



Neighborhood News

News and information for the residents of Wells Branch.
Vol 18, Issue 4, Holiday, 2009

Conserve water during Winter Averaging

See page 7

HOLIDAY TRADITIONS CONTINUE IN WELLS BRANCH

Dedication Pavers & Thanksgiving

Potluck

Saturday, November 21, 2009, 4:30 and 5, respectively

Wells Branch neighbors come together once again for our annual Thanksgiving potluck dinner in the Community Center. Everyone should bring a dish to serve 10. Meat, dressing, potatoes, bread, and beverages will be provided. The Generic Bluegrass Band will again entertain with the laid back sounds of acoustic bluegrass music. Before dinner, join the Wells Branch Staff around the dedication grove to recognize new pavers added in memory and achievement. The dedication will begin at 4:30 p.m.

Youth Fowl Shot Contest

November 24, 2009, 5-8 p.m.

Wells Branch youth are invited to the recreation center to test their basketball skills by competing in a variety of basketball activities. Contestants will be split into three groups: 8-10, 11-13, and 14-17 for a chance to win a Thanksgiving turkey. Participants must have a valid recreation tag to enter the gym and compete in the contest. Registration is free at the recreation center.

Luminaries

December 11, 12; 6-9 p.m.

Experience the glow of the holidays as the trails around Katherine Fleischer Park are illuminated with luminaries. Santa will visit the Homestead from 6-9 p.m. both nights and his elves will be taking photos for \$2 each. Next door in the Community Center, refreshments will be served and there will be live entertainment including

dance groups, singing and children's Christmas karaoke for all to enjoy. Join us Friday night for an old-fashioned hayride and caroling around the neighborhood. On Saturday, a children's Christmas train will be on hand from 6-9pm to give rides around the lighted trails.

Volunteers are welcome to assist in lighting luminary bags starting at 4pm Saturday. Please contact Matt Fuller at 251-9814 with any questions.

Remember to decorate your house this year! Judging for several categories including most elaborate, most original, most traditional, and best use of lights will begin Saturday night so make sure you go all out as awards will be given.

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Coming in January: Wells Branch's Got Talent

CLASSIFIED ADS

HANNAH'S PETSITTING: \$11/day for 1 pet, to water, walk, feed & play with your pet twice a day. References available. Call 922-3853.

DELIVERER'S NEEDED: Volunteers needed to deliver this newsletter. Call 238-9090 to help.

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KEEP YOUR WATER FLOWING IN COLD WEATHER

We may be in Texas, but we're still vulnerable to destructive winter weather. Here are tips to protect your water system from winter blasts.

Before a freeze:

- Wrap all exposed pipes located outside or in unheated areas of your home.
- Remove garden hoses from outside faucets. Insulate the faucet with a Styrofoam cover, rags, disposable diaper or paper.
- Cover vents around the foundation of your house.
- Know where your property's water cut-off valve is located and know how to use it.

In sub-freezing weather:

- Let water drip slowly from inside faucets during a freeze.
- Open cabinet doors under sinks where pipes are along outside walls.

If you're not going to be home:

- Cut off your water at the property's cut-off valve and drain all outside water faucets if your house will be unoccupied for several days.
- Or leave your home heating system on at a low setting. That may cost a few bucks, but it's better than returning home from your holiday trip to find your carpet and furniture soaked from burst pipes.

Renters should contact the manager or landlord for more information on freeze precautions.

Source: Wells Branch Word, December 2003
<http://www.wellsbranchmud.com/docs/newsletters/bw.pdf>

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fax: 512-610-1516



11 year Wells Branch resident

Please contact me for your real estate needs and let me put my knowledge of WB to work for you!



FOUR SIMPLE TIPS FOR DECLUTTERING YOUR HOME

By Dan Shapley Posted Mon Jul 6, 2009 , http://green.yahoo.com/blog/daily_green_news

"Clutter." The word itself seems too full of letters. If the word makes you cringe, it's probably because your home is full of it: Piles of paper on tables; books so thick on the nightstand you can't read the clock; closets so overstuffed with outdated clothes that you can never find what you're looking for; kitchen cabinets so full of flat soda and half-empty chip bags you wonder if there's anything other than a stale chip. Sound familiar?

Then consider these simple tips to help declutter your home. Clear up a little space around the house -- and breathe a little easier, even when confronted with evil, vile words like "clutter."

IN THE KITCHEN

Whether grocery shopping is a joy or a royal pain, no one loves the kitchen mess that results in unloading all those bags. Here are three good ways to cut down on the grocery clutter:

The average American uses about 500 plastic shopping bags every year. If you're a hoarder or at all concerned about the old "reduce, reuse, recycle" mantra, drop those plastic grocery bags in the recycling bin at your grocery store and stop stuffing them in every nook and cranny!

Get a couple of good reusable bags, and make a habit of storing them in the car so they don't clutter your kitchen and they're on hand when you need them.

Even the most well-organized kitchens tend to overflow onto counter tops. One way to keep that overflow from looking like clutter is to turn it into decoration: Get a simple decorative fruit bowl, then substitute your junk food snack purchases for fruit.

One nice side benefit-you'll cut down on the amount of trash taken to the curb, since the majority of American household waste is made up of packaging. An even nicer side benefit: You're

more likely to choose a healthy snack if it's right in front of you, so fill up the fruit bowl and enjoy!

GO TO THE LIBRARY

The Internet hasn't killed print -- not yet. If you're a bibliophile whose library overfloweth or a magazine or newspaper subscriber who watches unread issues pile up on the nightstand, it may be time to reintroduce yourself to the local library.

Borrowing one book at a time not only saves you money, but will cut down on clutter and that nagging feeling that you are missing an item that's due to be returned. As you thin out your personal book collection, ask yourself if you will really re-read each book. Most of the time, the answer will be "no". Take those books and sell or donate them and give someone else a chance to enjoy your collection!

If you must catalog your intellectual journey, keep track of your reading list on a site like goodreads.com -- and then go to the library.

This article will be continued in January with tips for your closets and controlling junk mail.

COVENANT CORNER

Fall is an excellent time to replace worn fencing. Foliage has died back which makes it easy to see what needs replacing. Keeping up fence appearance is important not only because it's a condition of most of the covenants in Wells Branch, but because it helps us all maintain our property values and keeps Wells Branch beautiful.

Now that the weather has cooled down, take time to look at your home and see what needs a little work before winter begins. It's worth the investment.



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HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

With the bustle of the holidays just around the corner, now is the time to make sure we're taking every precaution to keep our homes and ourselves as safe as possible. These tips should really be implemented year round, but due to the normal increase in crime during the holidays coupled with a down economy, everyone should be especially vigilant.

Anytime you travel, let someone know you'll be out of town and when you'll return. They should have the following:

- Your emergency contact information
- Contact information for anyone with access to your house (pet sitter, etc.), when they should be expected; what they look like and a description of their vehicle(s)
- Put your lights, stereo or TV on timers and have a neighbor park in your driveway
- File a Close Patrol Request. The filing of this form alerts patrolling officers so that they may pay close attention to one's residence. Contact the Travis County Sheriff's Office at 854-0845, press "3" and ask to make a Close Patrol Request.

Around the house, be sure to keep your blinds and drapes closed when you leave, even if only for a short period of time. Keep your house well lit at night, including the backyard.

Do NOT put the empty boxes for the new computer, TV, stereo system, etc. on the curb for the trash, anytime. Take the time to break down every box and put it inside your trashcan so that it is concealed, even if you have to hold it over to the next week. People start cruising our neighborhood on Tuesday afternoons to see what has been put out. The less they know, the better.

Door-to-door solicitations typically increase this time of year. Always look out the window or peephole before opening the door or answering a knock. Never open the door all the way, especially if your



A time to gather with FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

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Christmas tree and goodies are in plain view.

If your Christmas tree is displayed in front of a window, don't pile the presents around it. Store the gifts in another area away from view when the blinds or drapes are open.

Anytime you are out shopping, remain aware of your surroundings at all times. If unsure of your safety, ask a store attendant to have security walk you to your car. You can't be too safe. This goes for trips to the grocery store as well. When unloading your car at home after a day of shopping, lock it between trips to and from the car.

There has been a drastic increase in car break-ins in Travis County in the last few months. Don't leave valuables in plain view, even if your car is locked. Take them in the house or put them in the trunk, out of sight before reaching your destination.

Always lock your car. Never leave your car running unattended or leave your keys in the car or ignition. If you keep a garage door remote control in your car and don't park it in the garage each and every time you return home, hide the remote. Thieves check visors and this gives them instant access to your home.

Most of all, be aware of your surroundings and look out for your neighbors. If you see or hear something suspicious, call 911. The Sheriff's Department would much rather answer a false alarm than deal with a tragedy later.

We live in a great community. Let's keep it that way. Here's to a safe and happy holiday season!

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NATIONAL NIGHT OUT SUCCESS

National Night Out was a huge success. Wells Branch has always enjoyed a large turnout for our neighborhood night out against crime, and this year was no different.

Our trusty cooks, Tom Cheshire, MUD Board Director and Mike Howe, WBNA Secretary/Treasurer served hundreds of hot dogs and sausage wraps.

Distinguished guests for the evening included ESD 2 Fire Department Assistant Chief Tom Crane; Travis County Constable, Precinct 2, Adan Ballesteros; Travis County Chief Deputy Jim Sylvester; Travis County Sheriff's Department Community Outreach Representatives Deputy Kimberly Ortiz and Kelly Page; several of our local patrol officers from both the Travis County Sheriff's Department and the County Constable's Office and our local firefighters and paramedics from the ESD station at Shoreline and Bratton.

Both children and adults had the opportunity to visit with first responders, receive information on Neighborhood Watch and other programs available to residents, and tour the fire safety house and fire truck that the Emergency Services District #2 made available while the bounce house provided entertainment for the younger participants.

Our firefighters and paramedics were wonderful



Top L-Assistant Fire Chief Tom Crane speaks to the crowd.

Top R-Deputy Kimberly Ortiz provides information to a resident.

Bottom L-Mike Howe and Tom Cheshire working the grill.

Bottom R-Residents eating and socializing.

and entertained countless questions from children of all ages. We thank them for their patience!

Thanks to all of you who came out. We look forward to an even larger party next year.

15001 Wells Port Drive
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Mon-Thurs 10am-8pm
Fri 10am-6pm
Sat-Sun 1pm-6pm



Holiday Closings

Early Closure (4pm)
November 25 and December 31
Closed November 26, 27,
December 24-26,
January 1 and January 21

Regular Programs

0-18 mos., Baby Bookworms: Fridays, 10am
12-24 mos., Monkey in the Middle: Mon., 10:45am
18-36 mos., Toddler Story Time: Fridays, 10:45am
3-5 yrs., Preschool Story Time:
Mondays, 10am and Fridays, 11:30am
Ages 8+, Wacky Science: Wednesdays, 5pm
Ages 3-6, A to Zzs: Tuesdays, 5:30
Ages 7-10, Bluebonnet Book Club: Tuesdays, 6:30

Please remember that children under the age of 8 MUST have an adult with them at ALL times in the library and during library programs.

New Moon Release Party

Monday, November 23, 6pm

Join us at the library for games, discussion, fun, & food. Make your own Team Edward or Team Jacob T-Shirt! Test your twilight knowledge with trivia to win the grand prize & watch "Twilight: the Movie!"



Gingerbread Workshop

Saturday, December 5, 10am

\$10 fee and pre-registration required.

Bring the whole family to create and decorate your very own (non-edible) REAL Gingerbread house. We supply everything you need! All ages are welcome. Register early, limited to 35 houses.

Family Ornament Workshop

Sunday, December 6th: 1:30-4pm

Bring the whole family and create one of kind ornaments for your holiday décor. A variety of supplies are available and all are welcome to come and make family memories. \$1 per person



Conversational English

Saturdays December 5 & 19, January 16, 4pm

Join an ESL teacher for this open forum to practice your English speaking skills.

Computer Classes for Adults

Saturday, January 9th

9am: Computer Basics

10:30am: Create Your Own Web Page



8th Annual Polar Express Pajama Party

Friday, December 18th: 6pm

Join us for holiday crafts, songs, stories, cookies, hot chocolate, a special guest, and a bedtime reading of "The Polar Express!" Wear your best pajamas and bring your family, your teddy, and your pillow for the movie!



Science Fair Workshops

Wednesday, January 13, 5-7pm

Come to the library to find great experiment ideas and learn about the scientific process.



Wednesday, January 20, 5-7pm

Make a mock display and learn about the components needed to showcase your project.



Free Concert: Mr Johnny & Sharon

Saturday, January 23, 1pm

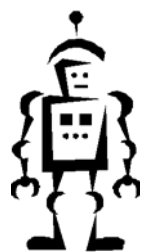
Mr. Johnny & Sharon will perform an interactive sound and music show! Your youngster can sing, jump, dance, and play props along with the music! Space is limited, so arrive 10 minutes early to reserve a seat.

Make a Roboto Workshop and Contest

Saturday, January 30, 1:30pm

Create a Roboto (2D robot type figure mounted on posterboard) using a variety of materials from discarded electronics and computers to keys, watches and hardware. We will have many materials available.

Register your item and have it ready to display by February 8. Entries will be displayed in the library and prizes awarded for 4 age groups: under 9, 9-13, 13-18, Adults.



Chess for Everyone

Tuesdays December 1st and January 5, 5pm

Bring your friends, your family, your chessboard (if you have one) and learn from a master. Already know a strategy or two? Challenge someone!



CONSERVE WATER, SAVE MONEY ALL YEAR DURING WINTER AVERAGING

Donna Howe, Vice President, Wells Branch MUD, appointee on State of Texas Water Conservation Advisory Board

Wells Branch residents can save money year-round by conserving water during the winter wastewater averaging period beginning November 16, 2009 and ending February 16, 2010.

There are no meters on customers' wastewater lines. To determine wastewater usage, a customer's water usage is averaged over three consecutive, low demand winter months when lawn watering and irrigation are less frequent. The customer's wastewater charge each month will be based on the new wastewater average or actual monthly water usage, whichever is lowest.

Because the MUD is a wholesale customer of the City of Austin, the City's Water Conservation Program is available to Wells Branch residents to help reduce charges for both water and wastewater. For information consult <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/watercon/>.

Here are some tips, along with information on just how much water is saved with a few minor changes in water use habits.

Turn off the water while brushing your teeth. Running water for 2 minutes equals 4 gallons down the drain. (4 gal. x twice a day brushing x 30 days = 240 gallons saved per month!)

Shorten your showers by turning off the water when shaving and lathering up. A 10 minute shower equals 52 gallons treated water down the drain. Decrease it by 2 minutes and save (5.2 gallons/minute X 2 = 10.4 gallons/day x 30 = 312 gallons saved per month!)

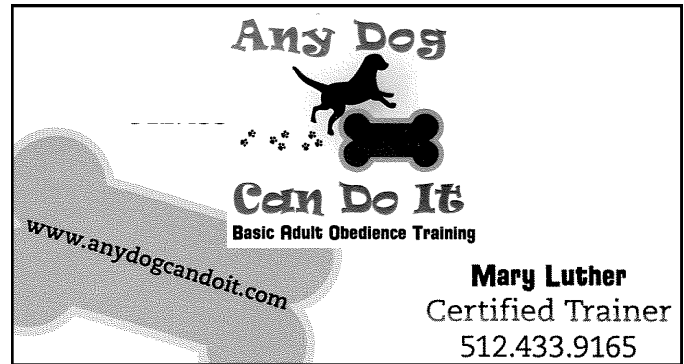
When you steam vegetables, use the leftover water in the steamer to water your plants. Not only are you recycling your water, your plants will love the extra nutrients.

Don't leave the water running while loading the dishwasher. Turn the water off in between each dish.

Fix your leaky toilet. a leaking toilet flapper can waste 880 gallons of treated water per month.

Just adopting the first two tips can save over 550 gallons per month per person, and for a family of four, that's 2,200 gallons saved per month. That's dollars in your pocket all year long. The leaking toilet is one of the primary ways homeowners unwittingly waste treated water. It's simple to test and determine if and how bad your leak is, place a few drops of food coloring in the tank and watch to see if the color ends up in the bowl while not being used.

Think of how much can be saved by installing new low flow toilets, showerheads, washers, dishwashers, etc. Wells Branch residents are eligible for all the rebates that the City of Austin gives out when you replace plumbing fixtures in your home. While free



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replacement toilets are gone for this year, they have rebates for new models and also for the installation. In these tight economic times, you can save treated water, save money, and feel good about doing your part for conservation.

Sources: Source: Wells Branch Word, December 2003, <http://www.waterfortomorrow.ca/en/> and <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/watercon/>

SIGN UP FOR IRIS!

In order to improve communication with residents in case of an emergency, the WB MUD has implemented the IRIS system. This system will enable the District to contact residents promptly via telephone or e-mail should there be an emergency (e.g., a boil water notice) or other situation that impacts the District's utility system. In addition, IRIS will provide information and routine updates on services, activities, and events. Residents have the ability to customize both the level and method of notification.

It's EASY to sign up for this service. Stop by the MUD office at 3000 Shoreline Drive, fill out a short form and provide a copy of a current government-issued picture ID for each person requesting notification. For your convenience, the MUD office is open until 7p.m. on Wednesday evenings. Your information will be protected by the District's Identity Theft Protection Policy. If you have any questions, please call the District office at 251-9814, or e-mail info@wellsbranchmud.com.

ADVERTISING AND ARTICLE SUBMISSION

Do you have a business or service you would like to advertise? Have an article of interest to other WB residents? If so, please contact Pam at wbnanews@sbcglobal.net for other information. All article submissions are subject to editing, all ads must be pre-paid.

January issue deadline is December 20.



Community Calendar

11/14, 2pm: Identity Theft Prevention, WBCL

11/21, 5-7: Neighborhood Thanksgiving potluck*

11/24, 5-8: Youth Fowl Shot contest* WBREC

12/11 & 12, 6-9pm: Luminaria Celebration* WBCC

12/20, 5pm: DEADLINE to submit articles, ad payments and ads for the January issue (wbnews@sbcglobal.net)

* Contact the MUD for more info, 251-9814
Have a free event to share with the neighborhood**? If so, send the editor the details, date, place and time via email: wbnews@sbcglobal.net.

**Events put on by for-profit entities do not qualify for this space.

WBCC-WB Comm Center on Klattenhoff

WBCL-WB Community Library

WBREC-Recreation Center on Shoreline Drive



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BROWN SANTA NEEDS NEEDS FOOD, TOYS, CASH AND VOLUNTEERS

The Brown Santa program provides food and gifts to needy families in the unincorporated areas of Travis County. This community service program began in 1981 with a few Travis County Sheriff's deputies helping about 25 families. The goal for 2009 is to help 1,600 families including approximately 10,000 children so that they will have presents to open on Christmas morning. This goal can only be reached with the help of the public.

Brown Santa accepts all non-perishable food times in unopened containers. Items especially needed are corn, green beans, cranberry sauce, instant potatoes, stuffing mix, cake mix and cake icing.

The program also gives toys to each child, age 0-16, in the family. Donations of books, puzzles, stuffed animals, and new toys are needed for every age group. Donations are typically low for ages 0-2 and 10-16.

All donations need to be new and unwrapped. Donation boxes will be available at the Wells Branch MUD Office and Recreation Center on Shoreline as well as the Thanksgiving Potluck and Luminary Events at the Community Center.

Brown Santa also accepts monetary donations that help buy turkeys and items not donated to complete toy and food boxes and overhead costs. Monetary donations may be made online or by mail. By mail, send checks payable to Travis County Brown Santa to PO Box 207 Austin, TX. 78767-0207. Online, go to brownsanta.org/donations.html and click on the DONATE button below to make your secure donation through PayPal.

Volunteers are needed to help wrap presents, sort food, make food boxes and load trucks for delivery. Individuals and groups are welcome, please call to sign up, 247-2682. Please see our website for more details or call 24SANTA.

Support your Neighborhood Association
by joining the WBNA and continue to make Wells Branch great!
Here is my check (made out to WBNA) for \$20 annual dues for 2009.

Holiday '09

I am: _____ renewing my membership _____ a new member

Name(s) _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

I/we want to help with: _____ Crime Watch _____ Newsletter Delivery

_____ 4th of July _____ Easter Egg Hunt _____ Nat'l Night Out

MAIL TO: WBNA Membership, 2104 Klattenhoff, Austin, TX. 78728