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Redland Oaks

November / December



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Secretary: Valerie Larson-Lohr

Treasurer: Karina De Wolfe
Member-at-Large:
Marian Fischer

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Greetings, everyone! I hope you are enjoying the fall weather.

The Redland Oaks HOA had its annual meeting in September, and a good number of you attended. The budget and other important matters were discussed. It was agreed to raise our annual dues by \$7.50 to a total of \$200. Vice President Michael Gray opted to step down, and resident Chris Hughes was elected to join the board. We thank Michael for his many years of service, including his work to keep our islands looking good!

At the open board meeting on October 24, officers were elected: President Stephen Garza, Vice President Chris Hughes, Secretary Valerie Larson-Lohr, Treasurer Karina De Wolfe, and Member-at-Large Marian Fischer. We wish our board members all the best in the coming year!

For the first time in a number of years, our neighborhood held a Neighbors Together (formerly called Neighbors Night Out) event on October 1 in the Doagie cul-de-sac. It was well attended, and everyone had a good time! You can see a photo on page 3.

I recently drove down Bulverde Road toward Thousand Oaks and was surprised to see that the road expansion project is largely completed. Due to contractor issues and other delays, this one has been years in the making. Now there are plans to expand Bulverde Road north to Loop 1604, which will affect us more than the previous project. Hopefully that one won't take as long as this one did!

District 10 City Councilman Marc Whyte and his staff hold "Coffee with the Councilman" events in various neighborhoods. He will be meeting with us on Saturday, December 14, from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. in the Doagie cul-de-sac. Please RSVP to Michael Gray at michaelgray45@sbcglobal.net if you plan to attend so the council staff will know how much coffee to bring.

As always, we will have our Christmas decoration contest this year, so have fun decorating your house to the max! Results and photos will be in the January newsletter.

I wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season!

Karen Davis

Redland Oaks Newsletter

This is your newsletter, Redland Oaks, so please feel free to send us any interesting articles or personal stories that we can add to the newsletter. We also welcome corrections, suggestions, or input for the newsletter. Please send content to: kdavis35@satx.rr.com

The deadline for the next issue is: January 1, 2025



SAFE DECORATING FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The holidays are a fun time to decorate your home, and many of our residents do a beautiful job with lights and other decorations. But the holidays can be a dangerous time if you don't decorate safely. Here are some tips from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:

Trees: Artificial trees have become increasingly popular over the years, with the advantages of being able to use them year after year and not having to clean up the needles at the end of the season. But many people still prefer the authenticity of a live tree. It's important to buy a fresh tree, as opposed to one that has been sitting on the lot for a while, is dry, and can be a fire hazard. Here's how to identify a fresh tree:

- A fresh tree is green.
- Fresh needles are hard to pull from branches.
- When bent between your fingers, fresh needles do not break.
- The bottom of the trunk of a fresh tree is sticky with resin.
- When the trunk of a fresh tree is bounced on the ground, needles should not shower down.

When you get your tree home, place it away from open heaters and fireplaces and out of high-traffic areas. Cut about two inches off the bottom of the trunk for better water absorption. Trim branches from the trunk as needed to set the trunk securely in the stand. The stand should be sturdy and hold plenty of water. Make sure the bowl is always full of water.

If you're worried that the tree might fall, secure it to the wall or ceiling with thin wires.

Lights:

- Indoors or out, use only lights that have been tested for safety. Look for a label from an independent testing company.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Discard or return damaged lights.
- Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, your house, walls or another firm support to prevent wind damage.
- Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.
- Turn off all decorative lights, inside and outside, when

you go to bed or leave the house.

- Never use lights on a metallic tree.
- Keep lights out of the reach of small children and pets if possible.

Be careful when installing lights in high places. If you're on a ladder, have someone hold it. Or hire one of the many companies that install outdoor holiday lights each year. They aren't cheap, but they keep you safe from falls.

CHEESY BAKED MASHED POTATOES (SERVES 6-8)

Ingredients:

- Butter or cooking spray, for baking dish
- 3 lbs Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and chopped (about 8 medium)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole milk
- 4 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 tsp Kosher salt, plus more as needed
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp freshly ground black pepper, plus more as needed
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 cups sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- Fresh chives or parsley, chopped (optional)

Instructions:

1. **Prep & Boil:** Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease a baking dish. Boil potatoes in salted water until tender, about 10 minutes.
2. **Mix:** In a small pot, warm milk and butter until melted. Stir in sour cream, salt, and pepper.
3. **Mash & Combine:** Drain potatoes, then mash until smooth. Add milk mixture and cheddar cheese, stirring to combine. Season to taste.
4. **Bake:** Spread potatoes in the baking dish, sprinkle with Parmesan. Bake for 20 minutes, then broil for 2-3 minutes until golden.
5. **Garnish & Serve:** Top with chives or parsley if desired. Enjoy!





IT'S TIME TO WINTERIZE YOUR HOME!

It may still be relatively warm in San Antonio — especially when compared to points north — but it's time to get ready for the cold snaps that are coming. Here are some tips from Lowes.com to prepare your home.

- Add weatherstripping to windows and doors. If you already have weatherstripping, check to see if it needs to be replaced. This is an easy fix and helps keep your heating bills down.
- Block the cold. Caulk your windows if needed and check your attic to see if you need to add insulation. While you're up there, also check the ceiling for water stains that indicate roof problems.
- Check your fireplace. Even if you haven't used it in years, debris and creosote can build up, causing a dangerous situation. Hiring a chimney sweep to check it out is a good investment. And check to see that your damper is closed, which prevents warm air from escaping. But make sure to open it before you use your fireplace!
- Clean gutters. Trees are dropping leaves, and that can mean clogged gutters. Clean them out or have a professional do so. Consider installing gutters that keep leaves out.
- Get a programmable thermostat. It can automatically change the temperature by a few degrees when you are sleeping or at work, saving energy costs.
- Protect your plants. Make sure you have supplies on hand to cover your outdoor plants during a freeze. Bring smaller potted plants inside during freezing temperatures.
- Protect your gas or electric grill by covering it when it's not in use. If you normally don't use it in the winter, consider putting it in the garage or storage shed.
- Clean and store your outdoor equipment. That includes power tools and hoses. Put them away for the winter.
- Change furnace filters for more efficient operation and cleaner air.
- Inspect your roof or have a professional do so. Make sure you don't have loose or missing shingles. Clear debris from the roof. Cut back overhanging branches that can rub against the roof and cause damage.
- Protect your pipes. Have supplies ready to wrap your outdoor pipes in case of a freeze. It's best to keep them wrapped throughout the coldest months.
- Turn off your sprinkler system.

Get a home energy check. CPS Energy will do a free energy assessment of your home and offer suggestions for improvements if needed. To schedule an assessment, go to <https://resi-savenow.cpsenergy.com/cps-energy/en/savings/no-cost-home-energy-assessment/> or call 210-353-2728.

NEIGHBORS TOGETHER!

Redland Oaks residents had a great time October 1 at our Neighbors Together (formerly Neighbors Night Out) event in the Doogie cul-de-sac. We had food, music and fun getting together with our neighbors. The idea of the event, which is held in neighborhoods all over the city, is to get to know your neighbors and work with them to prevent crime in our area. Thanks to everyone who helped arrange this fun event!



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HOW TO PREVENT OAK WILT

Oak wilt is a devastating disease that kills many trees in South Texas. It has been seen in Hollywood Park and other areas not that far from us. While there have been no reports of it in our neighborhood, the actions we take now can prevent it from infesting our beautiful oak trees. Here is information from www.texasoakwilt.org.

Oak wilt affects live oaks and red oaks in our region. Most of the tree mortality comes from the tree-to-tree spread of the disease through interconnected or grafted root systems once a central location has been established. New infection centers begin when beetles carry oak wilt fungal spores from infected oaks to fresh wounds on healthy oaks. Wounds can be caused by weather, construction, vehicles, wildlife or pruning.

Here are ways to reduce the risk of oak wilt in your landscape:

- Regardless of season, immediately paint all pruning cuts or other wounds on oaks. Any kind of wound dressing or paint can be used, and all are equally effective at preventing infections when applied immediately.
- Avoid pruning between February 1 and June 30 each year, when oak wilt is most active. There are exceptions, such as removing storm-damaged limbs, those blocking clearance on sidewalks and roads, and those rubbing against a building or roof. But be sure to paint the wounds immediately.
- Debris from diseased red oaks should be immediately chipped, burned or buried.
- The least hazardous times for pruning are on the coldest days of winter and during extended periods of extreme heat in the summer. Make proper pruning cuts and avoid "topping" or excessive crown thinning. As a precaution, clean all pruning tools with a 10 percent bleach solution between sites and/or trees.

One other note: If you pick up or buy firewood for your fireplace or firepit, be sure to inspect it carefully before bringing it home to make sure it's not diseased.



NOW IS THE TIME TO PLANT TREES

By Casey Cuellar, SAWS Communications Associate

Regardless of the weather, November signals the start of tree planting season in San Antonio. You can make the most of it by choosing trees that are right for our region and being mindful of our Stage 3 watering rules.

Here are some tips:

Choose trees that will do well in our climate. Those include:

- Oaks: Bur oak, chinquapin oak, Texas red oak, Monterrey oak and live oak.
- Elms: Cedar elm.
- Smaller specimens: Texas persimmon, Texas mountain laurel, possumhaw and yaupon.

Select the ideal planting spot. Trees need room for their roots to grow deep and wide. Plant your tree at least 15-25 feet from your house. Choose a spot with plenty of sunlight to promote healthy growth and provide shady areas in the future.

Plant your tree correctly. Dig the hole at least twice the diameter of the root ball. A wider hole helps roots grow without obstruction. Add a small amount of compost to the planting area and plant the root ball in the hole so that the top is level with, or slightly higher than, the surrounding soil.

Water your tree. In the absence of rain, follow the 3-2-1 watering method:

- Water three times a week for one month.
- Water twice a week in the second month.
- Water once a week in the third month.

For the first two summers after planting, water as needed, once or twice a month. Don't over-water!

Add nutrients. Consider adding compost and/or mulch up to two inches around the root ball to retain moisture and provide essential nutrients.

One final note: If you are planning to plant one or more trees in your front yard, and therefore visible from the street, please notify the ROHOA Architectural Control Committee per Article VIII, Section 2.9 of our community covenants. You can find the ACC form on our website, www.redlandoakshoa.com. Fill it out and give it to a board member before starting your project.



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