

SYDNEY HARBOUR

News For The Residents at Sydney Harbour • May 2015 Volume 3, Issue 5



SYDNEY HARBOUR VALENTINE'S PARTY



The Sydney Harbour Valentine's Party was a wonderful success with fun had by all. A big thank you goes to our Events Committee and all residents who helped make this event fun. Please see all pictures on the Sydney Harbour website at sydneyharbourhoa.org.

Music was provided by Tristan Goonie with Caribbean Rhythms DJ Services. The games were fun. The food was catered by Adriatic Cafe Italian Grill. A special "thank you" goes out to Virginia Carlton who made the Italian cream cake and Leesha Christensen who made the heart cookies.

[More Photos on Page 5!](#)

HAZARDS OF FEEDING DUCKS

As many of you may have noticed the Tree Ducks, also known as Mexican Whistlers, have returned to Sydney Harbour in ever increasing numbers each year, while our Mallards have decreased. They appear to be most prevalent in the area of 10-12 homes surrounding where homeowners feed these wild birds. While observing the ducks is enjoyable and feeding them may even be fun, the majority of homeowners have found them to eventually become quite a nuisance and difficult to get rid of once feeding is started. The mess, along with the health hazards to the ducks, additional wildlife, pets and even humans has created frustration, expense, decrease in use of outdoor space and even serious illness among pets in our neighborhood.

Feeding the ducks, according to the US Wildlife and Fisheries Department, the governing body charged with managing waterfowl, can result in several illnesses among the ducks themselves and has resulted in the actual death of large numbers of ducks in some areas when there is an epidemic of disease. When large numbers of ducks congregate in small areas such as our waterways they are often eating and defecating in the same areas. Uneaten food can mold causing illness and attracts rodents. Bread is very hazardous to ducks. Large populations concentrated in small areas also encourage competition for food and mates. During the mating season, when there is such competition, males often kill off by drowning the females while fighting for "privileges". It has been observed near Grotto Point that this winter there are 24 male mallards and only one female. Over the past few years many of us have observed the violent deaths of these females. The nesting by the female mallards in our flowerbeds is not just a nuisance and health hazard but unsafe for the ducks. The baby ducks rarely survive due to turtles, large fish, dogs and cats and rodents, despite the efforts many of our residents go through trying to save them. This is a further indication that ducks are better off when they can nest in areas that are natural habitats...ducks have survived for thousands of years not being fed by humans! And creating dependence on humans for food leads to death by dogs and cats and even automobiles as these creatures lose their natural fear of humans and wander our neighborhoods.

One average duck creates 1/3 lb of feces every day. Multiply that by over 100 counted in one 10-12 home area alone, that is 33 pounds of feces per day being deposited in the water, on our yards, docks, bulkheads, driveways and rooftops. The concentration can result in degradation of the quality of water and increase in algae growth, which is something our HOA dues are paying to prevent. Additionally, the feces can increase the concentration of e coli in the water. While swimming in our waterways is prohibited, many of us enjoy canoeing and kayaking and contact with e coli contaminated water can result in personal illness. Bird feces in general can result in many illnesses including salmonella, giardia, and general bacterial

infection causing gastrointestinal illnesses. You, your children or pet walking outside in areas contaminated by duck feces can actually track it inside your home to your carpet or flooring. There is also anecdotal information that the droppings are highly corrosive and can damage or cause deterioration to any building material including shingles and wood. They may also carry mites and a "bedbug" type insect that can invade our outdoor furniture cushions.

Cleaning up after the ducks that have left unsightly messes on docks and bulkheads is a necessity to keep our community clean and pleasant appearing. However the CDC has strict guidelines for how to safely clean bird feces which involves wearing protective clothing, a mask and even a respirator when there is a large concentration of droppings. Spores from the feces that can be infected with histoplasmosis can travel for long distances and when inhaled, can cause a serious respiratory fungal infection. Those most susceptible include infants and children, people with compromised immune systems such as those undergoing chemotherapy, those with asthma or respiratory diseases and the elderly.

Jim Steinbaugh, the Special Agent with the US Fish and Wildlife Department says that the most effective deterrent to nuisance ducks is to STOP FEEDING them. They will eventually move on to natural food sources. It is illegal to feed them in common areas and common waterways. Deterrents include loud noises, mylar balloons, decoys of predators such as hawks and coyotes and squirting them with a water hose. There are also spike strips that can be placed along the bulkhead and dock but are costly and they can easily fly over them. Consistency is the key as well as daily relocation of visual deterrents. And in some cases, the roosting takes place over night in which case most of us are asleep. But he also states that once the ducks become accustomed to your deterrents they will return. It appears that resident feeding usually takes place just before dark and early am, so the ducks are waiting at surrounding docks and bulkheads. This would be the prime time to use your deterrents. In special cases where duck populations are determined to be a health hazard by agents such as Mr. Steinbaugh, there are some provisions for eliminating some of the ducks, by permit only. We are very hopeful that would never have to happen.

We live too close together to not be mindful of actions on our own property that impact others. Please do your part by not feeding the ducks...its harmful to people, pets and ducks, its unsightly and can cause damage to our property. Let's keep Sydney Harbour a place where we can live peacefully and safely.

References:

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nas/RDRP/appendices/chapter6/a6-133.pdf>, <http://wildlifecenter.org/sites/default/files/Consequences-of-feeding-wild-ducks-in-public-parks.pdf>, <http://www.liveducks.com/duckbread.html>, <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/feedingwaterfowl.htm>

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since 2014 Annual Meeting

Conducted regular Board of Directors Meetings in May, August, and November with substantial homeowner attendance. First meetings of this type in the history of Sydney Harbour.

Empowered Pool Committee, Lakes Committee, Communications Committee, Deed Restriction Violation Committee, Landscaping Committee, and Events Committee to successfully operate our base business during the transition from a Developer-managed HOA to a Resident-managed HOA.

Appointed the 1st Nominating Committee in Sydney Harbour history. Representation on this committee is in proportion to the number of homes in each of the four sections.

Communication Committee started the Sydney Harbour Facebook page and continued monthly newsletter with coverage of relevant Sydney Harbour issues and HOA Board information updates.

Developed a stronger relationship with the Precinct 4 Constable team that patrols Sydney Harbour such that they share monthly

crime activity reports with our Board.

Delegated approval authority to speed up invoice payments.

Contracted with Reserve Advisors for full Reserve Study of the Sydney Harbour facilities. This study (available on SH website) is guiding our Reserve Fund expenditures.

Approved a Confidentiality, Disclosure of Interest and Acceptance of Gifts Policy for HOA Directors and Committee Chairs / Members.

Approved a Deed Restriction Policy.

Convinced Princeton Homes to correct exterior building for four new homes.

Reduced delinquent assessments for 2014 and earlier year to about \$16,000.

Cleared 936 deed restriction violations in 2014.

Approved a Sydney Harbour Assessment Collections Plan for 2015. As of April 7, 2015, this has reduced the 2015 delinquent assessment fee total to about \$26,000.

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Key Metrics

April 7, 2015

Assessment Delinquencies, 2015 - **\$26,317.91**
Earlier - **\$15,808.07**

Deed Restriction Violations, March 2015 - **496**




Sydney Harbour Real Estate Corner

Activity January 1, 2015– March 31, 2015

Presented by Kathy Emery

	HOME SALES	# OF HOMES	PRICE RANGES
Active	1 Story	4	\$301,000-\$413,498
	2 Story	18	\$255,000-\$500,728
Pending	1 Story	2	\$299,999-\$393,559
	2 Story	1	\$516,537
Sold	1 Story	4	\$215,000-\$289,000
	2 Story	3	\$370,000-\$469,118

This representation is based on data supplied by the Houston Association of Realtors. Neither the Association nor its MLS guarantees is in any way responsible for its accuracy.



ANNUAL POOL OPENING

The Sydney Harbour annual pool opening will take place on Saturday, May 16th, at 10:00 am along with pool registration for new residents.

A fee of \$10.00 per household payable to Sterling ASI will be due if you do not register at the on-site registration or if you elect to have the passes mailed to you. Only new property owners will be exempt from the fee. After May 31st a late fee of \$35 will be charged.

To celebrate the opening, an Ice Cream Social will again be held by the Events Committee from 1:00 pm-3:00 pm. This will be the official first day of the Sydney Harbour pool season, so come out and join the fun.

REMEMBER: You must have a pool pass to come in the pool area.



Hope4Minds Expands its Mission to Support More Texas Children With Severe Brain Injuries

Less than four years after it was founded, a Southwest Austin nonprofit organization has decided that it's got more than enough hope to go around.

That's the thinking behind a new mission and a name change for the Southwest Austin nonprofit organization known as HOPE4JD, which was founded in 2011 to support families whose children suffered brain injuries due to nonfatal drownings. As of April, the organization will be known as Hope4Minds whose mission is to foster hope and enrich the lives of children with an acquired brain injury by providing support and education.

With a new name and more families to serve, Hope4Minds also will expand its community outreach services to include parent support groups and concussion baseline screenings, in addition to the services it already offers such as CPR/First Aid training and family care packages.

"Our board of directors and supporters see the opportunity to do more and help more Texas families," says Ronda Johnson, executive director, Hope4Minds. According to the Texas Brain Injury Alliance, fewer than 1 in 20 children with acquired brain injury will get the rehabilitation they need for recovery. Injury may occur during events such as non-fatal drownings, choking, car accidents, sports and recreational activities, falls, lightning strikes and even abuse.

Since 2012, the organization has provided more than \$211,248 in services to families, 841 hours of recovery therapy services, nearly 100 family care packages to Texas hospitals and rehab centers, and free CPR training for 216 adults.

SYDNEY HARBOUR VALENTINE'S PARTY



SYDNEY HARBOUR

Thank You

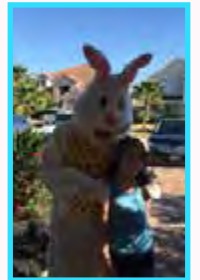
We would like to thank our resident Easter Bunny, JJ Martin, for once again making the kids smile as the Sydney Harbour Easter Bunny.

Also, thank you to all volunteers who helped set up and serve the Easter Bunny Breakfast.



BREAKFAST WITH THE EASTER BUNNY

Breakfast With The Easter Bunny was a great success again this year. The children had fun taking pictures with the Easter Bunny. Everyone had plenty to eat and were able to meet and visit with neighbors. This is one way we get to know our neighbors. Door prizes were awarded to Lucas Joaquim from Avalon Point, Andres Franco from Folly Point, Myles Meshioye from Harbour Bridge, and Anika Bowen from Obelisk Bay. Go to the Sydney Harbour website (sydneyharbourhoa.org) to see more pictures.



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EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Harris County Sheriff 866.222.7100
Pct 4 Main Dispatch Number 281.376.3472
Animal Control (Emergency) 281.999.3191
Poison Control 800.764.7661
Cy-Fair Volunteer Fire Department 713.466.6161
Emergency 911

LOCAL UTILITY/SERVICE PROVIDERS

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Gas-CenterPoint Energy 713-.659.2111
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You can choose your telephone provider
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PUBLIC SERVICES

United States Postal Service 281.373.9125
.....16635 Spring Cypress Road
Metro Park and Ride 713.635.4000

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Methodist Hospital-Willowbrook 281.477.1000
Cy-Fair Medical Center 281.890.4285
Memorial Herman Hospital 281.392.1111
North Cypress Medical Center 281.894.0003

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Cy-Fair ISD Administration 281-897-4000
.....10300 Jones Road
Farney Elementary School 281-373-2850
.....14425 Barker Cypress
Goodson Middle School 281-373-2350
.....17333 Huffmeister
Cy-Woods High School 281-213-1727
.....16825 Spring Cypress Road

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

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STERLING ASI PERSONNEL

Roxanne Martinez Association Manager
.....832.678.4500, roxanne@sterlingasi.com

Janine Cruz Administrative Assistant
.....832-678-4500 ext. 205, janine@sterlingasi.com
Contact for any concerns or general questions for the association regarding violations, deed restrictions, ACC applications, interest in joining a committee, clubhouse/pool rentals and any other questions regarding the property.

Susan Marshall Account Representative
.....832-678-4500 ext. 215, susan@sterlingasi.com
Any accounting related questions, a payoff quote or a transfer fee, or just want to know information regarding homeowner's accounts

Angela Villegas Pool Card Administrator/Customer Service
.....832.678.4500 ext. 224, angela@sterlingasi.com
Contact for homeowner's needing a pool card for access to the pool area.

Along with Janine, Susan and Angela, we have 6 customer service representatives that are familiar with the Association and area readily available to assist homeowners.



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