

# The Whispers

Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the Whispering Oaks Homeowners Association Published by Neighborhood News, Inc.

## ★ ★ ☆ ★ ★ 4TH OF JULY AT W.O.: PARADE, PICNIC, PLUNGE! ★ ★ ☆ ★ ★

Just as the Swim Club board does every year, once again this year the Club held the annual Fourth of July children’s parade, followed by a picnic and a swim open to everyone, regardless of whether members of the Swim Club or not. As usual, there was prize for the best-decorated bike.



Right: Two young visitors take a peek inside Officer LaFroschia’s patrol car on display during the 4th of July picnic.

Our ever-faithful firefighters pose during their annual 4th of July visit to W.O.



Relaxing by the pool.



The great parade of the W.O. Youngsters.

### EDITOR!

Richard Pressman’s eight-year run as editor of The Whispers is, alas, coming to an end. He’s had a grand time of it, being able to use his imagination to help promote WOHA and our wonderful neighborhood of Whispering Oaks. But it’s time for another to take the reins. If you’re interested in trying out your journalistic skills, let us know at [board@whisperingoaks.org](mailto:board@whisperingoaks.org).



### WHAT? NO ANNUAL WOHA MEETING IN SEPTEMBER?

At the last annual Whispering Oaks Homeowners Association meeting in September 2023, the group voted to change the fiscal and membership years to start 1 January, beginning in 2025. As such, the next annual membership meeting will be held sometime soon after the first of the year, with dues payable at that time.





2024

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# Peter's Prez-spective

A Letter from the WOHA President

## In Your Fall Planting, Remember Trees!

With cooler weather on the way and the promise of winter rains on the horizon, now is the time to start planting greenery upgrades for your yard. And while most of us with a green thumb will default to daydreaming about shrubs, as well, we'd be wise to consider trees. There are lots of advantages to adding trees and the cost can be far less than most folks suspect.

Recent freezes have damaged many neighborhood trees, and during our relatively mild summer some vulnerable ones didn't bounce back. The freezes combined with Oak Wilt has resulted in ample open space around Whispering Oaks. So with SAWS water restrictions getting even tougher, reducing the size of lawns exposed to full sun might be wise.

An extra tree or two means more eventual shade, which can reduce home utility use by up to 25%, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Less grass also means less upkeep. Here in Texas, I'd rather rake leaves once a year than mow a lawn once a week. That extra shade also enables more shrub diversity since even the toughest drought-tolerant species often prefer filtered sunlight for at least part of the day.

And while many common shrub species appropriate for South Texas won't be back in stock until next spring, nurseries always seem to have plenty of trees to choose from year round. Those in 15 or 30-gallon containers can be surprisingly affordable and manageable to install. In these sizes, popular shade trees cost around \$200, with ornamentals closer to \$100. You could pay more for an older tree which has additional height, but experts say younger trees typically grow faster and will quickly catch up anyway. (See article on "Want a New Tree?" page 3).

It's easy to forget that trees also boost a property's curb appeal. Real estate experts differ on exactly how much they believe mature trees can boost a home's value—though, clearly, it's in the thousands—but they all agree that a beautiful yard with prominent trees will consistently generate more interest and better offers. So planting low-maintenance trees now and letting nature do all the work could payoff nicely when you're ready to sell.

If you don't want to dig the hole yourself, most local nurseries charge a modest fee to deliver and install. Some outsource to licensed arborists whose crews can handle any challenge, including jackhammering limestone, if needed. You could bypass the retail nurseries and hire an arborist directly since most have access to wholesale nurseries, and the significant savings can help offset their fee. Many offer a one-year warranty on what they deliver and install.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for most homeowners is selecting a tree species. Each has its own appeal and advantages, so the options can feel overwhelming. But seasoned nursery staff and arborists can provide reliable advice, though many homeowners stick with the tried and true. There's a reason that some species are so popular and long-lasting in our neighborhood. Oaks such as Live, Bur, Chinkapin, Monterrey, and Lacey are common, and so are Cedar Elms, Mountain Laurels, Texas Redbuds, Loquats, Mexican Sycamores, Texas Persimmon and, of course, the endless varieties of showy Crepe Myrtles.

Don't forget that CPS routinely offers rebates on select tree species installed to shade a residence and reduce energy use. The program which typically starts in October each year offers \$50 per tree and allows up to five total per residence. Visit the CPS website for more information.

# IS WHISPERING OAKS A COMMUNITY?

By Richard S. Pressman

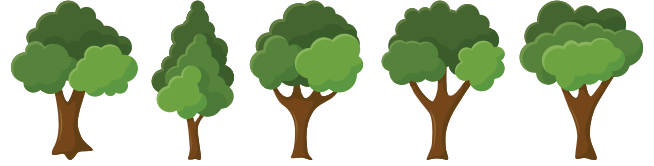
The Oxford English Dictionary counts no fewer than 101 definitions of the word “community.” Most are specialized, so they don’t apply to a sub-division such as ours. But it is of interest to see that at least several ways of looking at “community” apply to those of us lucky enough to live in Whispering Oaks. First and most obviously, we all live in the same location: “A body of people who live in the same place, usually sharing a common cultural or ethnic identity. Hence, a place where a particular body of people lives.”

We don’t all share an ethnic identity with each other, and we have some cultural differences. But we’re all Americans, Texans, and San Antonians. More specifically, we are all Whispering Oakers. In that sense, then, we live “life in association with others; the social state, frequently as in community.” That is, here we are planted in the same place and, as such, we automatically have common interests. We are our neighbors’ keepers. We recognized “the state or fact of something being shared or held in common, such as joint ownership, tenure, and even liability.”

Those of us who love living here appreciate the relatively high degree of “social cohesion, of mutual support and affinity such as is derived from living in a community” such as ours.

# WANT A NEW TREE?

The following are city-sponsored tree giveaways this fall on various Saturdays. What is being offered are mainly ornamental and shade trees in one-gallon containers.



### October 5

Monarch and Pollinator Festival: Brackenridge Park, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

### October 19

Fest of Tails: McAllister Park, 9:00 a.m.–2 p.m.

### November 2

Dia del Arbol: Mission Marquee Plaza, 9:00 a.m.–noon



**Council District 9**  
John Courage



## Important Numbers

Emergency 911  
City Services 311 (210 207 6000)

SAPD Non-Emergency 210 207 7273  
SAFD Non-Emergency 210 207 7744  
Animal Care Services 210 207 4738  
San Antonio Public Libraries 210 207 2500  
Homeless Connections Hotline 210 207 1799  
Walker Ranch Senior Center 210 207 5280  
Mail Theft Information 800 275 8777

CPS Energy 210 353 2222  
SAWS 210 704 7297  
Bexar Elections Department 210 335 8683  
Bexar Tax Assessor 210 335 2251

Contact us: [District9@sanantonio.gov](mailto:District9@sanantonio.gov)



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## WANNA READ SUMPIN FUNNY?

A note on the soda machine in a company’s break room warned, “Diet Cola not working.” Beneath that, someone wrote, “Try exercise and a low-carb diet!”

### A Bonus

“My wide and I just had a baby daughter and named her JuneJulyAugust. We will call her Summer for short.”

### Y Otro en Espanol

Diálogo entre novios:  
“Mi amor, tengo muchas ganas de verte.”  
“Yo también, querida. Ardo en deseos por verte.”  
“Bueno, entonces decidíamos de una vez y vamos a la óptica.”



## SAWS STAGE 3 CONDITIONS CHANGE WATERING TIMES, NEW WATER WASTE RULES IMPLEMENTED

The San Antonio Water System has announced new water usage rules for residential customers, effective immediately as South Texas enters into the fifth year of a drought and the Edwards Aquifer level continues to drop. (An itemized list of the changes can be found at [wateringrules.com](http://wateringrules.com).)

SAWS customers must now observe Stage 3 conditions, which include new watering hours of 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. to midnight on the same one-day-a-week schedule, as determined by the last digit of the street address. Drip irrigation is allowed during the same hours two days a week.

Citations for violations will now be noted directly on the customer’s bill as a “non-compliance” charge, eliminating the need to appear in court. Customers who disagree can appeal the charge with a citizen’s committee of non-SAWS employees.

## WHISPERING OAKS SALES

May ‘24 - July ‘24

Prepared by Jean Ruffini, Resident Realtor

	<u>Price</u>	<u>Per sq ft</u>
<b>Sold listings:</b> 3		
High.....	\$405,000.....	\$192
Median.....	\$297,900.....	\$169
Low.....	\$285,000.....	\$160
<b>Active:</b> 5		
High.....	\$535,000.....	\$186
Low.....	\$289,900.....	\$125

The latest Multiple Listing Service (MLS) report from the San Antonio Board of REALTORS® (SABOR) underscores the resilient trends in the local real estate market for June 2024. In total, 3,239 homes were sold, reflecting a 6% decline from June 2023. The average home price dropped by 2% to \$378,392, while the median price experienced a modest decrease of 1% to \$314,900. Conversely, the average residential rental price increased to \$1,913, signifying strong demand in the rental market.

San Antonio Board of Realtors

## SAFE STROLLING TIPS FOR W.O. WALKERS

Now that the weather will be cooling down, many of our neighbors may return to strolling the streets for fresh air and exercise. Although Whispering Oaks and the surrounding area is still considered to be pleasant and safe, residents are reminded to take precautions while out in public, both on our streets and in the neighboring parks.

- Especially when walking alone, always carry a cell phone.
- In public, never approach a stranger of concern. Keep your distance and immediately call 911.
- Capture photos or video only if you can do so safely without escalating the situation.
- If you feel threatened, immediately seek shelter at a nearby home or business.
- Never engage in escalating dialogue because doing so may undermine SAPD’s ability to pursue charges of harassment or threats.
- Consider carrying protection such as pepper spray, a Taser, or a firearm ONLY if you understand the legal limits of their use in self-defense under Texas law.

Hopefully this common-sense advice can keep all our neighbors safe!

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## POOL BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED!

The Annual Meeting of the WO Swim Club is the 6th of October, which includes an election to fill five vacant positions on the Pool Board. If you are a member of the Swim Club, please consider volunteering to fill one of these positions. Board members are elected by members of the Swim Club to serve a two-year term. Board officers (President, VP, Secretary, and Treasurer) are elected by the Board members at the first Board meeting after the Annual Meeting. Officers serve a one-year term.

The positions open for filling are Director of Fundraising, Director of Facilities, Director of Communications, and two general positions. Any Whispering Oaks resident member in good standing is eligible to serve on the Board. And as many as two non-resident members in good standing may be elected to serve as members of the Board. If you are interested in applying for a position on the Board, please send an email to the Nominating Committee by 30 September at wosc.secretary23@gmail.com. (However, we will gladly accept nominations even from the floor.) Please tell us which position(s) you are interested in, how we can best contact you, and any experience you may have relative to the position you're interested in filling. All positions are voluntary and unpaid. However, as an incentive, elected Board members are not charged fees for bringing guests to the pool.

Folks, on a personal note here's my concern. The Board currently has 10 members. These ten have served on the Board for a total of 87 years. Eighty-seven years! That's an average of almost nine years per Board member. That's a lot of work for such a small group. Two of them, including our President, are stepping down this year. So we need some new adults to step up and help out. The Club currently has 229 active memberships, 69 of which are family memberships. That's a lot of people to spread the workload to. Every Club member really ought to contribute in some way. You can serve on the Board, help run one of our social activities, help with beautification and grounds maintenance, help paint/repair our facilities and equipment, etc. The list goes on and on. After all, we all benefit from it. Even if you can't take on the full responsibility of a Board position, consider volunteering as an assistant to one of the Board members. Every little bit helps!

The last thing I'd like to tell you is this: If we don't have a functioning Board, we won't have a pool. It's as simple as that. If you enjoy spending time at the pool, if you believe the pool is an asset to our community, please volunteer some time to help keep it in operation for years to come. To all of you who have volunteered in the past, I appreciate you all and thank you for your service!

Regards, Rich Shevlin

## SUPPORTING YOUR WHISPERING OAKS POOL



We had a great summer at our neighborhood pool. But as summer is winding down and school activities start up, we will see less action there. From now until mid-May, Streamline Swimming will be using the Whispering Oaks pool during certain hours. Thanks to our partnership with Streamline, our pool will be heated during the cooler months. As a result, our members get the added usage of the pool all year, while our neighborhood children have the opportunity to swim in a professionally coached club right here in Whispering Oaks. Streamline will have practices most weekday evenings and Saturday mornings, but will keep a lane open for WO Swim Club members.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the Whispering Oaks pool with your membership. Your membership is vital to the survival of this beautiful facility. We had some neighbors go above and beyond with financial donations. With these donations we are slowly growing toward our goal to resurface the main pool. We are very fortunate that our previous resurfacing has lasted this long, as it was last resurfaced in the early 2000s. So we have been blessed that it still holds water. Even worse is the baby pool, as it badly needs repair of the cracks all along the top edges.

With funding needed in the \$100K range, we have raised about 10% of what we need to accomplish this goal. As we have a long way to go, we are exploring options for financing this major project. But every dollar helps. So, obviously, we will take any donations through our website at woswimclub.wildapricot.org. Anything is greatly appreciated!!! This is a major undertaking for our neighborhood pool, and we are working on ways to be more financially stable so that the burden of future fundraising is not so great.

Thank you for your support!

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*Whispering Oaks Resident*

## HALLOWEEN HOME DECORATING CONTEST

The annual Whispering Oaks Halloween Decorating Contest will be judged the evening of October 26th, with winners receiving \$50 and \$100 gift cards for their efforts. Judges will scour the neighborhood for the scariest, most colorful, and imaginative yard decor produced by our extremely creative neighbors. The contest has become a yearly favorite. More details can be found at [whisperingoaks.org](http://whisperingoaks.org).



## PLEASE DON'T FEED ANIMALS OUTSIDE! IT'S AGAINST THE LAW!

A true story was related to the WOHA Board recently: It seems a WO resident had been in the habit of feeding some feral or semi-feral cats in her backyard, so, of course, over time a few other animals showed up to eat as well. When a large female raccoon arrived on the patio with the cats at feeding time, the resident tried to gently shoo the animal away with her foot, but was bitten on her leg.

After receiving the unpleasant but necessary rabies shots, our resident was visited by some officials who set a trap to catch the animal and wrote a citation to appear in court for breaking the law, that is, feeding wildlife without a permit. Our resident is now feeling well, but will have to deal with the legal consequences to come.

## NOW'S THE TIME TO CLEAN THAT GARAGE! BULKY TRASH PICK-UP COMING SOON!

During the first week or two of October, the Solid Waste Department will once again visit Whispering Oaks to remove bulky trash and debris. Examples of items accepted are furniture, appliances, grills, water heaters, fencing, and small pieces of carpeting. However, no organic materials such as brush or leaves will be collected at this time, nor will hazardous items such as paint, chemicals, oils, or construction materials be picked up. For more information, contact 3-1-1.



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
**311 ONLINE CITY SERVICES**

## SAPD READY TO ASSIST WITH STREET PARKING CONCERNS

The Whispering Oaks Homeowners Association tries to assist members in making our neighborhood a pleasant, family-friendly environment for all, but one issue consistently receiving complaints is for a problem we just can't solve: Parking!

Parking on city streets is under the jurisdiction of the San Antonio Police Department, and all the ordinances are outlined in [sanantonio.gov/CCDO/parking](http://sanantonio.gov/CCDO/parking). Violations and complaints may be called in to 210-207-8266, or to the SAPD non-emergency line 210-207-SAPD.

The most frequent violations include these:

- Parking closer than 20 feet of a crosswalk, within 15 feet of a fire hydrant, or closer than 30 feet from a stop sign.
- Parking more than 18 inches from the curb.
- Parking against the oncoming traffic flow. (City Code 19-169)
- Parking any vehicle more than 24 feet in length, including oversized vehicles, trailers, campers and trucks with attached trailers. (City Code 19-194)
- Parking any vehicle for more than 24 hours without moving it. (Section 14-169)

Please be a good neighbor by not blocking private driveways or mailboxes and in cul-de-sacs, nor by parking "head-in" to prevent garbage trucks from accessing bins at the curb.

## STREETLIGHTS TURNED PURPLE? CALL CPS FOR REPLACEMENTS

Several years ago, the City of San Antonio started replacing the orange-colored mercury vapor streetlights with energy-conserving LED lights. Now some of those lights are dimming prematurely, emitting a pale purplish glow which does not illuminate dark streets very well. If you notice this problem on your streetlights, you can report the address by calling 3-1-1.

The CPS website also has a form to request streetlight replacements:

<https://cpsenergy.com/content/corporate/en/customer-support/my-home/streetlight-repair-requests.html>

## IT MAY BE TIME TO FIX THAT FENCE

Autumn is a fine time to repair or replace aging fencing. But to avoid problems, keep these local ordinances in mind:

- Fences must be structurally sound and in good repair. Rotted or broken posts and pickets shall be replaced promptly. Paint should not be degraded.
- Fences and retaining walls may not lean more than 15 degrees.
- Residential fences may not exceed 6 ft. in height, although panels surrounding swimming pools, abutting some types of facilities or alongside alleyways and some categories of city roadways may be up to 8 ft. height. A variance for non-conforming needs can be sought from the City, if desired.
- Fences shall be constructed of wood, masonry, or some metal fabrications. City ordinances prohibit use of barbed wire, metal panel, plywood, tarps. Neighborhood Conservation District rules prevent the use of chain-link fencing within Whispering Oaks.
- Pools and hot tubs must be surrounded with a lockable gate and safety fence of at least 4 ft. height. Above-ground pools must provide a lockable gate on the ladder.
- Whispering Oaks community covenants prohibit fence placement in front of a home's façade. Architectural masonry fencing integrated into the dwelling are considered part of the façade. A stand-alone panel intended to hide waste receptacles does not constitute a fence.
- A low-cost permit is required for new fences or repair/replacement of a significant portion of an existing fence, and City staff can clarify the requirements. Homeowners are responsible to ensure proper permits are obtained by contractors.
- Fences can pose liability risk which may not be automatically covered by some homeowner's insurance policies, so it's wise to consult your agent.



## Yards of the Month



Todd Guyette, 11206 Whisper Falls



Mike & Cecilia Wallen, 2611 Whisper Hill

### Whispering Oaks Online Communications

Join our Facebook page and Nextdoor Whispering Oaks HOA group for up-to-date information on events and other important news about our neighborhood.



**Facebook:** Whispering Oaks Homeowners Association SA

**NextDoor:** Whispering Oaks Homeowners Association group

Contact the HOA board and join the HOA at <https://www.whisperingoaks.org/>

*"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."*

—Henry Ford

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*"Winter is copper,  
autumn is bronze,  
spring is silver, and  
summer is gold."  
— Matshona  
Dhliwayo*

# Whispering Oaks Garden Club

## The Meaning of Garden Club Work

To some, it means the actual gardening, hands in the soil, body in the sun, and vision of color and fragrance and form.

To some, it means the use of flowers as a medium of artistic expression.

To some, it means an opportunity to serve their community by turning the ugly places into beauty spots.

To some, it is a spiritual experience, whereby they may serve through their gift of flowers to churches and hospitals and the lonely or forlorn.

To a few, it means the challenge of leadership and personal ability in group work.

To a very few, it is meaningless, a name on the membership list and a sometime attendance.

But to the many, it means making friends, meeting with old, and mingling with the new.

Garden Club work is as complex as the unfolding of a rose and as the face of a daisy. It is social. It is spiritual. It is political. It is educational. It is scientific. It is a way of life.

- Author unknown, from the current yearbook of the San Antonio Garden Center, Inc.

All are welcome to attend the September through May, first-Wednesday-morning meetings at the Center located at 3310 North New Braunfels Avenue, 210-824-9981. For information on joining the Whispering Oaks Garden Club, please email [whisperingoaksgardenclu@gmail.org](mailto:whisperingoaksgardenclu@gmail.org) or contact a board member:

President Tammy Anderson, Vice President Corie Dilley, Secretary JoAnn Aguilera, Treasurer Lucinda Crane, or Assistant Treasurer Betty Lezanic.

Please find phone numbers in the WO Resident Directory.



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Published and distributed by: **Neighborhood News, Inc.**  
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