

# The Whispers

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

## November Yard of the Month

The Meltons  
11719 Whisper Dew



## Didja Like the Last Issue's Being in COLOR?

We can do it again. But we need *your* help. Frankly, we can't afford to do *every* issue in color, though we would like to. But we could if you and your neighbors joined the Homeowner's Association. Honestly, if you can afford to live in Whispering Oaks, can't you afford \$125?—not only to publish *The Whispers* in color but, more importantly, to help keep up our historic neighborhood.

Every year, to keep the neighborhood up, it costs about \$50,000. There are electricity, water, gardening, and repairs. And improvements—such as lighting the entranceways for safety and attractiveness—cost still more.

Please do your part! They're about the cheapest homeowner's dues in the area. Please send a check to WOHA / P.O. Box 780454 / SA, TX 78278 or pay on line at [whisperingoaks.org](http://whisperingoaks.org). And thank you!



JOIN US FOR THE  
Whispering Oaks

## ANNUAL HOLIDAY SOCIAL

“BYOB”  
December 14, 2019  
6:30-8:30 p.m.

Adante Club House  
2702 Cembalo Boulevard  
San Antonio, TX 78230

Please R.S.V.P. by December 10, 2019 to  
Debra Esparza @ [desparza45@yahoo.com](mailto:desparza45@yahoo.com) or  
text @ 210.843.0365 Checks can be dropped off at 11527 Whisper Breeze  
\$20.00/person



### Go Ahead...

## Trim Those Live Oaks

**But not after January!** Please, no trimming between February and June. And absolutely be sure that your trimming company is licensed by the City and that they paint all cuts within 30 minutes. Any old spray paint will do. Failure to conform to these rules is actionable!



2019 - 2020

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## Simon Sez



It's amazing how quickly this year has passed, but I'm thankful for the many positives of our neighborhood. As I look back at our past Board's accomplishments, I am proud of what our leadership under Sylvia Romo accomplished. With my theme being "Community" for our neighborhood, the goal for me and our Board is to continue our growth of our HOA membership, a key to our continued success.

Your Board's goals for our Whispering Oaks are what is important to you, our neighbors: (1) The completing of our lighting at our entrances, with the left side of the Whisper Bow entrance to be complete in early December. This will give us three entrances completed, at Whisper Sound, Whisper Wind, and now Whisper Bow. (2) We are reviewing some much-needed repairs at the WOHA-owned brick wall between Whisper Bow and Whisper Willow. While this will be a somewhat costly repair, it must be done. (3) We need to clean our brick marquees at each entrance that also need some repair. (4) We must trim back the low-hanging branches at some of our entranceways. (5) And there is the ongoing Oak Wilt problem. These projects are both short and long term.

I am also pleased that we have renegotiated our lawn maintenance contract, which will save us some money while continuing to maintain our beautiful common areas. We have some landscaping to do at our entrances, which we have budgeted for.

On an interpersonal level, we are working on some Community events for the upcoming year. Even more so, a Board initiative is to get out to meet more of you. As part of our membership drive, we will be coming out to visit with many of you to have you become more a part of our HOA community. I ask those of you who are not members to please join our HOA to help us achieve our goals. Please see the attached insert for ways to pay.

My last thought, with the Holidays approaching, is a note on Henry Wooten, who lives next to us and who personifies a true neighbor. For the 21 years my family has lived in Whispering Oaks, Henry has always lent us a hand, given words of encouragement, and kept a positive spirit. As a dues-paying HOA member for over 35 years, he thereby helps us keep the neighborhood "yard" up, while he keeps his own yard beautiful. We always have had our yard competition in our own funny way, so when I would get lazy about cutting my yard, I would hear his lawnmower. That gets me motivated! He is always a friendly heart who shares great talks and who remains a friend to our neighbors who both live on and walk along our street.

Henry is now in his late 80s and somewhat struggling, so I don't see him out much these days. Our talks and his positive spirit are always with me. "Henry, how are you doing today?" "Well, fair to middlin'"—his normal good-ole Texas boy answer! Happy Holidays to you, Henry, and to all Whispering Oaks Community! Be safe!

Respectfully submitted,

**Simon Esparza**

President

A quotation that applies to a community:

*"Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."*

— John F. Kennedy

## One Final "Romo Report"

# Passing the Torch

It has been an honor and a pleasure to have served as the Whispering Oaks Homeowner's Association President for the last two years (2017–2019). I sincerely thank all of you for your support and confidence in my leadership. During this period, with the Board members and the volunteer residents working together, we accomplished much and kept our community safe and beautiful.

At the WOHA annual meeting on September 29th, Simon Esparza was elected President, along with new Board members. My watch has ended and the torch has been passed. But much still needs to be done. I encourage the residents to become actively involved and support Simon and the WOHA Board. Be a part of keeping Whispering Oaks a special place to live and making it even better.

Respectfully,

Sylvia S. Romo



## Letter to the Editor



I read frequent complaints on the "Nextdoor Whispering Oaks" net about speeders on Whisper Valley. I don't know the solution; there are already two speed bumps on that road. However, the speed limit in our area is **30 mph**. According to my research, CoSA authorizes us a speed limit sign at each entrance to Whispering Oaks. Perhaps WOHA could pressure our Councilman for their installation. Most people don't know that the default limit for all roads is 30 mph unless posted differently, so they have to be reminded.

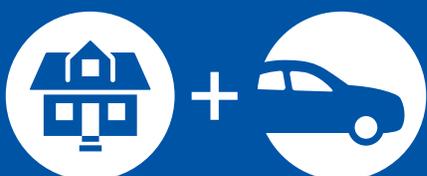
If it's not already being done, I suggest that a Board Member monitor the Next-door net and respond where appropriate. Let people know what WOHA does and maybe we can get more members.

**Sam Fisher**

*Note: Sam is a past President of WOHA.*

*Note: The Whispers will accept and is eager to publish Letters to the Editor. They should be grammatical and be constructive in both tone and substance.*

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## What Do You Get for \$125 Dues a Year?

1. Provides routine maintenance of the common areas that most of us take for granted: landscaping, watering, lighting, repairs.
2. Invests in our neighborhood with upgrades, such as permanent entrance lighting and seasonal decor that make WO a safer and more attractive community others want to move into, which keeps your home value up.
3. Creates an influential advocate on issues that threaten property values and quality of life: traffic, crime, zoning, city services, property-code violations.
4. Provides a voice to help resolve neighbor-to-neighbor conflicts and helps ensure compliance with WO and City codes.
5. Safeguards residents from costly problems: insurances, oak wilt.
6. Creates a connected, informed community: newsletter, directory, social events.

If you can afford to live in Whispering Oaks, can't you afford just \$125 a year to protect that investment?

From Councilman John Courage

# Councilman Courage on SAWS



My office has received numerous complaints from District 9 residents regarding high water bills from SAWS. I hear you and share your concerns. In 2017 I voted against the last SAWS rate increase request and have urged SAWS to live within their means without further rate hikes.

SAWS again has announced plans to come to Council by the end of the year to request a rate increase as high as 13.7%! A previous Council pre-authorized five years of rate increases in the water-supply category up to a certain amount. In 2020, that amount is up to 9.9%, which would go into effect on 1 January 2020. I am skeptical of any rate increase SAWS plans to bring before the Council.

Many ratepayers are still unclear exactly how their bills are calculated. In 2015, the Citizens Rate Advisory committee proposed eight different tiers of residential rates. As one

uses more water, they jump into higher tiers. If one happens to jump to the highest tier, that will cost nearly six times the amount of water in the lowest tier. As a result, we are seeing doubling and tripling of average bills

A Citizens Rate Advisory committee is formed every five years to review and recommend rates and structures. The newly formed Committee recently held its first public meeting. The committee is comprised of 20 community members. Each Council District is allotted one appointment, while the rest of the committee is made up of stakeholders. I have appointed Joe Yakubik, an electrical engineer and retired Lt. Col. from the U.S. Air Force, who has also been critical of SAWS' rate structures. Mr. Yakubik is volunteering his time and expertise to take a deep dive into the balance sheet of SAWS and future rates. A meeting was to be held on 15 October.

I will continue to fight for reasonable rates and for the people of San Antonio. SAWS is owned by the City, making the ratepayer a shareholder. If you have additional concerns, please contact our office at [district9@sanantonio.gov](mailto:district9@sanantonio.gov) or 210-207-0955.

Usage	Rate/100gals.	Water Supply Fee
2,992	\$0.0740	\$0.1040
4,489	0.1295	0.1819
5,985	0.1665	0.2338
7,481	0.2034	0.2859
10,473	0.2405	0.3379
14,962	0.2775	0.3899
20,199	0.3329	0.4678
Over 20,199	0.4809	0.6756

**Subsequent note:** I received word from SAWS executives that they will no longer be requesting the projected 13.7% rate increase and will only implement the pre-approved 9.9% rate increase for water supply.

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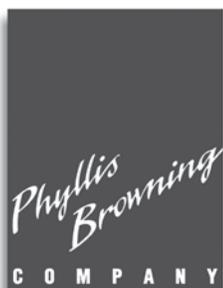
**Mary Jane Bell**

861-9587 (mobile)

829-2520 (office)

[mjbell@phyllisbrowning.com](mailto:mjbell@phyllisbrowning.com)

[www.phyllisbrowning.com](http://www.phyllisbrowning.com)



**Poop!**

Ya don't want it on *your* lawn, so don't leave on others' lawns. And it's the law: Dogs *must* be on leashes.



**We are on Facebook!**

@WhisperingOaksHomeownersAssociationSA

Like us for great neighborhood information and updates.

## Board Member Spurs Community Blood Drive

This year, it became apparent to WOHA Board Member Debra Esparza that as a community of families, it's important to have a thriving local blood supply that ensures that the people we see every day, the people we care about the most—family, friends, neighbors, coworkers—have access to life-saving blood when they need it. The local blood supply is a shared community resource that bonds us all. A blood donation is a great way to give back to our community and have a positive impact on the health of family and neighbors. In fact, a one-time donation can save the lives of up to three people! And there is a constant need.

For Deb, sponsoring her first community blood drive was very rewarding. She extends thanks to those who came out and rolled up a sleeve for patients in need, who came out to help build morale and camaraderie as neighbors and friends of our community! She extends thanks, as well, to the community business owners and leaders who donated door prizes for the blood drive:

Sergio's Hair Salon; Stamped Cards Class, by Cheryl Perry; Over The Top Designs, by Donna Sadders, who donated

a large Spurs wreath, a small Spurs wreath, and a fall door wreath; a wine & cheese basket by Realtor® Debra Esparza herself; owner/chef Pamela Steger of Steger's Chiffonade; Boutique on Basse, by Cynthia Sue, who donated a large fall door wreath; a Cross Writing pen gift set, by Realtor® Debra Esparza; Halloween decorations in a bag, by Salon Beatriz; and, lastly, our local Boy Scout Daniel Lewandowski, who worked on earning his Medicine Merit Badge by volunteering to serve his community with a great attitude and a serving heart!



### I'm Sorry!

Last month, your editor inserted a brief thank-you note for our outgoing president, Sylvia Romo—who, despite being next-door neighbors, he managed to call her Sylvia Ramos. Ah, the best laid plans of mice and men...

Come see us...

# Santa has a Gift for You!

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Happy Holidays,  
Santa

\*On select cottages

✓ Mark your calendars!

For Independence Hill Breakfast and Tour of Homes  
Thursday, January 30, 2020 at 9:00am.

## Oak Wilt—Part 2 of 3

# FAQs from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

## Management (Trenching and Injections)

### How effective are trenches?

Since the inception of the Oak Wilt Suppression Program in 1988, the Texas A&M Forest Service has assisted landowners in installing over 4 million feet of trenches, following program protocols, with a success rate of approximately 74%. Protocols include placing trenches at least 100 feet beyond symptomatic trees, excavated to a minimum depth of 4 feet, and having at least 1 non-symptomatic tree between the infection and the trench. When trenches fail to contain the disease, they were either not placed far enough from the infection or were not cut deep enough, resulting in remaining root connections that are still linking the diseased side to the protected side.

### How effective are injection treatments?

Properly injected trees, which do not currently show any Oak Wilt symptoms, but are in the vicinity of the disease, will have the highest success rate—reaching 80-90%—using the approved fungicides and the macro-infusion method. The success rate decreases drastically depending on the severity of the crown loss in the tree and the amount of visibly symptomatic leaves. Approximately 10–20% of Live Oaks survive Oak Wilt with no treatment. Note: surviving trees (both treated and untreated) may show significant canopy loss, but remain alive.

### Will injections stop the spread of Oak Wilt?

No. Most of the fungicide moves up into the tree, rather than into the roots. There is not enough fungicide in the roots to provide a sufficient barrier to disease movement; therefore, the fungus still has the opportunity to travel in the unprotected root system to adjacent trees.

### Are “alternative” Oak Wilt treatments as effective as trenching and injections?

We don't know. Current treatment recommendations are based on years of research from USDA Forest Service, universities, other state agencies and years of experience managing this disease. We can provide a landowner with realistic expectation of results using current treatment protocols. We can only recommend products that are legal to use; labeled and registered for Oak Wilt. We can only recommend delivery methods based on research results. If hiring vendors to treat trees, those vendors must be licensed through Texas Department of Agriculture. One must have a thorough understanding of the fungus, the trees, and how

they interact and any treatment must increase the survival rate compared to what occurs in the natural population (10–20% survival). Unless these criteria are met, we do not know the success of alternatives.

### Can/should I inject Red Oaks? What about White Oaks?

Although uncommon, Oaks can form root grafts between differing species and it is possible for Red or White Oaks to contract the disease from the other through these connections. Depending on the value of the tree and proximity to the disease, injecting Red or White Oaks may be warranted. Note: it is more common to inject Live Oaks (which are White Oaks) due to the fact their root systems are frequently grafted together.

### How often do I need to treat my trees?

It depends on the progression of the disease in that area. For best results, trees should be evaluated every 18–24 months for new Oak Wilt symptoms and re-treated if necessary. In most cases, trees are initially treated, then re-injected two years later.

### Can I just push the trees over/cut them down instead of trenching?

No. Live Oaks have vast, interconnected root systems that stretch for hundreds of feet in all directions. Pushing or cutting trees causes very little if any root disruption, and the fungus can still live in the roots without the tree present. This method was tried at the onset of the discovery of the disease and proven ineffective.

### Can I inject the trees myself?

Yes. The fungicide is not a restricted-use pesticide. A pesticide applicators license is not required to purchase the fungicide to you treat your own trees; however, you cannot treat trees for money, goods, or services for others. Learn how to treat trees by watching an instructional video at our website. If you are not confident with the treatment process, there are arborists who have specific training and experience with Oak Wilt injections.

### Where can I find the fungicide and equipment?

Many arborists and vendors sell the fungicide and equipment. Some rent equipment. You can find results on our vendor page or by doing a quick internet search using keywords like “Oak Wilt injection kits” and “Oak Wilt fungicide.”

### Who do you recommend for trenching, injections, removals, etc.?

As a government agency, the Texas A&M Forest Service cannot make vendor recommendations. Learn how to hire an arborist to make sure you are making the right choice, then find local Oak Wilt vendors in your area.

<https://texasoakwilt.org/faqs/>



## Real Estate Report September–November 2019

Prepared by *Jean Marie Ruffini*  
Resident Realtor®

	<u>Sales Price</u>	<u>Per Sq. Foot</u>
<b>Total Sales 7</b>		
Highest Price	\$392,500	\$150
Lowest Price	\$230,000	\$101
Median Price	\$345,000	\$130
Average DOM 51		

### Currently Active 6

Highest Price	\$405,000	\$175
Lowest Price	\$225,000	\$108
Median Price	\$315,000	\$124

San Antonio home sales leveled out after the summer boom, but remained at record highs for this time of the year. A total of 1,986 homes were sold in September, an 8.2% year over year increase. The average sales price of a home in the county increased 5.7% to \$258,873, and the median price rose 6.1% to \$225,000. ~SABOR

## Wanna Get Rid of Some Stuff?

Do you have leftovers from a yard or rummage sale that you would like to donate to a worthwhile organization?

Arms of Hope is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization focused on extending a hand to disadvantaged children and single-mother families in our society by providing shelter, necessities, and life skills at their greatest point of need.

Arms of Hope will pick up clothes, household goods, trinkets, knickknacks, small appliances (coffee pots, toaster ovens, blenders, etc.), and even small furniture in good-to-fair condition.

For more information on your pick-up dates, please call. Or if you have a weekend in mind that is already scheduled, call to book the date: 210-733-8888.



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# Happy Holidays

May the peace and joy of the season stay with you all year long.

*From the Board of Directors*



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## WO Garden Club Report

# Big Doings This Fall

The Whispering Oaks Garden Club began preparation for the holiday season with expert floral designer Adrianna Pedrosa presenting “Floral Elegance in Thanksgiving Decorations” at the November 21st meeting in the home of Mary Ann Cruz. Leti Brown will be accepting cash and gift donations for the women residents at the Sarah Roberts French Home until 15 December. The SRFH, a nursing home on Texas Avenue near Woodlawn Lake, is the Garden Club’s regular service project recipient.

On December 4, Garden Club members sold items at the annual Holiday Arts and Crafts Event at the San Antonio Garden Center located at 3310 N. New Braunfels. For this sale, gift items were donated by the “craft” members. For more information, please contact Leti Brown at 210-861-0434.

Our annual holiday luncheon was scheduled for Thursday, December 5, at Club Giraud. This is always a delightful and delicious gathering for members and their guests. More about this next issue!

Yard of the Month honors were awarded to the McCullough family at 2834 Whisper Path for October and the Melton family at 11719 Whisper Dew for November.



*All the Garden Club gang at the Sandy Oaks Olive Orchard in Elmendorf.*



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