



February 2009

Newsletter for The Park at Blackhawk and Lakeside

Neighborhood Watch Program

It's official – we now have a neighborhood watch program! The “kickoff meeting” was the evening of January 22 at the Amenity Center. About 15 people attended the meeting. Travis County Sheriff Deputy James Kitchens spoke to the group about how a neighborhood watch program works as well as how to keep the program alive, report suspicious activity, identify your valuable belongings, secure your home both inside and out, and prevent auto theft. The Community Liaison for the Sheriff's Office, Carrie Fortner, also spoke to the group. She spoke about the Citizen Media Representatives program, through which residents can volunteer and be trained to serve as liaisons between the community and the media when important events occur in our area.

It was easy to draw two conclusions from the meeting. First, a neighborhood watch program is a valuable tool that can protect not only our safety but our property values. Deputy Kitchens had many suggestions residents can use to make their homes safer and even save money on their homeowners insurance. The second thing that was apparent at the meeting is that we are underutilizing our own program. The program is only as strong as its eyes and ears, and right now, we need more of both. Although not required, it is preferable that block captains not be the same people who are holding other positions in the HOA organization. Several of the people at the kickoff meeting are already serving the HOA in other capacities. To keep people from having to “wear two hats,” we need more people who are currently not involved to volunteer as block captains.

Being a block captain is not a big commitment. If you volunteer, you simply gather contact information for the neighbors on your block. Then when you get information about suspicious activity, you help pass it back and forth between your neighbors and the program Coordinator. It's that simple! If you are interested in serving or would like more information, please contact Donald Jenkins, the program Coordinator, at jenksology@sbcglobal.net. Volunteer! Together, we can make this program a success.

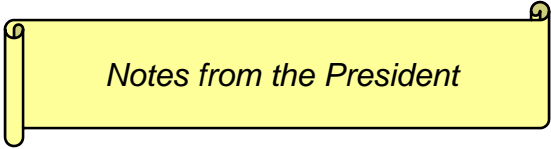
Crepe Myrtle Pruning

Many of you may have crepe myrtles growing in your yard - they grow quickly and heartily in our soil and climate. There are two basic ways to prune crepe myrtles, and now is the time to do it.

The first and best way is to thin a crepe myrtle, remove the dead wood and crossing branches, and treat it like a small tree. As a general rule, don't cut branches that are larger than the size of a pencil. Do pull off the small shoots near the base of the trunk limbs.

The second way to prune is called pollarding. Pollarding is when the tops of the crepe myrtles are chopped off so that the plant grows to the same height every year. Once it is started, it needs to be done yearly, during this time of year. Most professionals do not encourage this type of pruning because it leads to a weaker tree structure. It is, however, thought to encourage more plentiful blooms.

Regardless of which pruning method you choose, it is a good idea to remove spent blooms and seed pods from your crepe myrtle to encourage continued blooming.



Notes from the President

Folks,

I hope all of you have enjoyed this wonderful weather we are experiencing. It's nice not having to bundle up for freezing conditions as other parts of the country are. This unusual weather has everyone concerned, not so much about the lack of frost but the lack of rainfall. We are going through some of the driest months since the 1950s. Soil moisture is non-existent and there seems to be no end in sight. We as residents are going to have to practice water conservation voluntarily before the City of Pflugerville imposes water restrictions on us. Some areas in Austin and Central Texas have already implemented some type of conservation or water reduction plan. Though we are not in the city limits of Pflugerville, we are in their extra territorial jurisdiction (ETJ). What ever type of water restrictions are imposed in town will affect us also. We are still in the winter months and our lawns will be requiring fertilization and weed applications. However, if you do apply these products, try not to let the sprinklers run too long or water during the late afternoon or early in the morning to conserve water. Let's practice good water conservation in our homes as well. Try to minimize the amount of times we wash our clothes or run the dishwashers. Each one of you can set your own water conservation plans at home. Every little bit of water we save is that much less we have to pump from our lakes and aquifers.

Stay tuned for contacts from Block Captains in your neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Watch Program (NWP) had an organizational meeting on January 22. The coordinator, Donald Jenkins had Deputy Kitchens of the Travis County Sheriff's Department come and help train some of the volunteers. We are still in need of more so expect a knock on your door or an email from a Block Captain.

Speaking of the NWP, I think it couldn't have come at a more perfect time. During the Christmas season, many of your Christmas ground lights were cut. At first, I thought rodents had done it, but I kept getting emails from residents throughout the HOA with the same problem. I don't know how widespread this was, but it was a clear case of vandalism. With the NWP getting started, we can have more eyes looking out for each other and try to see if we can catch the culprits.

Respectfully submitted,

Eddie M. Garcia
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Park @ Blackhawk & Lakeside
HOA Board & Executive Committee
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Place your ad here! HOA members may place an ad or announcement free of charge in this "classifieds" format – just contact Marnie at mmtexas1@hotmail.com by the 15th of the month to submit your ad.

Blackhawk Amenity Center
3111 Speidel Drive
Pflugerville, Texas 78660

Tues-Fri 10-6
Sat 10-4
Sun-Mon Closed

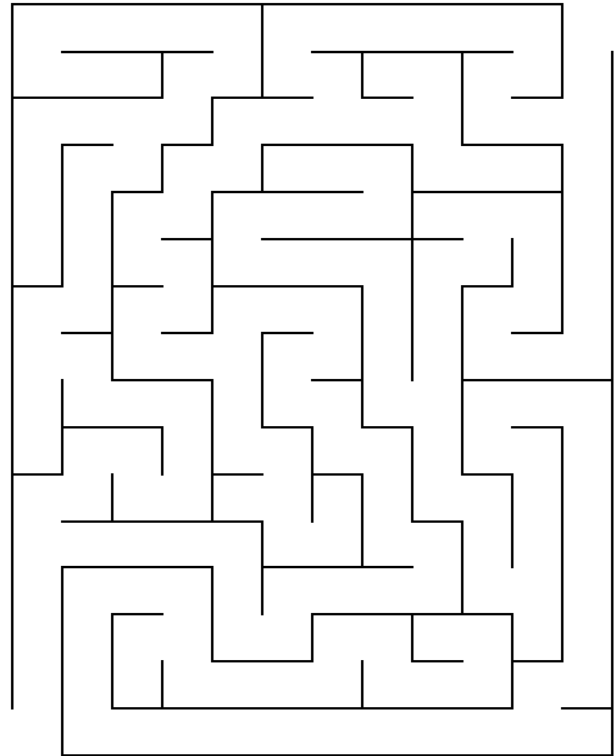
Fitness Center Hours
Daily 5 am – 11 pm

Park at Blackhawk and Lakeside HOA Management Team

Kathy Taylor, Property Manager
(512) 852-7998

Tara De Leon,
Amenity Center Manager
(512) 670-9704

Help the bee fly
to the flower.



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Hearty (and Low Fat) Turkey Chili

Cooking spray; 1 tsp canola oil; 1 lg onion (chopped); 2 medium garlic cloves (minced); 2 medium carrots (thinly sliced into rounds); 1 lb lean ground turkey; 2 Tbsp chili powder; 1 Tbsp paprika; 1.5 tsp red pepper flakes; 1 tsp ground cumin; 2 medium tomatoes (chopped); 1 cup canned tomato sauce; 1 cup canned chicken broth; 1.5 Tbsp apple cider vinegar; 1.5 cups cooked kidney beans (rinsed/drained); 1 medium green pepper (chopped); ½ tsp table salt; 1/8 tsp black pepper; ¼ cup scallions (chopped)

Coat lg pot with cooking spray; place over medium heat. Add oil & onion; saute until soft, about 5-7 mins. Add garlic & carrots; cook until garlic is softened, about 1 min. Add turkey; brown meat, breaking up as it cooks, about 5 mins. Add chili powder, paprika, red pepper, cumin, tomatoes, tomato sauce, broth, vinegar, beans & green pepper; bring to boil. Cover, reduce heat & simmer until meat & vegetables are tender, about 30-45 mins. Season to taste with salt & pepper; garnish with scallions. Yields about 1 cup per serving.

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