

The Whispers

Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the Whispering Oaks Homeowners Association Published by Neighborhood News, Inc.

Community Leaders Concerned as City Curtails Boarding House Oversight



As Whispering Oaks residents adjust to a new sober living facility which opened last summer on the community's east side, WOHA learned that a nearby subdivision has been grappling with multiple group homes for several years, and that local leaders speculate dozens of residential group homes are operating with little regulatory oversight due to recent city staffing reductions.

San Antonio's Boarding House ordinance was established in response to a 1998 fire in which five disabled seniors perished in a poorly managed suburban group home. A similar tragedy occurred in 2012. The victims fell into a category of care that isn't regulated by the state whose staff only oversee facilities catering to clients whose disability is profound enough to qualify for skilled care typically funded by Medicaid in an assisted living facility.

But clients with less severe disabilities often end up in small Boarding Homes. Allowed to operate in residential dwellings, these businesses cater to clients who are reasonably self-sufficient but benefit from a structured living environment providing room, board and non-skilled support. In the wake of the tragedies, San Antonio's ordinance aimed to oversee such facilities because state regulators do not.

Until recently, four full-time City staffers were reportedly tasked with permitting and inspecting all Boarding Homes. However that headcount has been reassigned in part because staff struggled to identify more than a handful of qualifying facilities. Just seven group homes are currently permitted, and several listed on the City website are already licensed by the state anyway. Community leaders say they'd gladly identify the dozens of group homes operating within their subdivisions

so staff can verify if the local regulations should have been applied long ago.

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THIS NEWSLETTER MAY CEASE TO EXIST

Future issues of The Whispers will be in jeopardy unless a new project manager is found to coordinate the subdivision newsletter. The volunteer's role is simple: gather articles from various contributors every two months; forward them to the publisher who handles graphic layout and printing; proof the final draft so it can be mailed. Writing actual content isn't required, only basic computer skills are necessary, and the task takes only a few hours on your schedule. If you'd like to lend a hand keeping our community informed, please leave a message for WOHA at 210-951-9966.



2026 WOHA Membership Drive

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San Antonio TX 78230

Please Mail by February 1st

- I'll do my part! My check for the \$149 annual household dues is enclosed.
- I'll do a bit more! Additional \$ _____ included supports the WOHA Capital Fund.

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(Continued from page 1)

San Antonio's ordinance includes provisions limiting Boarding Home occupancy to six clients and requiring half a mile separation between facilities. But in recent years Oak Meadow, a small subdivision off NW Military, has acquired four group homes for mentally disabled adults, and at least one operator has announced plans to open additional. Homeowners say the facilities merit oversight.

They claim last spring one client reportedly wandered off and was later found dead in a neighbor's yard. SAPD acknowledges wandering from facilities intended to be secured is not uncommon and disoriented clients are routinely retrieved from a shopping plaza near the subdivision. The frequency has caused some officers to know clients by name.

Oak Meadow's leaders are perplexed why the proximity provision hasn't shielded the subdivision from receiving more than its fair share of facilities. It's a fate that worries WOHA President Peter Lund. "Residents can't easily verify if a nearby facility is being overseen by the state, the city, or has simply fallen through the cracks" he says. State Senator Jose Menendez, who authored the legislation enabling municipalities to regulate Boarding Homes, called for a better local tracking system over a decade ago, but there's increasing skepticism that San Antonio ever got a firm grasp on the sector.

Lund points to one type of Boarding Home that has flourished relatively unregulated. Sober Homes arguably fall under the ordinance because the legislation does not discern between categories of disability. Addiction is recognized as a disability under federal law, although Texas regulates surprisingly few Sober Homes which has left many municipalities exposed. But it doesn't appear San Antonio has ever sought to regulate the facilities which provide room and board to clients in a manner similar to other Boarding Homes, albeit on a shorter term basis.

Exploitation of vulnerable clients seeking recovery has become an issue of growing concern nationwide and several states have shuttered poorly managed and fraudulent facilities. Sober Homes are widely regarded as the most prevalent type of Boarding Home and also the most potentially problematic. Dozens currently operate across San Antonio with no governmental oversight, and without clear guard rails and reliable enforcement in

place, Lund says a subdivision could easily find itself with multiple operating concurrently.

WOHA continues to lobby city leaders to recognize the phrasing of the longstanding local ordinance already applies, and District 9 is drafting potential amendments to make Sober Home inclusion more clear. Councilwoman Misty Spears will address the issue as the keynote speaker at the association's Annual Membership Meeting on Saturday, January 24. WOHA members in good standing will receive notice of meeting location and time.

Experts say a sober home's permanence could hinge on how well it is managed and that the facilities aren't immune to management issues. Last month, the Wall St Journal reported the lucrative addiction treatment sector can generate thousands in revenue per client, per day. That potential for high profits has attracted some unscrupulous operators who exploit vulnerable clients and deny them meaningful support services to minimize operational costs. In some cases, house managers have been accused of incentivizing prolonged stays to rack up insurance billings.

The number of national fraud cases remains relatively small and Lund says Best Days eviction of a client violating its rules is a good sign even if the process could have been handled better to avoid the man wandering the subdivision impaired. Day-to-day house management is critical because government regulation and oversight of sober homes can be lax, particularly if the operator accepts only direct payments or private insurance. Most of the Texas state-level regulations apply to only to operators which receive taxpayer funding via public programs such as Medicare.

Lund says WOHA will continue to press for sober homes to be confirmed under the existing local ordinance and believes the lengthy regulation was developed with the most potentially disruptive types of facilities in mind.

But if city leaders determine sober homes are exempt, he says WOHA will lobby for amendments. However he warns that cumbersome process would work its way toward a Council vote slowly and existing facilities could be exempted from some types of new regulations in the end.

The Whispers



Most non-advertising content in The Whispers is provided by the Whispering Oaks Homeowners Association which can be reached via email (board@whisperingoaks.org) or its website (whisperingoaks.org)

Advertising concerns or inquiries should be directed to publisher Neighborhood News at 210-558-3160

A Whispering Oaks Winter Wonderland

A parachuting Santa over a giant gift box, a manger scene with a life-sized angel, and a red and green “HO-HO-HO” all contributed to the festive displays among our Whispering Oaks neighbors in the annual Holiday Home Decorating Contest. Thanks to all who participated and volunteers who helped determine this year’s winners!

Grand Prize: The Garza family at 11223 Whisper Falls

Runner Ups: The Russell family at 2731 Oak Bluff & the Carden Family at 11226 Whisper Spring



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Saturday, February 7, 2026**

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

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Founded in 2013, The Eleanor Kolitz Hebrew Language Academy is a free public school located in Northeast San Antonio. EKHLA raises the bar in public education by providing strong academic and behavioral standards, as well as teaching impactful core values. EKHLA's core values are Support, Passion, Integrity & Honesty, Respect & Acceptance, Curiosity, Creativity, and Learning and "Repairing the World". With a total enrollment of under 550, students in grades Kindergarten thru 8th, receive extraordinary support from staff. *Contact registrar@ekhla.org with questions.*

11327 Dreamland | 210-890-7267 | Call for a tour or visit us at www.ekhla.org

New You in the New Year?

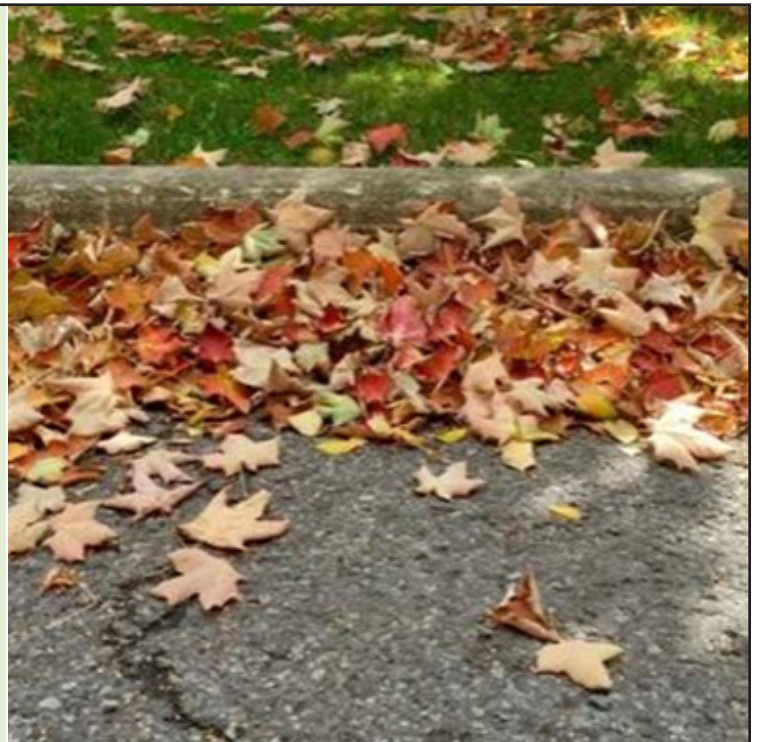
If one of your news year's resolutions is to get more fresh air and exercise, consider joining the dozens of neighbors who regularly stroll our beautiful subdivision. Two popular routes are shown and each is just over a mile in length. Those with stamina can use the creek bridge to conquer both!



Upcoming Green Waste Pickup Day

Our community's winter brush collection day will be in mid-January. Please keep in mind:

- ✓ Only brush such as tree trimmings, shrubs and organic material will be collected.
- ✓ All debris should be stacked within 8 ft of the curb and not underneath low tree branches.
- ✓ Avoiding blocking mailboxes or placing piles near parked cars.
- ✓ Debris in plastic bags will not be collected.
- ✓ Leaves in paper bags can be scheduled for pick up by a separate crew upon request via 311.
- ✓ It is illegal to blow leaves into the street and homeowners are responsible to supervise crews they hire.



New Tree Care Rules in Effect

Winter is the ideal time to trim trees, but be aware of new community rules that affect the vast majority of properties:

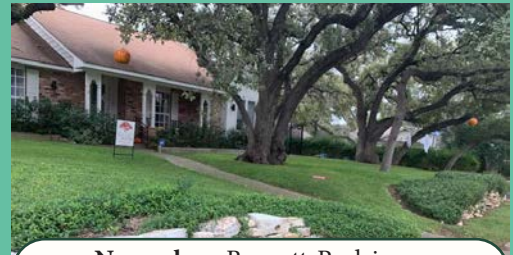


- Dead or dying trees must be removed and stumps visible from the street ground to soil level.
- Intentional cuts to Oaks should be made before Feb 1 and sealed within 30 minutes.
- Notify adjoining properties promptly if Oak Wilt is discovered.

Update your Email to Stay in the Loop

In an effort to reduce operating costs, WOHA is relying more heavily on emails to contact homeowners with subdivision alerts. Both members and non-members are urged to submit their preferred emails via whisperingoaks.org to ensure our records are up to date. Simply visit the website's Directory page.

Yard of the Month



November- Burnett-Rodriguez
11419 Whisper Valley

AL 307375, MC 104649

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"If I had a flower
for every time I
thought of you ... I
could walk through
my garden forever."
Alfred Lord
Tennyson

Whispering Oaks Garden Club



A new year brings a new schedule of events for our garden club to serve, learn, and socialize. January will find us decorating and filling Valentine gift bags with toiletries for the women at the Sarah Roberts French Home. In February, John Henry from Wild Birds Unlimited will teach us all about Purple Martins.

March is the month for the annual Quad-Club luncheon. The Point Bluff Social Club will host this year. March 21 is the San Antonio Garden Center annual plant sale. Our members will be involved in selling, and, of course, buying plants. This sale is open to the public 9 am – 4 pm at 3310 N. New Braunfels Ave.

Please feel free to join us or contact WOGC via email to: whisperingoaksgardenclub@gmail.com .



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 An advertisement for Whisper Path Cellars featuring a hand holding a wine glass filled with red wine. The background is a bokeh of warm lights. The text includes the winery name, a description, contact information, and a QR code.

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New Years in San Antonio

San Antonio offers a variety of activities to ring in the New Year, from free downtown festivities with fireworks to elegant dining experiences and family-friendly events.

New Year's Eve Activities in San Antonio

Here are some popular options for celebrating New Year's Eve in San Antonio:

- **Celebrate SA! at Hemisfair:** The city's official, free New Year's Eve celebration takes place downtown around Hemisfair, La Villita, and Market Street. It features live music, food and drink vendors, carnival games, and culminates in a spectacular midnight fireworks show that lights up the Tower of the Americas.
- **Dining on the River Walk:** Many River Walk restaurants, such as Biga on the Banks and Paesanos Riverwalk, offer special multi-course (prix-fixe) New Year's Eve dinners. Reservations are highly recommended for these popular spots.
- **Rooftop Parties:** Upscale hotel and bar venues like The Moon's Daughters, the observation deck at the Tower of the Americas, and the Hyatt Regency offer ticketed parties with panoramic city views and excellent vantage points for watching the fireworks.
- **Family-Friendly Daytime Events:** Families with young children can enjoy "Noon Year's Eve" events at The DoSeum or LEGOLAND Discovery Center, which include early countdowns, balloon drops, crafts, and games so little ones can celebrate without staying up late.
- **Theme Park Celebrations:** Six Flags Fiesta Texas hosts a "Rockin' New Year's Celebration" through early January, featuring festive entertainment, rides, and its own significant 360-degree fireworks display at midnight on NYE.
- **Live Music & Nightlife:** Various venues across the city, including Howl at the Moon on the River Walk and live music spots, host special parties with bands, DJs, and dancing that last until the early hours of New Year's Day.

San Antonio provides diverse options to welcome the New Year, catering to various preferences. The centerpiece is the free "Celebrate SA!" event held in the Hemisfair district, offering a vibrant atmosphere with live entertainment, food, and the city's main fireworks display at midnight, all set against the backdrop of the Tower of the Americas.

For those seeking a more exclusive experience, numerous hotels and venues along the iconic River Walk host gourmet dining events. Restaurants like Biga on the Banks offer exquisite prix-fixe menus, while rooftop lounges provide ticketed access to unparalleled skyline views of the midnight spectacle.

Families are not left out, with daytime "Noon Year's Eve" countdowns at children's attractions like The DoSeum, ensuring younger guests can join the celebration fun. Whether one prefers a lively downtown block party, a sophisticated dinner, or a thrilling theme park celebration at Six Flags Fiesta Texas, San Antonio has a memorable way to ring in the New Year.

Recipe Corner

STICKY HONEY-GLAZED TURKEY CROWN



Ingredients:

- 4.4 lbs (approx. 2kg) turkey crown on the bone
- 3.5 tbsp softened butter (approx. 50g)
- 1/4 cup honey (4 tbsp)
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp Chinese five spice (or a pinch of ground cloves)
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar
- Salt and black pepper for seasoning

Directions:

1. **Prep the turkey:** Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C). Smear the softened butter all over the turkey crown and season well with salt and half of the five spice powder.
2. **Initial roast:** Place the turkey in a roasting pan, skin-side up, and roast for 30 minutes.
3. **Make the glaze:** While the turkey is roasting, mix the honey, Dijon mustard, red wine vinegar, and the remaining five spice in a small bowl.
4. **Glaze and continue roasting:** Remove the turkey from the oven and brush half of the glaze generously over the skin. Return the turkey to the oven and continue to roast for another hour, applying the rest of the glaze twice more during this time, until the turkey is cooked through and the glaze is sticky and caramelized.
5. **Rest and serve:** Once cooked, remove the turkey from the oven and let it rest for at least 20 minutes before carving. Save the juices from the pan to make a simple gravy if desired.



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 San Antonio, TX 78230-3500

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Time Dated

Be Ready! Winter Weather

Weatherproof your home to protect against the cold.

- Install a smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector in your home.
- Have your chimney or flue inspected every year.
- Make sure the batteries are working!
- Insulate walls and attic.
- Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows.

Check out more tips on winter weather indoor safety.

- Never leave lit candles or other flames unattended.
- Bring your pets indoors as temperatures drop!

Prepare yourself for exposure to winter weather.

- Dress warmly and limit exposure to the cold to prevent frostbite.
- Avoid getting wet to prevent hypothermia.

If power lines are down, call your local utility and emergency services

If power lines fall on your car, warn people not to touch the car or power lines.

Make sure your car is ready for winter travel.

- Check antifreeze level and have radiator system serviced.
- Replace worn tires and check tire air pressure.
- Keep gas tank full to avoid ice in tank and fuel lines.
- Make a winter emergency kit to keep in your car.