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'Tis the season to water wisely



Wells Branch residents can save money year-round by conserving water during the winter wastewater averaging period beginning November 13, 2013 and ending February 13, 2014.

There are no meters on customers' wastewater lines. To determine wastewater usage, a customer's water usage is reviewed over three consecutive, low demand winter months when lawn watering and irrigation are less frequent. The customer's wastewater charge for future billings will be based on the new wastewater average or actual monthly water usage, whichever is lowest. The usage during this time frame determines the wastewater charge each month from April 2014 to March of 2015. Now is the time to make sure that there are no leaking faucets or running toilets!!!

Customers who pay their water bill to Wells Branch Municipal Utility District (MUD) may contact Margret Wingrove of Crossroads Utilities at 512-246-5908 or mwingrove@crossroadsus.com with any questions. Out of District customers who buy their water directly from the City of Austin, should call 512-494-9400 or check <http://austintexas.gov/departments/wastewater-averaging> for more information.

Visit the following site for more tips on water conservation:
<http://www.wateriq.org/water-saving/>

Travis County Brown Santa

BROWN SANTA is a community service program of the Travis County Sheriff's Office, and the many sponsors and volunteers (like you) who make it happen each year.



Brown Santa started in 1981 with a few deputies helping about 25 families in the unincorporated areas of Travis County. Brown Santa helped 1704 families in 2012 and hopes to do the same for the 2013 season.

Help celebrate the joy of Christmas by donating or volunteering; browse their website for more information and donation suggestions by age and gender at www.brownsanta.org. You can also call 24-SANTA (247-2682), or email the volunteer coordinator at volunteer@brownsanta.org.

Donation barrels will be available at the Wells Branch Recreation Center on Shoreline beginning November 20 for the Thanksgiving Potluck thru December 13 when they move to the Community Center for Luminary Fest. Pick up will be December 16 at the Rec. Center.

Please share if you can to help make a special Christmas morning for each child.

The new location for 2013 Brown Santa is: 9715 Burnet Road #B, Suite 400 Austin, TX 78758. While the official address is on Burnet Road, you will need DIRECTIONS to get there. From Metric Blvd turn west onto W. Rundberg Drive, follow to dead end and turn right into the warehouse area. Go all the way down and look for the address on the building.

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14611 Burnet Rd.
In Merriltown Square (corner of Burnet & Merriltown)
512-246-0727

Thanks, Wells Branch! by Linda Baird

This year's Capital Area Food Drive was a big success thanks to our generous neighbors in Wells Branch. RealNet Team with Keller Williams Realty is proud to have helped collect 18,000 pounds of food for the Capital Area Food Bank with the collection of over 50 bags of food donated from the Wells Branch community. Thanks, Neighbors!



Wells Branch's Got Talent

January 25 • 6pm • WB Rec. Center

Got Talent? Whether you're six, sixteen, or sixty, we want to see it! Start putting your acts together now! Wells Branch MUD invites talented groups and individuals of all ages with any type of talent to participate in our annual talent show beginning at 6pm inside the Recreation Center located at 3000 Shoreline Drive. Prizes and trophies will be awarded in both adult and youth categories for Best Individual Performance, Best Group Collaboration, Judge's Pick, and Audience's Pick. Admission is free for spectators and all performances will require a \$5 entry fee. Registration begins in December. Space is limited. For further questions, please contact the recreation manager at 251-9814.



Recycling Update!

Recycling numbers continue to hold steady at 60% participation each month. This number is the percentage of households who put their blue recycling bins out for collection every other week.

We can do better, Wells Branch! Please encourage your neighbors to participate. Every pound counts! For each ton of recycling, the MUD receives \$20 (usually between \$500-\$800 a month). If we increase our participation rate, it stands to reason that our rebates will increase as well. These funds are dedicated to purchasing trees for our park system. Think green (literally) • Recycle!

Recycling pickup only occurs every other week on regular trash pickup days. Clip and save this calendar or download the new calendar for 2014 from our website: wbna.us. Visit our Recycling page under "Community" for the calendar and list of materials accepted.

Recycling Calendar December 2013

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

January 2014

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Wells Branch New Year's Eve Extravaganza

YES • NO • MAYBE?

We need to hear from
YOU!

wbna.us



On Vitamin D & Sun - not a lecture...

Submitted by Austin dermatologist Zoltan Trizna, MD, PhD

Vitamin D is produced in the body as a result of exposure to the sun (i.e., UV-B) and can also be obtained from food and supplements. The most important role of vitamin D is to maintain bone health and normal calcium metabolism. This is why calcium consumption is also important.



I frequently encounter these five questions in my practice.

1-How do I know if I need additional vitamin D?

A blood test is ordered by your physician.

2-What is the best source of vitamin D?

The best dietary source is oily fish - primarily tuna, salmon, mackerel, swordfish and cod liver oil. Cheese, egg yolk and beef liver contain small amounts of vitamin D. Some dairy & cereal products are fortified with vitamin D. In the USA, the typical fortified milk has 100 IU of vitamin D per cup. Some orange juices and infant formula are also fortified with vitamin D.

3-How much vitamin D do I need?

The recommended daily allowance (RDA) has been established based on the assumption that the individual has minimal sun exposure. Remember: "minimal sun exposure" is not exactly defined and it is very different in Texas than in northern states!

The RDA is 400 IU in the first year of life; 600 IU until age 70, then 800 IU for ages 71 and above. The body can store vitamin D in the liver and fatty tissues.

4-How much sun do I need?

This is one of the most controversial issues and suggestions range between 5 and 30 minutes at least twice a week, but there is no clear answer. However, depending on the intensity of UV-B rays and your length of exposure, an equilibrium develops between production and degradation of vitamin D (in other words: vitamin D degrades as fast as it is produced), so more sun exposure is not better!

5-What about sunscreens?

Exaggerated reports alleged that sunscreen use will prevent the body from making vitamin D. Theoretically, this can be the case only if you cover your entire body with sunscreen and clothing but in real life this just does not happen.

Disclaimer: This material is not presented as specific medical advice. If you have any questions, please consult your physician. www.doctortrizna.com

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Birding in Wells Branch

Fall Migration 2013

by Sharon Richardson & Wanda Holcombe

Have you ever wondered why at times, Blue Jays seem to go overboard screaming out their name, "Jay, Jay, Jay"? If it is during the fall migration of October or November, look up to the sky and you may see a handsome Red-tailed Hawk (pictured below), Red-shouldered Hawk or Crested Caracara (pictured above) perched or flying above as the fall hawks are making their way overhead in central Texas. The large hawks eat mostly rodents and small amphibians, while smaller hawks, such as Cooper's and Sharp-shinned, tend to hang out in trees and on fences looking for small song birds. Swirling "kettles" of Turkey and Black Vultures have also been spotted lately. My husband Jeff even saw a group of 30 Sandhill Cranes overhead recently as he worked from our back porch.



Mills Pond is once again attracting a variety of wintering ducks and the tree lines all around the neighborhood are hosting the cool-weather songbirds such as the tiny Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers (yes they really have a yellow rump), and Blue-grey Gnatcatchers, which look like miniature mockingbirds. There are many great bird guides; the National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America is one, as well as numerous bird apps for your smart phone such as iBird Pro, or Audubon Birds to help you to figure out what you are seeing at the pond or in your backyard.

Look soon for more information on Birding in Wells Branch from the "Community" tab on the Wells Branch Neighborhood Association website: www.wbna.us. Join us, Wanda and Sharon, or Heather and Mark as we lead monthly casual strolls to see the birds living or passing through our neighborhood. We will be meeting at the Kiosk at Mills Pond at **7:30am** on the following Mondays (Sharon and Wanda): November 25, and December 30. Heather and Mark Johnson will lead groups on the following Saturdays: November 30 and January 11. Bring your binoculars if you have some or we can share extras we have amongst our hosting teams.

For further information or questions/suggestions contact:

Wanda Holcombe: wandah70@gmail.com

Sharon Richardson: srich816@austin.rr.com

Heather & Mark Johnson: frioswimmer@gmail.com

See you on the trail!



Fall Happenings at WB

Elementary By Belinda Cini, Principal

Fall is in the air and so are increased expectations for learning at WBE! As we are almost 1/3 of the way into the school year, academics across content areas call for increased rigor

and complexity of intended student outcomes. What does this mean? It means that the academic expectations become more difficult as the standards are raised for all students. How can you help? We ask for your support of student learning by the following:

1. **Make sure that your child has a quiet, well-lit place for scheduled homework time daily.**
2. **Be positive about school, learning and homework.** The attitude you express about education will be the attitude your child acquires.
3. **When your child asks for help, provide guidance rather than answers.** It is important for your child to do the work in order to practice and learn.
4. **Read together with your child and ask questions about story meaning.** Ask questions about the characters and events in fiction or about what information your child is learning in nonfiction. Stop and ask your child what he/she thinks will happen next and why. After reading, ask your child to retell or summarize their reading.
5. **Incorporate math problem solving in the real world.** Use household chores, cooking, games and sports, or making items for reinforcing concepts and solving math problems. Plan and use money for budgeting and spending together.
6. **Go through and discuss your child's folders, agendas, and returned assignments together.**

We thank you for working together with us to help your child get the most out of learning in the 2013-2014 school year!

Be sure to check the calendar on the school website, <http://wellsbranch.roundrockisd.org/> for holidays, early release days and other important dates!

WBE PTA's Go Green Team

by Tara Fisher-Munoz

The WBE Go Green Team has gotten off to an excellent start this year. Gardens are planted and our Farmer's Market should be up and running sometime in December. We will be getting our huge rain barrels soon and Dianna Gielstra, Sylvia Brito, Jordan Bucher and I have been meeting with RRISD/ Aramark to discuss healthier food options in the cafeteria, including a salad bar. Things are definitely moving forward at WB Elementary!

Visit <http://gogreen.wellsbranchpta.org/index.html> to learn more about the WBE Go Green Team!

If you have any questions about our program, please contact me at tfishermunoz@yahoo.com. I look forward to hearing from you!



News from Northwest Elementary

By Betsey Harper



Have you noticed that the Northwest Staff and PTO is working harder than ever to create a family-friendly environment by hosting more activities and events for our school family? We have had a busy fall with Skate Night, Popcorn Fridays and

BoxTop Collection contests just to name a few. The Music programs are also in full swing beginning with our Veteran's Day Program. A lot has been accomplished so far this school year!

For the winter months, we will continue with monthly Popcorn Fridays and BoxTops collections, and will be adding a couple of Parent Night Out (PNO) events. On PNO nights, NW kids can be dropped off at school for dinner, a movie, and games with their peers. Fast approaching is Breakfast with Santa too. This is a tradition at NW where kids shop at our holiday store, meet and take a picture with Santa, work on crafts and enjoy a hearty breakfast. Soon afterwards, it will be time for our Family Science Night and the NW Science Fair.

These events would not be possible without the large number of new volunteers! Thank you NW Family for all you do! Spending quality time with your kids in their school environment will help establish memories that will last them a lifetime. And based on a study funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, children who spend more time at or around school, flourish academically too. This is because of the increased time with peers spent visiting, socializing, and studying out of school hours with different forms of educational stimulation; away from computers and televisions.

If we continue to grow as a diverse family and neighborhood, NW will become a top school in Texas, not just in Pflugerville - Thanks to all of you!

WB Leadership Academy Update



by Traci Synatschk, PTO President

Wells Branch Leadership Academy had their grand opening just this fall. They had only a few months to prepare, however they were dedicated to getting the doors open to serve the children of Wells Branch and surrounding areas as soon as possible.

"WBLA is off to a great start," says Principal Sally Irvine. There are currently about 240 students and room for a few more. WBLA is anticipating a high volume of applicants for the Fall Semester. Ms. Irvine advises that if parents are considering applying for next fall they might not want to wait, but consider moving their students now. There are openings in 1st, 3rd, 4th, 6th & 8th grades. WBLA has great flexibility in teaching. Consider that all of the students were brand new this year and came from different learning levels and teaching models. The WBLA teachers have been amazing at reaching the children where they are.

WBLA has a lot of great things planned for their first year. Stay tuned for opportunities to check them out at Holiday musicals, spring talent shows and more! Also consider becoming a sponsor. See the sponsorship details along with up to date news and other volunteer and fundraising opportunities on our website at www.wbla.my-pto.org

Like us on our Facebook page WBLA PTO to stay in the loop!