

The Whispers

PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY BY NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS, INC. FOR THE WHISPERING OAKS HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION

Councilman Courage Pledges to Maintain Whisper Valley Access to Wurzbach

TxDot's renovations to Wurzbach and NW Military are well underway and the upcoming second phase will be right outside Whispering Oaks. WOHA has been working with Councilman John Courage in preparation and remains hopeful that his plan to safeguard Whisper Valley comes to fruition.

In the coming months, Wurzbach will be widened between Lockhill-Selma and the entrance to the Elm Creek neighborhood one block to the west. One additional lane will be added in each direction, which will make the already challenging intersection at Whisper Valley even more difficult to traverse. While most of the roadway involved in the area's project is technically TxDot's domain, this short section belongs to the City, which means our local representative has some influence on its final plan.

During initial reviews, WOHA expressed concern that residents using the wider intersection may have more difficulty coming and going from Whispering Oaks via Whisper Valley. The Councilman's staff suggested what's known as a Flying T to improve safety and enable access (see illustration). In this configuration, a curb-lined center median on Wurzbach would provide both an in-bound dedicated turn lane into Whisper Valley and also an outbound access lane for motorists merging into West-bound Wurzbach traffic.



Artist's rendering of a potential Flying T configuration on a widened Wurzbach. Not the actual proposed plan.

TxDot's funding would not cover this upgrade, so Councilman Courage pledged to find the funds from his discretionary budget if the concept is approved by City planners and, of course, if the Councilman will have remained in office for the upcoming term, to be decided in a run-off election on June 5. The addition of the Flying T would likely follow TxDot's completion of its other work, but City planners have initially confirmed that space would allow for the potential safety enhancement.

Other alternatives explored by WOHA for the intersection included the addition of a new stop light which was ruled infeasible due to the close proximity of existing Lockhill Selma stop lights, and a "no block" zone, which was rejected by the City due to paint-durability and maintenance concerns on the increasingly busy roadway.

I've Been Workin' on the Ro-oad

Lotsa road work going on, both on the edge of Whispering Oaks and inside. During this year, the following streets were restored:

- Whisper Hill • Whisper Path • Whisper Valley
- Whispering Wind • Whisper Path

The new right-hand turn construction at Wurzbach Parkway and Lockhill Selma leading to Elm Creek will be ongoing through April 2022. Make plans to avoid Whisper Valley and Wurzbach Parkway during peak traffic hours. If you must, one way to get onto Wurzbach in either direction is to turn off of Whisper Valley at Whisper Quill and then turn left onto Lockhill-Selma. Further information can be found @ <https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/projects/project-tracker.html>.

SENIOR CENTER COMING!

Groundbreaking took place on 26 March for a new Senior Center for our area. The Senior Center, located adjacent to Walker Ranch Park, has also been referred to as the Multi-Generational Center. Plans are to make the center more versatile and available at hours it might normally be closed by opening it to younger age groups.



The facility will feature, among other amenities, a dining area, exercise rooms, lounge, and classroom areas. There will be a patio space and sufficient surface parking for 200 vehicles.



Exterior finish materials will consist of architectural concrete masonry, insulated metal wall panels, fiber cement siding, metal windows and large aluminum and glass storefront areas, and a standing seam metal roof. There is a covered board and entrance canopy.

—Thanks to the John Courage On-line Newsletter

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Simon Sez



Happy summer to all our neighbors! Here we are in June already and time for the hot summer months.

Since I have been President of our HOA, in my column I have talked about many topics. One of the top priorities is the growth of our Board of Directors and of our HOA membership. That's because the strength of both is necessary to our having a strong, well-protected neighborhood. I believe that our membership team and the rest of our Board has done a wonderful job in growing our membership to close to 400 members. In the last two years, we have gone from around 30% of all Whispering Oaks homes to over 50%. The Board and I want to thank all our neighbors for getting involved, doing the right thing for us all.

Although the Board has grown in strength and commitment, we continue to look for committed members to get involved by joining our Board. Our HOA Board, which has been around for over 50 years, must continue to be involved and have consistency for the prosperity of our community. If you're interested in becoming a candidate for our upcoming September annual HOA meeting, please email us at board@whisperingoaks.org.

As I spoke about in our last newsletter, we must all continue to take pride in our neighborhood by maintaining the beautification of our homes. As I walk through our streets, I am pleased to see the care that so many of us take in our yards and our homes. Please continue these efforts so we can keep our neighborhood one of San Antonio's most desired. And, while we're at it, please note that there is entirely too much speeding on our streets. So let's slow down, let's "drive like our kids live here," as so many do. Let's make it not just a kid-friendly neighborhood—what with the playgrounds and the swimming pool—but a kid-safe one as well. Let's make that a commitment!

I'm sure you've noticed all the street work taking place on Wurzbach and Wurzbach Parkway, which has been a big inconvenience over the course of the last six months. The HOA Board is keeping a close watch on this work, maintaining communication with our District 9 Council office. We will continue to keep everyone posted on developments. Relatedly, we are working with the City and, more specifically, our District 9 office on the Whisper Valley and Wurzbach situation. We hope to have good news soon concerning what can be done.

Have a wonderful summer, and I look forward to seeing many of you on my daily walks with my dog, Bexar.

Simon Esparza

President

"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy on not fighting the old, but on building the new."

—Socrates

New 2021 Directories *Are Out!*

You say you didn't get one? Well, are you a member? You gotta be a member!

These directories are invaluable. So if you're not a member, please join. As we always say, in all honesty, "If you can afford to live in Whispering Oaks, you can afford among the lowest dues in San Antonio."

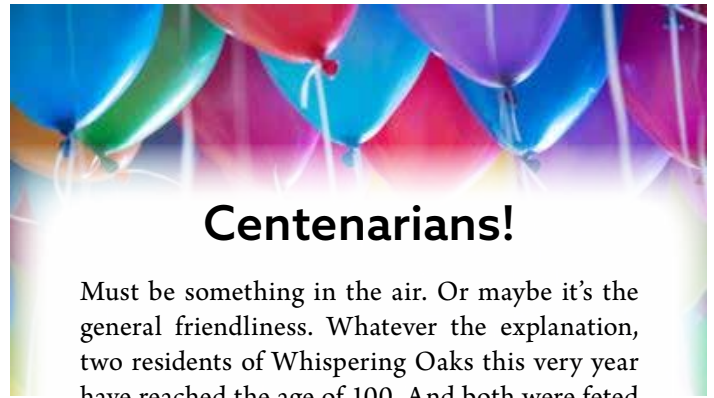


Adiós, Juan

"A nice thing about South Texas is that we can both mourn someone's passing and celebrate that person's life." So said a guest at the party on Sunday, May 2, at which the Escamilla family celebrated Juan Escamilla's life... big time!

Family came in from all parts. And all wore purple t-shirts identifying themselves by their relation to Juan, be they son, daughter, step-son, on and on, including Juan's beloved wife, Colleen (*first photo, 2nd from left*). To do it up right for the transplanted Chicagoan, the family brought in all Tex-Mex food and hired a first-rate mariachi band.

With the rains having passed, the weather was perfect, and so was everyone's mood—perfect way to say our last goodbyes to a true hero of the neighborhood.



Centenarians!

Must be something in the air. Or maybe it's the general friendliness. Whatever the explanation, two residents of Whispering Oaks this very year have reached the age of 100. And both were feted with huge lawn signs. So let's join the chorus and say, "Happy Birthday!"



Helen Kerman, on Whisper Green



"Boots" Burk, on Whisper Trail

What Happened??

Graduation?
Wedding?
Bar/Bat Mitzvah?
Confirmation?
An award?

Let your neighbors hear about it.
Contact The Whispers editor at
rpressman@satx.rr.com



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There is so much going on right now with our neighborhood pool! Thanks to all who came and helped us with cleanup day. With all the volunteer sweat and hard work, our pool is just about ready for the summer.

FORT PLAYSET

We are so excited to share with you about the renovation of the large fort play-set on our property. It has served our children well over the years, but has been breaking down recently, with boards rotting and falling apart. The renovation will replace all the rotted or broken wood and includes new safety features as well as new play features.



BLUE MARLINS NEIGHBORHOOD SWIM TEAM

We are excited to announce the launching of our neighborhood swim team this June. Registration is now live on <https://whisperingoaksbluemarlinsswimtopia.com/>. We offer swimming for all ages, from beginner levels all the way to advanced swimmers. Visit the site for more detailed information about our season. Practices will be in the morning only, so through June and July there will be no swim teams practicing in the evenings.

SPONSOR OUR TEAM

Many of the amenities at our pool are paid for through the funds raised by our non-profit swim team, both through swimmer registration fees and through sponsorships. Supporters of the swim team can advertise on the team website, on the team t-shirt, or on a banner to be hung on the pool fence. Find out more at <https://whisperingoaksbluemarlinsswimtopia.com/sponsors>.



MEMBERSHIP COSTS

To renew, go to woswimclub.org and make sure to login to your account, then click "join us." Once you are logged in, it will tell you in a yellow notification box that "You are already a member, Edit your member profile." Click on that, and then on the next page you should see a link that gives you an option to Renew to the next year period.

New Annual Membership Rates:

- Family Resident Membership – \$395
- Senior Resident with Grandchildren – \$350
- Standard Resident Membership – \$295
- Non-Resident Membership – \$450

If you have any questions, please reach out to the pool board at info@woswimclub.org.

After the Storm...



Photo of the drainage ditch taken from the footbridge and posted on Nextdoor.com by resident Linda Vidales, Saturday, May 1. It's a sight we've not seen in nearly 20 years.

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An Ideal WOHA Youngster



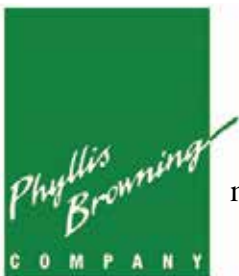
"Our own neighbor, 6th grader **Roberto Barrera** 6th, can be seen doing community volunteer trash pick for our neighborhood. Thank you, Roberto, for all your hard work. I look forward to working with you again."

- Simon Esparza, WOHA President

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Chop, Chop Away... and an Uh-Oh

By Board Member Janis Witt

Most residents have been busy this spring cleaning up their landscaping after the big winter freeze. Luckily, it looks like most Sago Palms have leafed out, as have some shrubs. Many other plants, such as Confederate Jasmine, Indian Hawthorne and Pittisporums, look like goners.



In order to spur new growth, gardening experts recommend cutting back the dead ends of shrubs by half to one-third of the affected branches. All those dead Sago fronds need to be removed as soon as possible; waiting longer will make the job painful! Loquats, a common small tree in many Whispering Oaks yards, are coming back, but especially need to have those dead ends cut off. In many cases, to make sunlight for new greenery, damaged vines and ground cover can be brushed with a broom to knock off the browned foliage. Fertilizing with an organic fertilizer should speed things up, along with plenty of watering if we don't have sufficient rain in the coming hot months.

As always, residents are reminded that our neighborhood covenants require lawns and landscaping be kept in a neat and trimmed condition. Additionally, City of San Antonio ordinances require lawns to cut below 12 inches, and for dead and diseased trees hanging over property lines and the city right of way (sidewalks and streets) to be removed. *Failure to do so can result in fines and/or removal by city crews at the homeowner's expense.*

For more information, listen to the several garden shows airing on San Antonio radio on Saturday and Sunday. WOAI 1200AM, KLUP 930AM, and KTSA 550AM all have call-in programs that offer great advice on local plants and conditions.

Got an Idea for an Article?

Is it a topic that would be of interest to the neighborhood? Is it a something special about one of our neighbors? Let your editor know! rpressman@satx.rr.com

Oak Wilt Update

The Oak Wilt infection and spread continues to work its way throughout the neighborhood. A walk-through with A&M Forestry service was conducted in April, and a flyer, once completed, will be delivered with an updated Oak Wilt map. To prevent further Oak Wilt progression, if the property is infected or shows signs of potential infection, we urge each resident to take action. Do your part to help preserve the beauty of Whispering Oaks.



Oak Wilt—Part 3 of 3

FAQs from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Firewood

Can I burn oak wilt-infected wood?

Yes. The fungus that causes oak wilt is a living organism and burning will kill it. Plus there is no danger of spreading the disease through burning or smoke.

Can I spread oak wilt by moving infected wood?

Possibly. The fungus that causes oak wilt cannot survive temperatures above 95°F nor moisture content below 20%. Thoroughly dried, seasoned wood poses no risk to spreading. Green, infected red oak wood poses a risk as fungal mats can form on logs and become a source of fungal spores. These spores are picked up by sap-feeding beetles that could infect healthy oak trees in the immediate area. Never move or store infected and unseasoned red oak wood. Only move, purchase and store thoroughly dried firewood and cover with clear plastic to heat and dry the wood and to keep insects from escaping. Thoroughly dried wood will have loose bark, cracks in the wood, and will be lighter in weight than green firewood.

Can I use infected wood as mulch?

Yes. Chipping the wood will facilitate heating and drying. The fungus cannot survive these conditions.

Planting

Can I plant oaks back into an oak wilt area?

Yes with precautions. It is recommended to wait a few years before reintroducing oaks, as there is potential for roots to graft with existing root systems, creating a pathway for infection. Non-oak species can be planted at any time.

I've heard some oaks don't get oak wilt. Is this true?

No. All oaks are susceptible to oak wilt; however, some species are more tolerant of the disease than others. Red oaks (blackjack, Shumard, Texas red, water) are extremely susceptible to the disease and will die if infected. White oaks (bur, chinquapin, Lacey, Mexican white, post, white shin) are more tolerant of the disease; however, they can become infected and suffer canopy loss, but rarely die from the disease in most, but not all circumstances. Live oaks (live, Texas

live) are intermediate in susceptibility, with approximately 20% of infected trees surviving the disease in various states of decline.

What trees do you recommend for my area, when should I plant, and where can I purchase them at a reasonable price?

Texas is a very large state with 12 distinctive eco-regions that support a variety of trees. Trees adapted to some parts of the state may not grow in others. View our Recommended Trees and check out the Texas Tree Selector for help with choosing appropriate trees for your property. In Texas, fall is the most appropriate time to plant trees. This gives trees a chance to establish in the landscape before the heat of summer. Texas celebrates its Arbor Day the first Friday in November. Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) offers seedlings through the Central Texas Restoration and Recovery Program. Seedlings are grown from seed collected throughout central Texas and are available through the Texas A&M Forest Service – West Texas Nursery.

Community Assistance

Are there any federal or state laws concerning oak wilt? Where can I find examples of community oak wilt ordinances?

No. Some municipalities, homeowner associations, and property owner associations have ordinances concerning oak wilt. These ordinances vary from community to community.

My neighbors are pruning their oaks at the wrong time of year and are not painting the cuts. Can someone from TFS come out and tell them to stop?

No. TFS is not a regulatory agency. If your community has an ordinance concerning oak wilt, you can follow the protocols stated in that ordinance. If not, informational and educational resources are located on the Community Tools tab of this site.

I'm thinking about buying/have a contract on a piece of property that I think might have oak wilt. Can you come and inspect the property for oak wilt before I buy?

No. Texas A&M Forest Service personnel can only come onto a property at the request of the owner. There are private vendors that do offer this service.

I'm thinking about selling my property/house – am I required to disclose oak wilt?

Yes. If you know oak wilt is present on the property and you fail to disclose that information, you could be in violation of the Deceptive Trade Practices-Consumer Protection Act.

Oak wilt is in my neighborhood, what can we do?

Inform, educate, and monitor! Form a committee or task force to inform the community of the problem, educate the community about oak wilt management, and monitor the disease progression in the community.

Besides technical assistance, what other resources are available to property owners who have oak wilt?

Limited cost shares are available (through TFS) to reimburse a percentage of approved treatment costs. Ask your TFS Forester for more details.

Important Local Contact Information

Council District 9 Field Office

16500 San Pedro Ave., Suite #290

San Antonio, TX 78232

Phone: 210-207-0955

Emails: colt.osburn@sanantonio.gov, bryan.naylor@sanantonio.gov, milee.ray@sanantonio.gov

TxDOT San Antonio District

Main Phone Line: 210-615-1110

Public Relations: 210-615-5839

SAPD Non-Emergency

210-207-7273(SAPD)

SAFFE Officer Steven Beilstein #84

Phone: Desk – 210-207-7425

Email: Doyle.Beilstein@sanantonio.gov

Bexar County Sheriff's Dept.

Score Unit (similar to SAFFE) – SCORE@Bexar.org

Phone: 210-335-6010

Bexar County Constable Precinct 3 – Mark Vojvodich

Phone: 210-335-4750

Email: contactus@bexarpolice.org

311 – Dial 311, download the app, or go to

www.sanantonio.gov/311

Pot holes, graffiti, traffic signal timing, restaurant food safety, construction permits, missed garbage pickup, median mowing, stray dogs, street lights, water leaks, junk vehicles, traffic issue investigation, drainage/flooding, and more.

Helpful Links

- <https://www.bexar.org/1568/Elections-Department>
Bexar County Elections department
- <https://www.bexar.org/1357/Dispute-Resolution-Center>
Free mediation services before it reaches the level of requiring lawyers
- <http://www.texashighwayman.com/>
Comprehensive info about state-maintained roads in San Antonio
- <https://www.txdot.gov/contact-us/form.html?id=>
Online complaint form for reporting issues to TxDOT
- <http://txdotsanantonio.blogspot.com/>
Updates on TxDOT projects
- <http://txdotsanantonio.blogspot.com/>
Track TxDOT projects
- <https://www.sanantonio.gov/2017Bond>
Bond tracking page

Code & Covenant Corner

Reminders of Municipal Code and Whispering Oaks Covenant requirements that apply to every property regardless of WOHA membership status.

How to Report Campers, Trailers, and Stagnant Vehicles

Most residents are aware that the City has restrictions on how long vehicles and trailers can be parked on our streets, but not everyone realizes that the Whispering Oaks Community Covenants also have special restrictions regarding on-property parking. Reporting a violation depends upon which rule is being violated.



City ordinances mandate that vehicles and trailers parked on the street must be moved within 24 hours. The City also restricts campers being used as habitation while parked on the street. Residents who spot these types of violations on the street should dial 311 and file a report, which can be done anonymously.

But when it comes to vehicles and trailers parked on a private property, City ordinances aren't the only rules to consider, and that can make reporting violations a bit more complex. City ordinances restrict some types of stagnant vehicles sitting in driveways and they also prohibit any vehicle from being parked on grass. But while the City does not prohibit most trailers or campers from being parked in a driveway, our Covenants don't allow them even for short periods.

So what's the easiest way to report a potential vehicle or trailer violation in our neighborhood? Start by dialing 311, which will promptly dispatch appropriate City staff to investigate issues that violate the law. Feel free to share the case number with WOHA, who will help monitor resolution of select violations. But if the City attendant says the issue doesn't violate a City ordinance, be sure to drop WOHA a message via our website to determine if it's a Covenant violation that only our volunteers can address.

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Garden Club Report

It Bees That Way Sometimes

The Whispering Oaks Garden Club is gearing up for our August-through-May agenda of programs and parties. Wow, have we really missed all that! President Pamela Harrison Martínez and her board of officers want to start off with an August evening of conversation, drinks, and dinner for members, spouses, and guests. It is never too late to become a WOGC member. If interested, call Pamela at 210-219-8683.

In the meantime, let's think about the birds and the bees. They are among our oh-so-vital pollinators. Please do all you can for the survival of hummingbirds, bats, honey bees, native bees, butterflies, moths, wasps, beetles, and even common house flies. Learn what to plant in your yard for spring to fall blooms.

In particular, avoid the use of insecticides. It has been estimated that one of every three bites of food we eat is there thanks to the work of a pollinator. For lots of good guidance, visit gardenstylesa@saws.org and the Pollinator Partnership websites. Then go ahead and celebrate Pollinator Week, June 21-27, 2021.

*"Someone is sitting in the shade today
because someone planted a tree a long time ago."*
—Warren Buffett

*"Ah, summer, what power you have to make us suffer
and like it."*
—Russell Baker

*"There's a huge temptation to fix a garden in one point in time
and to see it as an installation—that certain plants flower at
certain times, and they look this way, and that's the way they are.
The truth is, no garden is like that.
They change all the time."*
—Monty Don

And now for a woman's perspective,
and not just any woman, but Emily Dickinson:

*"Inebriate of air am I,
And debauchee of dew,
Reeling, through endless summer days,
From inns of molten blue."*

In Memorium

During this terrible epidemic, let us remember all those—family, friends, and neighbors—who have taken sick and who have died. And, in the Whispering Oaks way, let us be sources of support for those who have survived.



April 2021

Curt & Betty Lezanic
11122 Whisper Willow



May 2021

Bob & Gail Hughlette
11503 Whisper Ledge

**Drive
Like Your
Kids
Live Here.**

**Please
Slow Down!**





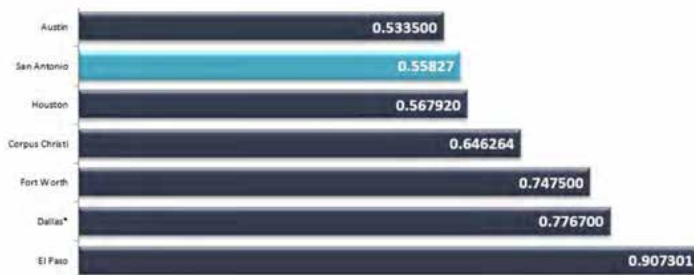
Report on Taxes from Councilman John Courage

In April, most of you should have received your 2021 Notice of Appraised Value from the Bexar Appraisal District. Many of us, including me, pleaded with the State leaders to provide a reprieve in the form of appraisal freezes for purposes of property tax relief. Our pleas fell upon deaf ears. The housing market has seen dramatic increases as a result of lower mortgage interest rates, and families seeking larger single-family homes as a result of working from home. The hot housing market has led to higher appraisal values of property.

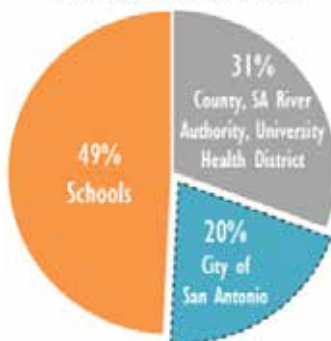
I take my responsibility of financial stewardship of your tax dollars very seriously, which is why I authored and passed the City's first Homestead Tax Exemption back in 2019, which has saved San Antonio taxpayers over \$12 million and counting. But I believe we can do more and am working with my colleagues to increase the exemption because tax relief is key to affordable housing.

The City of San Antonio has the second-lowest property tax rate of all major cities in Texas. We have some of the highest credit ratings, which provide us lower borrowing costs, meaning more funding for infrastructure and other necessities.

FY 2021 Proposed Texas City Property Rate Comparison
(Per \$100 of Taxable Value)



Property Tax Distribution



The City receives less than a quarter of the property tax proceeds that homeowners and commercial property owners pay annually. Nearly half of the property tax proceeds are distributed to school districts, while the remaining amount, minus the City's portion, is divided among Bexar County, Alamo Colleges, University Health

System, and the San Antonio River Authority. In FY 2021, the City will forego \$65.8 million in property tax revenue as a result of the Homestead Exemption, Senior and Disabled Homestead Exemptions, and frozen City property tax payments.

"May Is Bustin' Out All Oh-o-ver!"

With apologies to Rogers and Hammerstein's Carousel, we must say that you just can't keep a good neighborhood down. Despite the ravages of February, come May, the flowers have emerged all over Whispering Oaks. Here's just a taste.





Real Estate Report

February – May 2021

Prepared by Jean Marie Ruffini, Resident Realtor®

	<u>Price</u>	<u>Per Sq. Foot</u>
<u>Active listings – 2</u>		
High	\$395,000	\$158
Low	\$248,000	\$135
<u>Pending listings – 1</u>		
	\$415,000	\$134
<u>Sold listings – 11</u>		
High	\$430,000	\$164
Median	\$355,000	\$144
Low	\$220,000	\$112

“San Antonio and its surrounding areas experienced a 16% increase in March’s home sales compared to March 2020.

The average price of a home sold in the area for March was \$316,971 with a median price of \$268,500.

The inventory of available homes in the San Antonio area plummeted to 1.3 months in March, according to the San Antonio Board of Realtors, well below the six months of supply typically considered a balance between buyers and sellers.”

—SABOR

Whispering Oaks-Gate?



No scandal, just some necessary replacement work. Seems that the space between homes off of Lockhill-Selma and near Whisper Path had a broken gate that was intended to discourage selfish people from dumping trash there. So the WOHA Board decided it should replace the gate.

Pictured is Luis Rangel, of Rangel Masonry, getting the job done for Whispering Oaks. He also did the repairs on the perimeter wall. So he’s our go-to guy.

Wanna Read Sumpin’ Funny? 🤔

The math professor is explaining to his class the basics of positives and negatives. He tells the class, “Two negatives can make a positive, but two positives cannot make a negative.”

Then the wag in the last row—you know the type—responds, “Yeh, right!”

Un Chiste en Español

Un policía le pregunta al ladrón, “Usted, ¿por qué le robó el reloj a la señora?”

Y el ladrón contesta, “Yo no le robé ningún reloj. Ella me lo dio.”

“En qué momento ella le dio el reloj?”

“En el momento en que le mostré la pistola.”

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LEAVING AN ANIMAL INSIDE A CLOSED VEHICLE IS ILLEGAL.

If you see a pet in danger,
please call 3-1-1.



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
ANIMAL CARE SERVICES
DEPARTMENT



Published and distributed by:
Neighborhood News, Inc.
3740 Colony Drive Suite LL100
San Antonio, TX 78230
(210) 558-3160 * (210) 558-3163 fax

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