

# The Whispers

PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY BY NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS, INC. FOR THE WHISPERING OAKS HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION

## APRIL FOOL'S STORIES... A TAD EARLY

### Goodbye, Swimming Pool!

In what is being seen as a clearly high-handed maneuver by the Tennis contingent of the Swim & Tennis Club to just flat out take over, in the middle of the night on Sunday, 27 February, when all the world was sound asleep, bulldozers moved in and filled in the swimming pool with fresh dirt, then quickly tarred it over to make a new clay surface.

Before anyone knew it, the lines were painted and the posts and net were in place. Two new courts. Score: tennis players 45, swimmers love. Makes you wonder how they ever came up with that word to say "zero"!

### Governor Appoints Mayor of Whispering Oaks

In his ongoing war against municipalities, the gov has taken the power away from the Whispering Oaks Homeowner's Association Board of Directors and appointed short-time resident Mortimer Snerd as Mayor for Life. Mayor Snerd and his wife, Madeline, moved in just last week.

When asked if there was any political motivation for his appointment, Mr. Snerd quipped, "Absolutely not. How could there be? I don't even know the governor...all that well." Snerd's first act was to have the entire present Board arrested and charged with representing a neighborhood, to which they had to plead GUILTY.

### CPS No Longer to Charge WO Residents

Out of a feeling of guilt for what so many residents went through in late February of last year, the CPS Board has decided never again to charge Whispering Oaks residents for utilities. When asked if this would also guarantee the residents they would always have energy to heat their homes, even during a winter storm, CPS representative Ms. Ultra Glum hemmed and hawed, then hung up the phone.

Feeling guilty, though, ten minutes later, Ms. Glum called your reporter back to say we should refer our question to ERCOT. After several attempts to get an answer—any answer, straight, crooked, whatever—your reporter gave up. If you wanna find out, try this number: 512-248-6800. Good luck!

## 100% Join WOHA

For the first time in the neighborhood's fifty-year history, every single household has joined the Homeowner's Association. Whoopee! Asked to comment, WOHA President, Simon Esparza said, "It's been tough until now. We tell the people we're an all-volunteer Board. But actually we skim quite a bit off the top. Even so, it's been tough, as we've had to limit ourselves to breakfast at Mamma Margie's. Now we can eat reeeaal goood!"

When asked about all the projects that need to be attended to in the neighborhood, such as completing the lighting of the entranceways and completing the landscaping there, as well as advancing the campaign to fight Oak Wilt, Esparza said, "Well, all things in good time. We need to eat first. Then we'll think about it. You can't rush these things, y'know. Hey, you want a breakfast taco?"

## A Little April Fool's Fun...A Little Early

### Why was everyone so tired on April 1st?

Because they just finished a long 31-day March.

### What monster plays the most April Fools' jokes?

Frankenstein!

### Did you hear about the guy who swapped the labels on the pumps at the gas station?

It was an April Fuels' joke.

### A and C were going to prank their friend...

But they just letter B.

### What's a stepladder's favorite holiday?

April Stool's Day!

### What did April Fools' Day say after it won an award?

Prank you!

### There are some friends you know will never pull an April Fools' Day prank...

Because they think it's still March.

### Babies born March 31st are the easiest to prank on April Fool's...

They were literally born yesterday!

### What's the biggest difference between Thanksgiving and April Fool's Day?

On one you're thankful, but on the other you're prankful.

Always remember: What's the point of having a language if you can't play with it?

## SPRING CLEANING COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE!

March 26, 2022 9 am - 3 pm  
Whispering Oaks Neighborhood

Conduct your own garage sale on your driveway the same day as your neighbors and just before the City's upcoming Curbside Bulky Pickup Day. Whispering Oaks HOA will promote the community-wide event on social media and with signs at all entrances. Each participating residence should secure a \$16 permit via <https://www.sanantonio.gov/CES/Permits-Licenses/Residential>. No other registration required.



2021–2022

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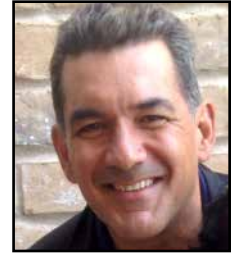
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# Simon Sez



Hello, neighbors! As March comes marching in, I hope your 2022 finds you doing well and keeping warm during this cold winter. Here we go into springtime and looking forward to warming weather. And, speaking of “warming,” it feels good to get my column back for this issue.

As President, I have spoken often about community and neighborhood togetherness. Happily—through the efforts of our WOHSA Board—in the last two years we have regained in membership, and now have half of you paying dues. Even so, we need to have more. Having lived in Whispering Oaks for about 23 years and now as your President, I know it is important membership for our whole neighborhood’s sake. I have heard that, at one time, membership was as high as 80%, and neighbors made sure that all Covenants were followed. Please reference the website or the Directory.

We, as an HOA, ask that all our neighbors and renters take note and obey our Covenants so we can keep our neighborhood beautiful, safe, and pleasant for all. These last six months, our Board’s Code Compliance team has had to inform a number of our households that Covenants are not being followed. Many of us moved here for the beauty, the relative security, and the serenity of Whispering Oaks. So let’s make it that way for everybody.

You still have time to contribute to our HOA via our Website and contribute to our Capital Fund. We have a lot going on with new irrigation and landscaping that has been worked on the last few months—and completed! We also have final approval from CPS and the City to begin work on lighting at the Whisper Willow entranceway, work we expect completed by April. The HOA also had a successful new neighbors’ event in January. It was great to see so many enthusiastic new neighbors who’ve moved in this past year. It was gratifying to hear the stories of why they chose Whispering Oaks.

We have more upcoming events scheduled for the spring and summer, so visit our website for updates, plus we will be posting on Next-door.com as well—which is not to mention our beautiful newsletter. We will also need some help with trash pickup on the neighborhood perimeter, so if you want to help and can give just an hour of your time, please reach out to us via our website or send me an email personally. Also note that the HOA is working with City in continuing efforts to keep our neighborhood safe both inside and outside our walls. That includes the street repair that is happening around our neighborhood, especially on Wurzbach, centering on Whisper Valley and its forthcoming Flying T entranceway—which we fought for.

There is quite a bit happening so please be patient and be careful as well. I want to personally give a big shout out to Richard Cabrera and Sheila Dipprey, on Whisper Bow, for the Christmas lights they installed at Whisper Sound.

Many thanks to you both for this and for your support of our HOA and neighborhood. As your President, I want to also give a huge thanks to the HOA Board, who give so many volunteer hours to our neighborhood. If you put the numbers to it, out of 751 house or roughly 1,400 adult neighbors, we have eleven neighbors who volunteer many, many hours of their time to keep Whispering Oaks one of the most admired neighborhoods in San Antonio. Many of these volunteers are professionals with 40 to 60-hour jobs plus families, but yet give of their time to our neighborhood. I want to give them a huge thanks for what they do. That’s all the more reason to join our HOA. If you can give of your time, we’d love it. But if you can’t, then just \$10.44 isn’t much to ask. Is it, really?

Let “beauty, security, and serenity” be our watchword going forward. Have a wonderful spring. And Bexar (my dog) and I hope to see you on our walks. Oh, yeh, plus Jasper (family puppy), now old enough to join us.

A Welcome-New-Neighbors Evening

# Some Fifty People Gather at Los Azulejos



Despite concerns about Covid, some folks—new neighbors and old—met at Los Azulejos Restaurant on N.W. Military Highway on Tuesday, 25 January for a meet-and-greet.

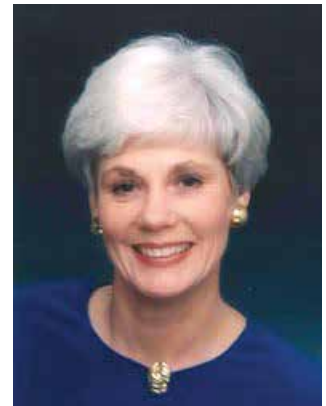
Sponsored by the WOHA Board and organized by Board member Evita Morín, folks enjoyed a wide variety of *hors d'oeuvres* (that's French, though the food was purely Mexican), chatted, got to know each other, then heard a little bit from each Board member and each new resident.

A remarkable coincidence came to light when new resident Daniel Wing who, with his wife, Denise, recently moved to Whispering Wind from Minnesota, recognized Richard Pressman from his photograph in a story he published about Whispering Oaks in the online journal *SA Report*. In looking for where to live in San Antonio, they had been searching through information about various neighborhoods, when they came across his story. They were so impressed that they decided, then and there, that Whispering Oaks was to be their neighborhood!

Another bright side to the evening was that all the new residents expressed a desire to support their new neighborhood by joining the HOA. Apparently, they all agree that “if you can afford to live in Whispering Oaks, you can afford the low dues.”

In any case, the Board thought that the evening was such a success that they plan to do it again for other new residents sometime within the year.

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**Welcomers Adele Barnett and Judine Taylor**

## How We Welcome New Neighbors

*by Adele Barnett*

Of utmost importance to the members of the Board of Directors of WOHA is welcoming new residents to our beautiful neighborhood. Because a new home is a major transition, it is our goal to assist everyone in any way possible.

The welcoming process begins with one of our dedicated and tireless Board members, Vice-President Peter Lund. Peter actively tracks home sale activity via MLS to obtain addresses of properties in Whispering Oaks that are for sale and ultimately purchased. He has also designed the invaluable packet of information to share with all newcomers, the “Welcome Wagon.”

Shortly after new residents settle in, I hand-deliver this welcome kit, along with a complimentary copy of the Community

Directory, to each home. Hopefully, I can offer a personal “Hello and Welcome” message as well. If not, Judine Taylor, a loyal and longtime Whispering Oaks resident, assists in making an in-person visit to extend a smile and a welcome at a later date—and she just might bring along a bag of home-made chocolate chip cookies. We request a name, phone number, and email address to include in the upcoming directory if the new resident wishes. It is important that newcomers to our community know they can count on the Board of Directors to be available to answer questions and address concerns.

Finally, a follow-up letter is sent to remind new residents of remodeling regulations (e.g., permits, covenants, Neighborhood Conservation District restrictions, WOHA review, and rentals). This important data is offered to help newcomers avoid possible costly issues in the future.

Ah, but welcoming new residents is only one piece of a large puzzle in managing our neighborhood. The WOHA is instrumental in infrastructure issues, government and community affairs, code and covenant compliance, the newsletter, online communications, events, membership, and oak wilt prevention. We even sponsor an occasional social event for folks to get to know each other. Obviously, this comes with a price.

Membership in the WOHA is only \$10.42/month or \$125 annually. As you can see, it’s a tremendous bargain for all we do. If you have not joined yet, please do so. Help us keep Whispering Oaks the valuable and beautiful gem that we all love.

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# Just What Are Those Marquees About?

by Pam Harrison Martínez



The Whispering Oaks marquees are located on Whisper Valley (east/pool side) and Whisper Willow (west side)—both being near the tennis courts. They’re used to provide information and to send out good tidings to all residents. While an exact date of their construction seems elusive, several veteran homeowners remember their being around way back in the early 1970s.

While their locations have remained constant through the years, the structures themselves have undergone several renovations. At one point, a Boy Scout project led to an overhaul of both marquees. More recently, repairs and updates were done by the Whispering Oaks Homeowner’s Association, using member dues and some donations. The maintenance of these marquees is, of course, necessary to the quality appearance of our valued neighborhood.

A few years ago, an agreement was reached between the WOHA and the Pool/Tennis Club. For six months of the year, WOHA is responsible for the messaging, and for the other six, the Pool/Tennis Club is. During the summer, the Pool/Tennis Committee relates information about their specific activities on one side, while the opposite side pertains to various WO concerns. Throughout the year, the WO Garden Club chooses a Yard of the Month and, with the homeowner’s approval, their name and address are posted on the marquee. As well, throughout the year there are announced on the marquees many fun WO celebrations.

It appears that the marquees are another time-honored landmark in our Whispering Oaks neighborhood. Thankfully, through the years there have been responsible, generous neighbors who have overseen improvements when there has been a need. We hope this and other aspects of keeping our neighborhood updated and viable will continue.

**When:**  
 Sunday, April 10th, 2022  
 10:00 a.m.

**Where:**  
 At the pool area, of course

**Warning:**  
 To participate, you must be either a child or a child at heart!

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# Sometimes Jasmine Just Ain't a Nice Girl



It so happened that the Whispering Oaks residents facing Lockhill-Selma Road and their visitors were having trouble seeing oncoming traffic because of overgrown Primrose Jasmines. It's bad enough that the bushes are, by nature, rather large, but when they had increased in size still more, visibility—and safety—was impaired.

It happens that the entity responsible for trimming them is the City, but responsiveness can take a long time. So the WOHA Board of Directors decided to take the bull by the horns—or the bush by the branches. Two gardeners were hired to do the trimming. And the job was done. Your WOHA dues at work for the greater good of the community!

## Letter to the Board

27 January 2022

To the WOHA Board:

We were sad to miss the new resident welcome party, but I wanted to reach out and say thank you for the invite! We hope to meet more of our wonderful neighbors in the near future!

Best,  
Kellie Taylor



## Thanks, Rick!

The WOHA Board bids a fond farewell to Board member **Rick López**, who is resigning after serving well for three years. Rick worked on the Oak Wilt problem and on community outreach. But, unfortunately, he has found that other demands have arisen, such that he no longer has the time to serve.

The Board says, "Thanks, Rick, for serving us well and for your good spirit. We'll miss you. And best of luck in the future."

## Do You Like *The Whispers*?

We're glad. Now, are you a member? No? Why not? You think the newsletter and all the work that the newsletter tells you about happens for free? Yes, the Board works for free. But gardeners don't, electricians don't, banks don't, and electricity is not free. And neither does the publisher.



So if you like *The Whispers*, do what others have done. Do your part. Do your share. It's only \$125 a year or just \$10.44 a month, paid automatically through the website. You know the watchword: "If you can afford to live in Whispering Oaks, you can afford some of the lowest dues in the city."



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**Got a question or comment for the WOHA Board?**

Contact us at [board@whisperingoaks.org](mailto:board@whisperingoaks.org)

## Want to run a business from your home?

# Home Businesses

**Note:** Should you be thinking about running a business from your Whispering Oaks home, here are the City of San Antonio's regulations for what are called "Home Occupations":

The current regulations dealing with home occupations are designed to protect and maintain the residential character of established neighborhoods while recognizing that certain professional and limited business activities have traditionally been carried on in the home. Regulations can properly limit these, so they can take place in a residential structure without changing the character of the neighborhood or the structure.

**Home Occupation** – A Home Occupation is defined by the Unified Development Code (UDC) 35-378 as follows:

"Any activity carried out for gain for a resident conducted as an accessory use in the resident's dwelling unit."

The following conditions apply if your home is located within the city limits of San Antonio:

1. The appearance of the dwelling unit shall *not* be altered, nor shall the home occupation be conducted in a manner which would cause the premises to differ from its residential character either by the use of colors, materials, construction, lighting, signs, increased traffic or the emission of odors, sounds, or vibrations. The City's noise and nuisance regulations are also applicable (Sec. 21-52).
2. No outdoor display of goods or outside storage of equipment or materials used in the home occupation shall be permitted.
3. The home occupation shall *not* involve the use of advertising signs on the premises or any other advertising media which calls attention to the fact that the dwelling unit is being used for a home occupation *with the exception of:*

A telephone number listing and/or business name on one (1) nameplate not exceeding one (1) square foot in area, shall be allowed provided the nameplate is nonilluminated and attached flat to the dwelling unit or visible through a window.

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4. The home occupation shall be conducted solely by the resident occupants of the dwelling unit. No person not permanently residing on the premises shall be employed for hire or as a volunteer.
5. The home occupation shall be conducted ENTIRELY WITHIN THE DWELLING unit except for those necessary outdoor activities related to the care of children. No more than twenty five percent (25%) of the gross area of the dwelling unit shall be used for the home occupation. Use of accessory buildings, garages, or carports for a home occupation is prohibited.
6. The use of electrical or mechanical equipment that would change the fire rating of the dwelling or create visible or audible interference in radio or television receivers or cause fluctuations in line voltage outside the dwelling unit is prohibited.
7. The home occupation shall not involve the use of commercial vehicles for delivery of materials to and from the premises.
8. No direct on premise selling of goods shall be allowed; however, phone soliciting is permitted. Direct on-premise selling of cottage foods and whole, non-cut produce is permitted.

Direct on-premise selling of goods implies that sales transactions occur at the site where the product or good is located. Technology has evolved to allow sales transactions to be conducted outside the home, such as over the internet (e.g., PayPal, Zelle, Amazon, or Facebook Marketplace) or through mail order. The code provisions for home occupations should be clarified to allow activities resulting in sale transactions and transfer of good that takes place off premises.

9. No certificate of occupancy is required for a home occupation.

**PROHIBITED USES:** The following uses are prohibited as home occupations:

1. Vehicle painting service or repair.
2. Animal hospitals, kennels, stables, hospitals, or obedience/training schools.
3. Restaurants, catering or the preparation of food for resale. Except for cottage foods and whole, non-cut produce.
4. Furniture repair or upholstery.
5. Teaching of music, art, dance, or exercise classes to more than two (2) students at any one time.
6. \*Barber and beauty shops; however, both beauty and barber shops are permitted as a Specific Use Permit.

The process to obtain a Specific Use Permit starts by applying for a Special Exception with the San Antonio Board of Adjustment (BOA). Additionally, you should read your property deed restrictions or lease agreement to insure it does not prohibit a home occupation. Consult your insurance company to determine your insurance needs for operating an office in your home.

Contact Development Services Department, 210-207-1111 or at 1901 S. Alamo, 78204 for more information and to obtain an application for home occupations.



## Whispering Oaks Swim Team News!

On-line registration for the Whispering Oaks Blue Marlin Swim Team will begin in mid-April. The program is an 8-week program that begins May 16th and will run until July 8th. The first few weeks will be afternoon/evening practices and then we switch to morning practice once school is out. Exact dates and times will be posted on our site upon registration.

If you are new to the neighborhood, we want to encourage you to enroll your swimmer in this learn-to-swim program. It is a fantastic way for your child to learn to swim, meet other families in the neighborhood, and build lasting friendships. Swimmers will get to show off their talents by participating in swim meets with other teams as well. Participation is not mandatory, but we do hope that 95% of our swimmers will want to participate. There are individual and relay events. We allow swimmers from outside the neighborhood as well, so we encourage members to invite their friends.

Dates and logistics are still being worked out. Please reach out to [teamsablumarlin@gmail.com](mailto:teamsablumarlin@gmail.com) if you have not been on the team and would like to be included in the email distribution. For up-to-date information on the swim team go to <http://www.woswimclub.org> and click on the Swim Team link, which can be found to the left of the search option on the top bar. Or, you can go directly to <https://whisperingoaksblumarlins.swimtopia.com> for the latest information. Email is preferred, but you may also text LoGina Vinclesio at 210-389-3363.

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## Our Pool Needs Your Help!

Our Whispering Oaks Pool has been an important part of this neighborhood for many years. Hundreds of children have been a part of the mighty Blue Marlins swim team. It is surprising to be talking to coworkers to learn they grew up in the area and spent their summers swimming at this pool for the Blue Marlins. Our pool has provided great entertainment for many families over the years. Families come to swim, play basketball, grill, play on the playscape or just hang out. The Whispering Oaks neighborhood has annual gatherings at the pool for summer holidays. These are great events to meet new neighbors or hang out with old friends. We are blessed to have these facilities just a short walk or drive from our front doors.

Over the years many neighbors have volunteered thousands of hours to help maintain the Whispering Oaks pool. Thankfully, their efforts have kept this facility in good shape over the years. Unfortunately, this facility does need major repairs from time to time and we need to ask for financial help from the neighborhood. Our pool is in much need of a pool resurfacing in the coming year. Estimates for this project are around 110K. We also need the roof replaced for a cost of 20-25K. We have set our goal at 150K to make sure we are able to cover any other unexpected expenses that might come up. Other projects include fence repair, light replacements, and painting.

**Why do we need your extra support?** The Whispering Oaks pool is supported by its memberships and by the Blue Marlin swim team. More recently, we have benefited financially from the Streamline club swim team. They also came in and installed a heater which benefits all our members in year-around swimming. All these funds go into running the pool. Expenses include pool management company, insurance, water, electricity, pool equipment repair, taxes, and general maintenance. With all these expenses and income from membership and swim team, most years we break even financially. We have volunteers that help (mowing, cleaning, maintenance) as they can to save money.

**SO WE NEED YOUR HELP!** As a neighborhood we own this pool and as pool board we are charged with trying to keep our pool and grounds in good condition so our neighborhood will be able to enjoy this facility for years to come.

The Blue Marlins swim team is helping raise funds and allows you a tax-deductible donation.

Please visit our website to Donate – [www.woswimclub.org](http://www.woswimclub.org)

For mail-in check donations please mail to:  
**Whispering Oaks Swim Club**  
P.O. BOX 781323  
San Antonio, TX 78278



# Garden Club Report

By Ann Parsons

According to the Whispering Oaks Garden Club By-Laws, “The purpose of this organization is to encourage sociability among its members and to promote knowledge and interest in gardening along with community beautification and service projects.”

At every Garden Club gathering, the social aspect is in full display. Knowledge and interest are gained, not only from our guest speakers, but also from members sharing their successes and failures with their home gardens.

Community beautification is usually covered by financial and hands-on help to the HOA with the planting and maintenance of the two parks and the subdivision entrances. In addition, our Yard of the Month awards encourage residents to add color, include native and drought-hardy plant variety, and provide butterfly-, bee-, and hummingbird-friendly plants.

Our recent service projects include donations to repair the two WO marquees, and two donations for the Penny Pines Reforestation Program of the USDA Forest Service. Also, thanks to members Janis Witt and Caroline Wernli, a large supply of children’s books donated by Half-Price Books went to the local VETSTRONG effort benefitting Afghan relief.

Thanks to all our Club members, who support our purpose and vision.

“Spring: the music of open windows.”  
—Terri Guillemets

“Spring has returned. The earth is like a child that knows poems.”  
—Rainer Maria Rilke

“Spring is when you feel like whistling even with a shoe full of slush.”  
—Doug Larson

**Editor’s Note:** The Garden Club has not been meeting due to Omicron, but expects to resume in March. Here’s hoping we’ll have a report next issue... and pictures!



**February 2022**

Wilson & Shelley Spreier  
3210 Whisper Bells



## FAMILY NIGHT SPECIALS

Tuesdays & Wednesdays  
at Capo's on Blanco

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- LARGE SALAD \$6.<sup>95</sup>
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**Family Night**

**SPECIALS**

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**PIZZA & WINGS**

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# Tips Concerning the City's Tree Ordinance

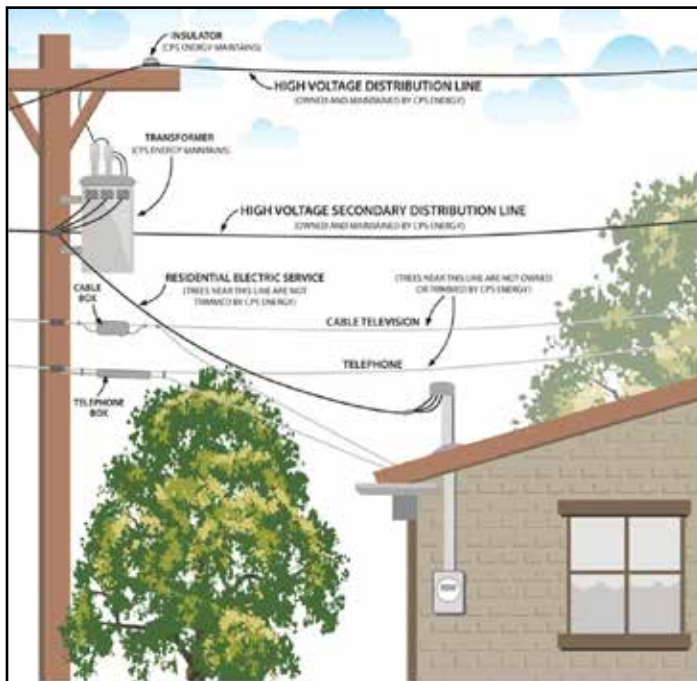
*Adapted from Councilman John Courage's Online Report\**

Because we in Whispering Oaks live in homes where all the work is done, no tree permit or coordination with the City Arborist is required for tree removal. Homeowners can prune or remove trees on their property, but if they hire a contractor, the contractor is required to have a valid, City-issued Tree Maintenance License. If you have a concern regarding a tree on your property, it's recommended to hire a private Certified Arborist for a consultation and any required work.

The property owners are responsible for the care and maintenance of trees and shrubs on their property, abutting streets, sidewalks, and alleys (City right-of-way). They need to make sure all overhanging limbs are trimmed (14-foot clearance over streets and 8 feet over sidewalks), debris is removed, and trees and shrubs are not blocking access to sidewalks and streets. Neighborhood brush collection is provided free of charge twice a year. One can also drop off brush, leaves, and grass clippings at the Bitters Brush Recycling Center to be recycled into nutrient-rich mulch.

See the City of San Antonio's Full Tree Ordinance Fact Sheet:

[https://docsonline.sanantonio.gov/DSDUploads/20200415FAQ\\_TREEORDINANCE\(3\).pdf](https://docsonline.sanantonio.gov/DSDUploads/20200415FAQ_TREEORDINANCE(3).pdf)



Never trim trees near electric lines! For your protection, and to prevent outages, CPS routinely trims tree limbs and removes vines that grow on utility poles and into power lines. If your trees need to be trimmed away from electric lines, call CPS at 210-353-2222

or use their Residential Service Request Form (<https://www.cpsenergy.com/en/forms/res-service-request-form.html>)

You can trim your own trees if they interfere with the service line (the electric line from a utility pole to the home). However, CPS does ask that the customer call five business days before the work is to begin so that they can temporarily remove the service line.



Oak Wilt is a deadly fungal disease that infects and disables the water-conducting system in oak trees. All Oaks are susceptible to this disease, but some species are more so than others. The City's Oak Wilt Ordinance includes some requirements to help prevent the spread of oak Wilt:

- All cuts and wounds on Oak trees shall be painted within 30 minutes.
- Firewood from Oak Wilt-infected trees shall not be brought into the city at any time.
- Make sure contractors doing tree pruning have a valid, City-issued tree-maintenance license and proper training.

In addition, our City Arborist has some tips you can follow:

- Avoid pruning Oak trees between February and June. This is when Oak Wilt fungus is most active.
- The best time to prune trees is either in the middle of the summer, when temperatures are at their hottest, or in the late fall or early winter when temperatures can be at their coldest.
- Remove Red Oaks Identified with Oak Wilt.

*\*Issued 28 January 2022*

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## Important Information to Protect Your Deed and Your Home Ownership

Our Bexar County Clerk has set up a free property alert system. You register/create an account and then you can set up alerts for any filing activity against your property! Finally, a tangible benefit for our tax dollars! The alert will notify you if someone tries to file a lien or other document that may cloud ownership of your property.

For about the last two years there has been a lot of talk about fraudulent activity concerning the deed to your home. The major fraud prevention subscription services sell a product which does the exact same thing! Our tax dollars have paid for this. This ranks as one of the most important fraud alert services for which you can register—and it's **FREE**.

One can sign up on the website of the Bexar County Clerk! Click on the alert star at the top of the page for more information or just sign up with one of the two ways provided and register your specific property for alerts. <https://bexar.tx.publicsearch.us/property-alert>

—Thanks to Ann Marie Nikolich

### Strange Creatures Spotted at the Pool

Four of the strange creatures spotted at the pool at all sorts of times of the year: **Sheralyn Wright, Sue Schindel, and Marc and Mary Ellen Rioux.**

## Real Estate Report

January - February 2022

*Prepared by Jean Marie Ruffini, Resident Realtor®*

	<u>Price</u>	<u>Per Sq. Foot</u>
<b><u>Active listings – 0</u></b>		
<b><u>Pending listings – 0</u></b>		
<b><u>Sold listings – 49</u></b>		
High	\$490,000	\$181
Median	\$346,200	\$155
Low	\$276,000	\$132

Home ownership transactions are still moving forward in the San Antonio metro area. The average price for a home increased 17 percent and median price appreciated by 19 percent, with an average sales price of \$359,545 and a median of \$307,200. Available inventory reduces to 1.6 months. –SABOR

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## IN MEMORIAM

### Myrna Alwais

Long-time resident and wife of past WOHA Board President Howard Alwais, Myrna Alwais, passed on in December. They were married for 52 years and lived in Whispering Oaks for 50 of them—making Howard and Myrna among our longest-standing residents. Here they raised seven wonderful children. But, beyond the family itself, Myrna gave and gave. She served as an officer with the Whispering Oaks Swim & Tennis Club and, for an astonishing 20 years, she served as treasurer for the famed annual Brandeis Book Sale that had about 100 tables at the old Central Park Mall. We'll miss the smile.



### George Lee



Whispering Oaks recently lost a good friend and colleague in George Lee, who passed on in December at the age of 82 after a long bout with Alzheimer's Disease.

George hailed from New York originally but moved to San Antonio to work for the Southwest Research Institute and later the Air Force's Center for Environmental Excellence at Brooks AFB. He had a Ph.D. in Chemistry from the Rensselaer Polytechnical Institute and a postdoctoral fellowship from Cornell University.

George and his wife, June, moved to Whispering Oaks in the 1970s and were two of our earliest residents on Whispering Wind. Among his other volunteer activities, George devoted much of his time over the years to the Whispering Oaks community. He was one of the few residents who served both on the WOHA Board (as membership chairman) and the Swim and Tennis Club Board. An avid tennis player, George was considered the "tennis representative" on the Board, although he served in other capacities as well. His gentlemanly demeanor and long service to Whispering Oaks will be missed by those who knew him.

Anyone interested in paying tribute to George can do so by contributing to the Alzheimer's association ([www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)) or the ALS society ([www.alstexas.org/donations](http://www.alstexas.org/donations)).



## Councilman Courage Statement on the CPS Rate Increase

The 3.85% CPS Energy rate increase request was approved by Council on 13 January that became effective March 1. As the Chair of the Municipal Utilities Committee, I do not take rate requests lightly. I have been an outspoken critic of both SAWS and CPS in the past, and I will continue to remain critical of decisions I do not feel are in the public's best interests. This includes some concerning financial and managerial decisions made by leadership at both utilities. We all know CPS has a long way to go in increasing transparency and responsibility moving forward, and we will hold them accountable for that.

However, I felt the case for this increase was valid. CPS has not requested a rate increase in over eight years, in part due to cutting costs and increasing efficiencies. After nearly a year of research, meetings, and public input, it is clear this request is reasonable. The 20-month COVID pandemic has financially impacted all of us personally—and CPS Energy very directly by reducing their revenue by \$140 million dollars. Winter Storm Uri showed us how vulnerable our power grid was and how much work there is to be done to protect our city during disastrous situations like last February, which added millions in additional costs to CPS. Now there is a new team of senior CPS leadership ready to address the issues we are facing currently.

Weatherizing and modernizing our electrical grid comes at a cost. Over the past few years, we have all seen inflation affect everything from basic goods to housing. CPS is not insulated from these external cost pressures and has been tasked to do more with less.

Had this rate request been denied, the financial damages to your community asset could have been catastrophic. CPS would continue struggling to expand and upgrade its energy delivery system for a growing population. CPS, like many businesses today, is struggling to recruit and retain highly skilled employees. Failure to secure this rate hike would have also tarnished their credit rating and cost us millions more in interest every year. Fewer improvements would be done to weatherize equipment, so we could be doomed to repeat what happened last February.

Initially, CPS was suggesting a rate request of about 13%. That was met with skepticism from many of us at the City and Council who pressed our City Finance department to challenge CPS to tighten their belt and sharpen their pencils. The 3.85% rate increase addresses the most immediate needs of CPS Energy and our community.

*(Continued on page 13)*



(Continued on page 12)

After being billed outrageous charges of nearly \$1 billion dollars by ERCOT and the natural gas conglomerates due to Winter Storm Uri, CPS has paid roughly \$418 million in justifiable fuel costs needed to address the weather emergency our community faced last February. Rather than take the route of other Texas utility companies, who immediately passed these exorbitant bills onto customers, CPS decided to pay these costs over 25 years with a marginal bill impact. Additionally, CPS continues to fight in court against \$500 Million dollars of additional immoral, and illegal, fuel prices during an emergency. This comes on top of facing a pandemic during which CPS suspended disconnects and is now still owed roughly \$120 million from continuing delinquent accounts.

Moving forward, I will continue to hold CPS accountable as Chair of the Municipal Utilities Committee by requesting a third-party audit of financial, management, and compensation policies, considering rate restructuring design with the Citizen Rate Advisory Committee, ensuring CPS provides easily accessible financial documents, and closely following continued weatherization and grid resiliency improvements.

**Editor's note:** It is worthwhile keeping in mind that CPS, which stands for City Public Service, is municipally owned, so it is beholden to the taxpayers.



## Wanna Read Sumpin' Funny?

A married couple have been out shopping for hours when the wife realizes that her husband has disappeared. So she calls his cell phone.

"Where are you?" she yells.

"Darling," he says, "do you remember that jewelry shop, the one where you saw that diamond necklace you loved? But I didn't have enough money at the time, so I said, 'Baby, it'll be yours one day'?"

"Yes!" she shouts excitedly.

"Well, I'm in the bar next door."

## Y un Chiste en Español

Un hombre dice a otro:

"¿Sabes que mi hermano abrió un negocio?"

"¿Con qué? si no tenía dinero..."

"No, no. Lo abrió con una barra y robó todo lo que había a dentro."

## Garage Sale Tips

- Be sure to get any necessary city/county permits BEFORE holding your sale.
- Some bargain shoppers like to get in VERY early and get the first deals. Try and start around 7 a.m. at least. This also allows you to close up early if your sales are fruitful or it gets too hot to continue comfortably.
- Have your items priced with tags.
- Have plenty of cash and coin change and always keep your money with you. Carry your money in your pocket or fanny packs, or a small crossover purse works well too.
- Display your items on tables, big boxes turned upside down, or a blanket or sheet. Customers don't want to have to go digging for items still in boxes. However, children's clothing is okay to have in boxes. Be sure to box them up in sizes and clearly label the boxes.
- Move your vehicles across the street that day to leave parking spaces for the customers' cars to pull into.
- If you live on a side street or towards the back of the neighborhood, make a sign with a poster board or a box and write "GARAGE SALE" with an arrow pointing in the direction of your home, or put your street name on the sign. If needed, put a few out leading to your house. Please remember to take all your signs down at the end of the sale. If you decide to close early, remember to take them down so customers don't show up to find there's no sale.



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# Get Your Garden Ready for Spring Planting

By Sharon Reynolds, Neighborhood News Staff Writer

Beautiful Spring days are forthcoming, so it's time to get outside and get your garden ready. I don't know about you, but I love to spend time outside and spring provides the perfect backdrop to ease my stress while bonding with nature. Follow these tips to make sure your garden is ready for spring planting.

## First things First - Prepping Your Tools

Since it's still too early to plant delicate seedlings, now is a great time to get those garden tools ready.

- **Gas-powered Equipment** – time to change the oil and spark plugs to ensure your tools are ready when you are.
- **Pruning Equipment** – if any of your pruning tools have rust on them, use steel wool to remove it. If you are so inclined you can also sharpen your tools with a sharpening stone and add a light layer of oil to prevent future rust.
- **Digging Tools** – break any handles lately? If your shovel or other digging tools have a broken handle, consider replacing the handle instead of buying a whole new tool. Be sure to wash off any old dirt or debris from your tools and rust-proof them by spraying a light layer of oil on them.

## Getting Your Garden Ready for Planting

- **Pull Weeds** – during the winter, all sorts of different weed varieties pop up in our gardens. Now is the perfect time to pull them out since the ground is still soft from the winter season. It's important to get them out before they go to seed. Once they go to seed, any gust of wind will blow the seeds all over your yard and create a plethora of weed families throughout your lawn.
- **Remove Dead Plants** – pull out any plants that have died over the winter season. If your garden includes ornamental grasses, those should be cut down to about 4 inches high.
- **Removing Leaves** – Remove leaves from flower beds and lawn to ensure plants and grass get the necessary sunlight to thrive.

These are just a few tips to get your garden ready for spring planting. With beautiful weather ahead, enjoy your time outside as the renewal of plant life begins.

### Resources:

- Michigan State University. *Weed Seed Banks.* [https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/weed\\_seedbank\\_dynamics\\_e2717](https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/weed_seedbank_dynamics_e2717)
- Modern Farmer. *Get your garden ready for spring checklist.* <https://modernfarmer.com/2018/09/get-your-garden-ready-for-spring-a-checklist/>

Search for the twelve Spring themed words below.

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# Interesting Facts about St. Patrick's Day

By Sharon Reynolds, Neighborhood News Staff Writer

## There Were No Snakes Around for St. Patrick to Banish from Ireland

As the story goes... St. Patrick stood on a hilltop with only a wooden cane in one hand and banished all the snakes out of Ireland. The truth is there were no reported snakes in Ireland's fossil records. Additionally, during that time the region was covered in ice and would have been too cold of a climate for snakes to survive. However, historians do believe that instead, this is a metaphor for the abolition of pagan ideology out of Ireland and the triumph of Christianity. In fact, less than 200 years later, after St. Patrick's arrival to Ireland, the country was completely Christianized.

## St. Patrick was born in Britain

Folklore generated about St. Patrick's life is generally what we all believe to be true. However, historians have confirmed that St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, was not actually born in Ireland, but in Britain at the end of the 4th century. When St. Patrick was 16 years old, he was kidnapped by thieves in Ireland and sold to a priest. Approximately six years later he escaped back to Britain and eventually returned to Ireland to work as a Christian missionary (History.com, 2022).

## The Shamrock, a Sacred Plant

The three-leaf clover, or shamrock, was considered a sacred plant and symbolized the beginning of spring. Although, according to some legends, St. Patrick used the three-leaf clover to visually explain to others about the Holy Trinity of Christianity. When the English began to seize land from the Irish and began creating laws against speaking the Irish language, many Irish people began wearing the shamrock as a symbol of their pride in their Irish heritage and their disapproval of English rules.

## The First St. Patrick's Day Parade Was Held in America

Ireland began celebrating St. Patrick's day on March 17, 1601, however, the tradition of holding a parade on that day began in America, before the United States were formed. The first St. Patrick's Day parade was held in a Spanish colony of St. Augustine, Florida. Over a hundred years later, English military soldiers began marching in Boston and New York City on March 17, 1737, mostly because they were homesick. Parades grew in popularity. For the first time in decades the 2020 and 2021 St. Patrick's Day parades were cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



## Corned Beef and Cabbage Was created in America

The dish corned beef and cabbage was actually invented in America by Irish immigrants. Typically, ham and cabbage were eaten in Ireland; however, most of the people who immigrated from Ireland to the United States lived in poverty and could not afford such a luxury. As a cheaper substitute, immigrants used corned beef instead of the more

expensive ham or beef, and that is how the dish came to be known and associated with St. Patrick's Day.

### Resources:

- History.com (2022). St. Patrick's Day Facts. Retrieved from <https://www.history.com/news/st-patricks-day-facts>
- History.com (2022). Snake Symbol History of Mythology. Retrieved from <https://www.history.com/news/snake-symbol-history-mythology>



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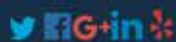


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