



Whispers

Whispering Oaks Homeowners Association

Message from President Howard Alwais

Hello Neighbors,

In this first *Message from the President*, I would like to introduce myself and offer a brief overview of some of my goals for the coming year in Whispering Oaks. I am an original homeowner, having lived on Whisper Spring for 35+ years. Our children grew up here, swam on our Marlins Swim Team and fully enjoyed their young years here. I've served on the Board of Directors for the past 5 years as WOHA's Treasurer. I wanted to "give back" to the community in which my family has made lifelong friends.

Whispering Oaks is comprised of approximately 750 homes. WOHA currently has between 450 and 500 members. One of my goals will be to increase membership in the association that works to make Whispering Oaks one of the most desirable communities in our area-- your Whispering Oaks Homeowners Association. I would like to see more neighborhood events that offer opportunities for us to get to know each other better and have fun together. I'd like to see a Spring event that would allow us to visit with "experts" and neighbors regarding landscaping/curb appeal and home improvements and other hot topics in this area. Our homeowners association has, as most of you know, a voluntary membership which cannot become mandatory. WOHA is most appreciative of those who choose to join and of those who send additional contributions each year. I would encourage non-member homeowners to email me with opinions, thoughts, suggestions or reasons for their decisions not to support WOHA with the nominal \$65 membership fee. I would like to make a difference and will listen to all considered, constructive messages.

Please, email me at president@whisperingoaks.org

Another serious goal will be to improve our website, www.whisperingoaks.org, to make it a more interactive, integral part of our community that will encourage people to visit and use it more often. This will be another path for our neighbors to communicate with each other and strengthen the sense of community.

I would like to ask each of you to consider becoming more a part of our neighborhood. I would like to see an increase in the number of homeowners who volunteer to help. "Help" means "giving back" in the form of ideas and suggestions as well as volunteering to participate by becoming a block captain, assisting with different events, agreeing to serve on the "call list" if we need help in a certain field in which you might have interest or expertise. Let us know where you might be willing to pitch in when possible.

From where I sit, it's "giving back"; if you are new to Whispering Oaks, it might be "giving it forward". Either way, "giving it" will bring back to you in so many ways and you'll join me in truly making a difference in the coming year. Isn't it time YOU joined ME in working to achieve these goals and to continue to keep Whispering Oaks a great community to live in?

Cordially,
Howard Alwais

RECENT REAL STATE ACTIVITY : Data from January 1st 2008 to November 1st 2008

Total SOLD: 21

Lowest price: \$132,000 (1558 s.f.)
Highest price:\$295,000 (3171 s.f.)
Average Price sold: \$219,307
Average price per s.f.: \$94.76

Average days on the market: 87

Information courtesy of *Nancy Doucette (Whispering Wind), Kuper Sotheby's International Realty*

CURRENTLY FOR SALE: 15 HOUSES

Lowest price: \$175,000 (1911 s.f.)
Highest price: \$307,999 (3400 s.f.)
Average Price \$228,613
Average price per s.f. \$99.70

Current days on market: 69

Happy holidays!

At this time of the year, all over the world people from many different faiths join in a shared wish for joy, happiness, health, and peace to all. We, the Editorial Board of Whispers, want to extend our warmest holiday greetings to all our neighbors of Whispering Oaks. We would like to remind every one that especially at this difficult financial time for so many, we should try to be generous with those who are less fortunate. If you can, considering making a donation to a cause of your preference.

Happy Holidays!



But remember that, for those closer to us, sometimes the best gift we can give is our time and our friendship.

Whispering Oaks Homeowners Association Board of Directors

- President: Howard Alwais
- Vice President: Andrea Stella
- Secretary: Lisa Abramson
- Treasurer: Jennifer Johnson
- Membership: Diane Crawford
- Block Captains:
Andrea Stella/ Diane Crawford
- Hospitality: Andrea Stella
- Communications/Data & Directory:
Sylvia Garcia
- Common Space: Norma Sackett
- Code Compliance/Covenants:
David Baird
- Government Liaison: Oscar Galvan
- Capital Campaign Steering Committee: Peter Nettelfield and David Sund
- Security: Arthur Stier
- Social: Norma Sackett
- At Large: Kara Reynolds, Ginny Cohen, Jeanne Paulk
- Newsletter:**
Simon Esparza, Publisher
Lisa Abramson -- Board Liaison
Terry Caesar, Editor
Eva Bueno, Layout and Design

Let's enjoy the fruits and vegetables of the season!

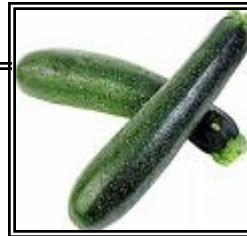
Cranberry sauce

- 2 medium oranges
- 1 lb of cranberries (rinsed)
- 2 cups of sugar



Early in day or several days ahead:

Cut unpeeled oranges into quarters. Remove any seeds.
Put oranges and cranberries through food grinder using medium blade. (You can also use a blender.)
Stir in sugar. Cover and refrigerate. Makes 4 cups.



Zucchini bread

- 3 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla
- 1 cup of oil
- 2 cups of sugar

Mix eggs, sugar, oil, vanilla. Beat until fluffy.
Add 2 cups of peeled and grated zucchini.
Mix 3 cups of flour with 1 tablespoon of baking soda, 1 teaspoon of salt, 1 tablespoon of baking powder.
Add 1/2 cups raisins. 1/2 cup of chopped walnuts (if you are allergic to nuts, skip the walnuts), 1 cup of drained crushed pineapple drained. Mix gently.

Grease and flour 3 bread pans. Pour the mixture.
Bake at 350 degrees for about 40 to 45 minutes.

WOHA NEEDS YOU! WILL YOU BE A BLOCK CAPTAIN

AND REPRESENT YOUR STREET IN OUR BEAUTIFUL NEIGHBORHOOD?

Time required is minimal. We will meet quarterly as well as assist the Board in communicating to our neighbors. Can we count on you to help?

PLEASE CONTACT **Diane Crawford** (W.Spring, 479-3413) crawford_d@att.net OR

Andie Stella (W.Ridge 408-7201) italianstar@earthlink.net

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED AND/OR WITH ANY QUESTIONS. THANK YOU!!!

Faces of the Neighborhood: Grace Nuñez

"I'm not a very interesting person," claims Grace Nuñez—before she goes on to detail a fascinating life, lived in two countries since she settled in Whispering Oaks thirteen years ago. Although born in New Orleans, Grace grew up in Mexico and worked as university and government administrator there after college graduation, until she met her husband, Arturo, a fellow student of architecture.

When Arturo's work took him to the United States, their children, Monica (now a senior at the University of Guanajuato) and Alejandro (now a junior at Clark), and María (in her last year at Hobby), were very young. Eventually, they all attended school in the U.S and made many friends here. The family regularly vacations in Mexico during holidays and summer.

Perhaps the main reason Grace and Arturo decided to live in the United States was so they could give their children the opportunity to live in another country and learn English. Now it's "another tool," according to Grace, for each of them to have. However, she insists the children speak Spanish at home.



In Mexico their extended family is large. Nobody seems to regard this as a source of conflict. Indeed, life in the United States sometimes seems like a vacation from life in Mexico—except when the reverse seems more true.

Nothing about the United States impresses Grace more than the value it places on service to the community. At present, she is the Spanish tutor at the Assumption Seminary, here in San Antonio, and continues her work as a weekly volunteer guide, or "docent," for the San Antonio Museum of Art.

Upon her arrival in San Antonio, Grace immediately joined a group of American and Mexican women who call themselves "Las Amigas" and who still meet once a month to visit local cultural sites or hear invited speakers. From the start, it seemed the right thing to do. No wonder Grace says, "everything in life you need to do at the right moment."

HOLIDAY LIGHTS ON THE RIVER
JOIN us for some FUN
Sunday evening, December 7, 2008

Another WOHA

"Get Together—Feel Better" event!!

We board our 57-passenger bus at the Whispering Oaks Swim Club parking lot 5:15 PM, departing at 5:30 for the Casa Rio dock on the River. We'll go upstairs where we can enjoy a fantastic Mexican buffet; then board a barge for a memorable river tour at 8:30 PM; then board our bus again at 9:30 for return to the WO Swim Club parking around 10:00 PM.

--Your entertainment fee, including meal, bus and barge; only \$35.00 per person cash or check. **Please RSVP** by phoning **Norma Sackett at 479-8970** or nsackett@msn.com not later than Wednesday, December 3! Please check weather forecast for proper attire for the sightseeing cruise. You may purchase wine, beer and other refreshment at the Casa Rio Bar.

--Menu at Casa Rio includes: Guacamole, Chili con Queso, Chicken & Beef Fajita strips, Pico de Gallo, Sour Cream, Grilled Peppers and Onions, shredded cheese, Cheese Enchiladas, Chili con Carne, Mexican Rice, Refried Beans, Tortillas, Chips, Hot Sauce and Ice Tea. Bunuelos included. **RESERVE NOW!**

New to the Neighborhood?

If someone new has moved onto your street, or if you are a new resident, please call **Roz Moroh** (Whisper View) at 492-2563.

Roz is Whispering Oak's "welcome lady" and the friendly face to new residents. She will visit and bring information about the Homeowners Association, Swim and Tennis Club and Garden Club.



Whispering Oaks
Homeowners Assn
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Pruning: advantages and perils

Every now and then in our neighborhood we see a crew pruning the trees at somebody's yard. Of course Whispering Oaks looks very well cared for, and most of the trees are in excellent shape. However, since a neighbor recently mentioned her worry about the danger of having unskilled people working with our trees, we did a little research to find out more about how and when to prune, especially our precious oaks.

The first thing to know is the reason for pruning a tree or shrub. According to the very informative site of AgriLife Extension, maintained by the Department of Agricultural Sciences of Texas A & M, we prune a tree to train the plant, to maintain its health, to improve the quality of flower, fruit, foliage and stems, and to restrict growth. As the site states, we have to be careful about who is doing the pruning, because "The old idea that anyone with a chain saw or a pruning saw can be a landscape pruner is far from the truth. More trees are killed or ruined each year from improper pruning than by pests." If you are like me, you have received many offers to have your trees "trimmed," and sometimes the person or persons simply drove by and judged the trees "in need of a trim." Make sure you have references and can trust the person who will take care of your trees.

Considering our mature oaks, we should also always be aware of the correct time to prune, in order to minimize the potential damage that can be caused by the fungus that causes Oak Wilt. Answering a question about the safe time to trim, NAN HAMPTON, of the Lady Bird Johnson

Wildflower Center, at UT, says that "The beetles responsible for spreading the fungus that causes Oak Wilt are most active during the warm spring weather. They are still around the rest of the year but are least active during the hottest months of summer and during cold spells of our winters here in Texas."

(<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/gardening/5849566.html>) The old saw one hears in South Texas is "January to June, DON'T PRUNE." One improperly cured tree wound can be the opening for the beetles to get in and Oak Wilt to start. From one infected tree, hundreds of others can be infected, as we can see in the panicking message posted at the site of Travis Heights, Austin, where, the neighbors there report, oak wilt is destroying one of the oldest stands of oak in the city. **Let's not allow that to happen in our Whispering Oaks.**

For more detailed information, see in the internet: <http://extension-horticulture.tamu.edu/plantanswers/trees/oakwilt.html>, and also http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/howtos/ht_oakwilt/toc.htm. From the library, you can pick up the following: "[Guidelines for Proper Pruning to Prevent Oak Wilt Infection](#)" by Kim Camilli (Oak Wilt Coordinator, Texas Forest Service) and "[Studies on Pruning Cuts and Wound Dressings for Oak Wilt Control](#)" by Kim Camilli, David N. Appel, and W. Todd Watson. *Arboriculture & Urban Forestry* 2007. 33(2):132-139