauce and/or sour cream. I have employed each of my children in the peeling process over the years and watching them dutifully and carefully participate in the preparation is one of my favorite parts of the holiday tradition. We also play dreidel, which is a symbolic game using a four-sided spinning top. It's a gambling game for kids that in our house involves Hershey kisses or gold-wrapped chocolate coins called gelt, as currency. Hanukkah was never a gift-giving holiday until relatively recently in history. In our family, we do give wrapped gifts each night, but they are often pajamas or socks, and not pricey or extravagant.



(Frying Latkes)



(Homemade cookies for Hanukkah)

We look forward to helping you find that perfect vacation, when you are ready to travel again.



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Tip of the Month

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When we first moved to Steiner there were only a handful of other Jewish families that we knew. Since our own extended family lived out of state, we helped start a tradition of having a Hanukkah party at the Community Center, focused on the kids, to help make the holiday feel more special. Without sophisticated social media, it was hard, but we tried to include all Jewish families in Steiner Ranch and enjoyed the opportunity to meet them and celebrate together in a shared space. I have many happy memories of watching our kids play dreidel and do Hanukkah crafts with other kids while the adults mingled. This year will be different due to COVID, but we may be able to have a few outdoor celebrations with small groups of family and friends and have Zoom celebrations with others. Protecting and cherishing lives is one of the most important tenets of Judaism, so we will be careful and be grateful for however we can celebrate with those we love.

Steiner Ranch Fire Memorial

The Steiner Ranch Memorial is located at the John Simpson Park and it is dedicated to the 2011 Steiner Ranch fire which destroyed 23 homes and claimed the life of Travis County Constable Cpl. Kevin Aigner, who collapsed and died from a stroke on September 10, 2011 while helping to guard homes damaged in the wildfire. The fire was likely started by electrical lines that touched, causing them to spark and ignite grass, according to a report from the Travis County Fire Marshal's Office.



Tyler Buchner, an Eagle Scout, a freshman at Vandegrift High School and a member of the Vandegrift Marching Band, created the Steiner Ranch Fire Memorial for his Eagle Scout Project as he believes that this memorial helps residents who experienced the fires as well as new residents reflect and become fire wise.

The memorial is now complete and is made up of four sections:

1. Information Kiosk - artifacts, pictures, fire education, and artwork
2. Firemen Placard - thanking the firemen for saving our community
3. Memorial Bench - remembrance for constable Kevin Aigner that passed away
4. Walkway of Bricks - honoring the sponsors that donated to the project

The proposal, approval, planning, fundraising, and construction of the memorial, took 407 hours and \$5,140. The project was made possible by the SRROA Board of Directors and Community Sponsors.

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*Thank you
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(Kiosk and walkway of memorial bricks)



(Memorial Bench in honor of Corporal Aigner)



(Volunteers helping build the memorial)

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2020 HALLOWEEN SPOOK-TACULAR HOUSE DECORATING CONTEST WINNERS!

Much thanks to Steiner Ranch residents who participated in the first ever Halloween Spook-tacular House Decorating Contest. 28 homes entered the contest and 137 people submitted their votes. Thank you to all that entered the contest and to everyone that participated and casted their vote and made Halloween extra fun this year for everyone in the Community to enjoy!

Congratulations to the winners:

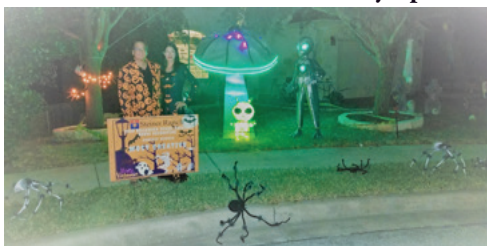
Most Spooky - 13105 Appaloosa Chase Drive



Most Fun - 4105 Gazley Lane



Most Creative - 2925 Centennial Olympic Park



Community Favorite - 1309 Nova Court



Winners received a yard sign and a themed basket sponsored by:



Thank you Sponsors!

Firewise Focus Reducing Wildfire Danger from Fallen Leaves

Submitted by Brian Tarr, Firewise Committee Volunteer

Wind-blown embers that ignite spot fires are responsible for the destruction of 85-90% of the homes lost to wildfires in the United States. If, like me, you have been raking leaves for several weeks, you have been doing important work to mitigate the risk of wind-blown embers igniting leaf litter spot fires around your home. Wind-blown embers will typically accumulate in the same places that fallen leaves will accumulate around your home. Therefore, it's very important to remove accumulations of fallen leaves to mitigate the risk of an ember ignited spot fire destroying your home.

Where to Look for and Remove Leaf Litter Accumulations

- Under bushes, shrubs and hedges
- Each side of wood fences; especially where they meet the side of the house
- In the concave corners formed by the shape of the house or fences
- Under wood stairways and decks
- On the roof in shallow sloping valleys and behind chimneys or skylights
- In roof gutters

Strategies to Minimize the Work of Removing Leaf Litter Accumulations

- Keep bushes, shrubs and hedges trimmed-up at least 6 inches above the ground (to make it easy to blow leaves out from under them) and use gravel or river rock instead of mulch in landscaping within 5ft of the house.
- Provide easy access to remove accumulations of leaves from under wood stairways and decks (or screen-in these areas to exclude both leaves and embers).
- Keep large trees trimmed to 6 - 10 ft away from the sides of the house and at least 10 ft above the roof.
- Install an effective type of leaf excluder screen on gutters that are prone to fill with leaves.

The following pictures illustrate the implementation of these strategies around my home in Steiner Ranch.



Bush Trimmed-up 6" Above Gravel Filled



Easy Access and Gravel Base Under Wood



Large Trees Trimmed to 10 ft Above



Screen on Roof Gutter Below Overhanging

To request a free Firewise evaluation of your home, email your request to SRfirewise@gmail.com

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Steiner Ranch Cycling News

Texas is getting some colder mornings as winter riding season is almost here. You may have specific requirements for the ride you are going on. Make sure you plan a sensible route to match the predicted weather forecast, take a (charged) phone with you, think of the worst possibility and be prepared!

CLUB RIDES

There have been some impromptu rides on Saturday/Sunday leaving from Cups & Cones at various times. Typically, smaller groups meet 7:30 - 8:30a depending on the weather.

Please look for future ride updates via our email/Facebook/Website as things develop in 2021.

Shout out to our 2021 SPONSORS!

Austin City Living - Looking to sell/buy home, call Derrick Jones

Patten Title Company - Tell your Mortgage lender to use Patten for real estate transactions

Cyclist Law - Personal injury attorney, call Lenore Shefman

Lakeside Pizza & Grill - We are powered by Lakeside's awesome burgers, breakfast tacos and refreshed by their beer.

Independent Investment Bankers Corp - Broker-dealer exclusively dedicated to serving investment banking professionals, call Dante Fichera.

Rudy Project - Team discounts on glasses, helmets, and gear

RIDE DISCLAIMER: Each rider is responsible for his or her own safety on our rides. Please join us at your own risk. Our weekly rides are open to public participation but ride leaders do NOT assume any liability for your participation. We require that all participants complete a waiver, follow traffic laws and wear a helmet while on our rides.

News from the Trails Committee

Submitted by Eric Morton



Hard to believe that 2020 is almost over. While we don't currently have a way to track trail usage, it is clear to me that they are busier now than ever before. I run into whole families out for a hike, sometimes with little kids in their backpacks.

Running into the families with young kids makes me remember the day that we put an offer down on a house in Majestic Oaks - I told my kids (then 2 and 5, now 19 and 22) that there were possibly some dinosaur bones on Westridge Canyon and we went for a hike.

Funny enough, we didn't find any; but that trail came to be known as "Dinosaur Bone Trail" for many years, at least in our family. The name hasn't really spread...

But 2020 has been a challenging year and I'm glad to see that other families are finding the joys in the trail that our family had and still has.

The trail committee had put a hiatus on our monthly trail work days while we were in COVID restrictions. But we have started them back up! It was a small group as we decided relatively late to do the October day, but we had two NJHS students out earning volunteer hours and several "regular" members out on Chaparral and Dry Gulch. These trails needed a lot of TLC (and quite a bit of chain sawing) as some of our recent storms seemed to have caused a lot of trees to fall or droop. It was good to get out as a group. Everyone wore masks, and there is nothing like being socially distanced but doing good for the neighborhood.

We do these monthly maintenance days every fourth Sunday of the month (although sometimes we move them if holidays look like they will get in the way of attendance). The meeting locations change each month as we look for trails or work items and meet close to the site. If you are on Facebook, they are always announced on our page and on some other Steiner Ranch social sites. If you don't Facebook, you can join GroupMe - there is both a trail, MTB, and hiking group. We also try to announce them through the HOA calendar. An upcoming work day is to replace the second bridge on Bear Creek Trail (two bridges were washed away, and only one has been replaced so far). The HOA provides us a budget for building supplies and tools, which is greatly appreciated. But for the most part, all work on trails is volunteer hours, except if we have a tree or bee issue that requires professional attention.

The middle and high school MTB team has started up again! They practice Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings. Trails are a bit busier when we have over 60 student athletes and, best of all, we have had around 30 volunteer coaches this year. General trail etiquette is that riders should yield to hikers, but of course it is always appreciated when it happens the other way around, especially if they are passing you. Give them a wave - especially if you see my "pod".

And we have finished replacing all of the green signs at trail entrances. We have a total of 29 signs and they look spectacular! I would like to call out Sterling Gray for his leadership on the projects. Given the increased trail usage, it is great that we have a more readable map.

As always, see you on the trails.



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Reducing Wildfire Risk on the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve

Submitted by Johanna Arendt and Jeremy Hull, Travis County Balcones Canyonlands Preserve



*Close-up map of the shaded fuel breaks
Travis County is maintaining this season*

fire behavior in Central Texas and identify the best fuel mitigation techniques for the region. The main tool used for reducing the spread of wildfire in juniper-oak woodlands of the BCP is the “shaded fuel break” -- a narrow strip of land, up to 100 feet wide, where select understory vegetation is removed or pruned. Removing these “ladder fuels” reduces the risk of surface fires reaching tree canopies, lowering the risk to homes and businesses. Unlike a traditional firebreak, shaded fuel breaks leave the tree canopy intact to shade out grasses and other fine fuels, which are more likely to ignite than live trees.

Our Work at Steiner Ranch

Travis County and the City of Austin conduct fuel mitigation projects every year on the BCP from September through February, focusing on areas where the preserve borders development. Steiner Ranch has been a top priority for these risk-reduction projects. Travis County has created more shaded fuel breaks in Steiner Ranch than on any other part of the BCP. The accompanying map shows where shaded fuel breaks have been completed on the BCP at Steiner Ranch. The County maintains these areas periodically to remove new understory growth and dead vegetation. This year, maintenance is being done on the shaded fuel breaks behind homes along Portobella Drive and Woodland Hills Trail (see map).

Shaded fuel breaks are most effective when they are created along the forest edge within 100 feet of development. In some

Work crews are busy in the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) working to reduce wildfire risk on preserve lands next to Steiner Ranch. This year, they are maintaining shaded fuel breaks that were first created in 2015 behind the homes located on Portobella Drive and Woodland Hills Trail (see map).

What is a Shaded Fuel Break?

After the 2011 Labor Day fires, Travis County worked with the City of Austin and other partners to study

cases where the BCP borders privately-managed greenspace, the County has collaborated with entities including the SRMA to create shaded fuel breaks where the forest meets development. Some sections of the Steiner Ranch-BCP boundary have not been treated because the steep slopes found there pose a safety hazard for work crews. Removing vegetation from slopes can also cause extensive erosion.

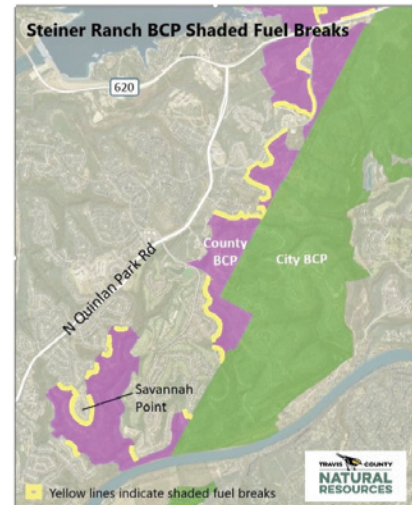
What You Can Do

- Harden your home and create defensible space: When fires do occur, the greatest risk to homes is from embers, which can travel more than a mile from the fire. The best way to protect your home

is to minimize areas that are likely to burn if embers land there. This “hardening” of your home can include sealing openings, screening vents, and cleaning gutters. Other helpful actions include removing, moving, or replacing flammable elements like piles of firewood, flammable outdoor furniture, and wooden fences and decks. Learn more about creating defensible space from the Central Texas-specific Ready, Set, Go!: <https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/fire-marshall/prevention/wildfire-preparedness>. For recommendations tailored to your home, you can request a free Home Ignition

Zone (HIZ) Evaluation by emailing your request to SRfirewise@gmail.com or contacting Will Boettner with the Travis County Fire Marshal's office (512-763-9686 or Will.Boettner@traviscountytexas.gov) or Chris Rea with Lake Travis Fire and Rescue (crea@lifr.org).

- Prevent Fires from Starting: More than 95% of wildfires are started by people or man-made infrastructure like power lines, so practicing fire-safe behavior can go a long way towards preventing wildfire. The Travis County Fire Marshal's website will also tell you if a burn ban is in effect and provide tips for safe outdoor cooking and work such as welding, cutting, and grinding (<https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/fire-marshall/prevention/wildfire-preparedness>).



This map shows the shaded fuel breaks on the County-managed parts of the BCP. It does not show the SRMA-managed greenbelt or any fuel mitigation work that may have been done there.

Continued on Page 21

What Not To Do

Please be aware that some common “fuel reduction” strategies can actually increase fire risk. For example, clear-cut woodlands often become grasslands, which are more likely to ignite than live trees. When removing vegetation, also consider proper disposal – piles of dead branches and dry leaves can themselves become fuel. When trimming, please also respect property boundaries. It’s illegal to cut vegetation on someone else’s property without permission, or to dump yard trimmings over the fence. Not only does this potentially increase community wildfire risk and damage important habitat, it could also result in civil or criminal penalties.

Steiner homeowners adjacent to SRMA-managed wildlands, which are different from the BCP, may be able to conduct fuel mitigation on those wildlands after receiving permission from the SRMA Architectural Committee. This is not allowed on BCP-managed property. If you’re not sure whether your home is next to the BCP, you can visit the interactive map at <https://www.traviscountytx.gov/bcpmap> or contact us at BCCP@traviscountytx.gov.

Reducing Risk is a Community Effort

Reducing wildfire risk helps protect lives, homes, and businesses, as well as the rare endangered species habitat found on the BCP. While the oak-juniper woodlands found on the BCP are not susceptible to frequent fires, under extreme circumstances like prolonged drought and high winds, wildfires in this region can be destructive. We will never forget the fires of 2011 when 57 homes were destroyed in Travis County. For this reason, BCP managers work continually to reduce wildfire risk, partnering with neighboring communities and local fire-fighting entities to leverage available resources and maximize impact. BCP managers are also active in the Austin-Travis County Wildfire Coalition, which completed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan in 2014 to guide regional wildfire-risk reduction efforts.

Through the collaborative efforts of homeowners, wildland managers, and local fire departments, both private property and the region’s remaining wildlands can be protected from the devastation of wildfire. For more information about the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, please visit <https://www.traviscountytx.gov/tnr/nr/bcp>.



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