



# The Village Gazette

VOLUME 13 | ISSUE 2 | FEBRUARY 2016

VILLAGE CREEK COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

## Landscape Corner

If it rains a measureable amount each week or so, watering should not be necessary. If it doesn't rain, then add supplemental watering for ALL plants because, even though the plant tops are dormant, the roots need moisture to survive. The key test for sufficient moisture is to stick a shovel or trowel down into the soil. If you can't easily penetrate 6", you probably need to provide some water. A rain gauge is useful as we all know that rainfall in this area can be highly variable from place to place.

**Vegetables:** Many seasonable vegetables can be transplanted this month including, onions (sets), mustard, collards and kale. Protect them with blankets when freezing is predicted. Seeds can be sown

for carrots, beets, turnips, radishes.

**Freezing:** Very cold weather is possible in February (record low in February was 6 degrees F), so continue protection of applicable plants. As a reminder, consider draining your backflow preventer before hard freezes (28 degrees or below or continuous below-freezing nights). Don't forget to reopen the valves when irrigation is required.

**Fertilization and Mulch:** Apply light fertilization to all plants. Maintain a layer (2" to 3") of mulch throughout the year to assist in keeping moisture in and weeds out. Note that in areas with nice shade, such as under roses, weeds tend not to be a problem. Weeds love open areas, so either plant these areas or apply a thick layer of mulch.

**Spraying:** This is the month to spray fruit trees with oil sprays (before they bud).

**Pruning:** February is a good month to prune deciduous woody plants prior to spring growth. Look up specific plants to find out the exact time for pruning.

**Grass:** Weeds are awaiting warm weather to take off, so if you see some, now is a good time to hand pick them. If you must use chemicals, this is a good month to apply weed killer. Bare areas, with lots of weeds, might be a sign of poor water distribution of your sprinkler system, so see if bare areas are getting enough water before you spend too much effort on other solutions.

**Roses:** February is a good month to plant and prune roses.



## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS or 911

CenterPoint-Gas Leak .....713-659-3552  
Constables Office ..... 281-376-3472, www.cd4.hctx.net  
Klein Fire Dept. ....281-376-4449  
Poison Control Center .....800-764-7661  
Willowbrook Methodist .....281-477-1000  
EMERGENCY 24 HOUR LINE .....281-537-0957  
(select 'emergency' option)

### SCHOOLS

Tomball ISD .....281-357-3100, www.tomballisd.net  
Willow Creek Elem (K-4).....281-357-3080  
Northpointe Int (5-6).....281-357-3020  
Willow Wood Jr (7-8) .....281-357-3030  
Tomball High (9-12) .....281-357-3220  
Tomball Memorial High School .....281-357-3230  
Transportation.....281-357-3193

### HOA MGMT

Spectrum Association Management.....281-343-9178  
Otis Chandler.....ochandler@spectrumam.com  
Fax number.....281-752-5482  
After Hours Emergency Numbers .....281-343-9178  
Dedicated Village Creek Phone:.....832-500-2221  
Dedicated Village Creek email: villagecreek@spectrumam.com

Office Address – 16690 Park Row Houston TX 77084

Payment Address – PO Box 1118 Commerce GA 30529 (or drop  
off check/money order at office address)

Village Creek Community Association Website  
www.spectrumam.com (register to access)

(must have account number and valid email address to register,  
call the above office number if you need assistance)

### SERVICES

CPS.....713-626-5701  
CenterPoint-Gas.....713-659-2111  
Dead Animal Pick up .....713-699-1113  
Domestic Violence .....281-401-6250  
FBI.....713-693-5000  
Harris County Animal Control .....281-999-3191  
Houston Chronicle .....713-220-7211  
Sweetwater Pools .....281-988-8480  
Lost Pets.....spectrumam.com  
Municipal District Services (24 hrs) .....281-290-6500  
Reliant-Street lights .....713-923-3213  
..... www.centerpointenergy.com/outage  
Sex Offenders .....www.familywatchdog.us  
Comcast - Cable/High Speed Internet.....713-341-1000  
Republic Waste.....713-849-0400  
Trash pickup Tues/Fri  
Recycling Fri (only newspapers/#1 & 2 plastics/aluminum cans)

### NEWSLETTER

Publisher - Peel, Inc.....512-263-9181  
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Editor.....Gordon R. Watson  
.....watson.g@sbcglobal.net



## Information for Veterans

*By Gordon Watson*

Our son recently mentioned to me that one would think that a Veteran would automatically be signed up to be part of the Veterans Administration upon discharge. While this makes sense, for some reason, it isn't true...at least for Veterans in the past. I am not sure about these days. To obtain VA medical benefits, you will need to sign up with the VA. The Outpatient Clinic in Tomball is a great source of help and information. It is located at 1200 West Main Street in downtown Tomball. Phone: 281-516-1505.

The VA will provide medical care to most Veterans with costs based on whether they were hurt while serving in the military or current worth and income. The VA even has its own mail order pharmacy. No matter what your worth and income, Veterans can get most of their medical care from the VA. The less your financial need, the more costly the VA treatment is. Whether the costs and care make sense to you will depend on your current situation (and that most likely will change as you age).

One disadvantage is that, while you will have a primary care physician at the Tomball Clinic, you will probably need to go to the main clinic in downtown Houston for specialist care. There are exceptions to this general rule. The Tomball Clinic does have an excellent laboratory for most medical testing.

While the VA medical program may not make sense for you right now (and may never), I highly recommend that you at least enroll, and get their ID card. If you need their medical help later, you will have already done the hard part (and even that isn't that difficult).

When you go to the clinic, take two forms of photo ID. Your DD214 might be helpful.

[http://www.houston.va.gov/locations/Tomball\\_VA\\_Outpatient\\_Clinic.asp](http://www.houston.va.gov/locations/Tomball_VA_Outpatient_Clinic.asp)

## DEPUTY CORMIER'S CORNER

We asked Deputy Cormier what is expected of us when a law enforcement officer pulls our car over.

1. When a deputy approaches a vehicle, his or her safety and the safety of the violator are primary concerns. We would like for everyone inside the vehicle to keep hands where they can be seen. Suspicious activity such as furtive (suggestive of guilty nervousness) movements send up red flags and normally will put the deputy on alert that something may be going on inside the vehicle that could jeopardize his safety. Deputies, as a norm, will follow a certain guideline when conducting traffic stops. Not all traffic stops are the same, and there is nothing that is considered a routine traffic stop. Again, the safety of all parties involved is paramount, and it is our desire to get violators down the road as quickly and safely as possible.

We also asked him what we should do if the road we are pulled over on has no shoulder.

2. We do our absolute best to ensure that all traffic stops are conducted in a safe environment for the driver of the vehicle as well as the deputy. The Deputy conducting the stop will generally attempt to make a traffic stop in an area that allows the officer a safe position to interact with the violator as well as assuring that the safety of the violator is assured. This especially rings true with traffic stops that are conducted in the night time hours. We would like to have as much visibility as possible so the presence of artificial lighting to illuminate stops is preferred.

Dep. Joseph (J.T.) Cormier

Unit 84816

Harris County Constable, Pct. 4

Patrol Division - West District

281.370.9106 (Lakewood Office)

281.376.3472 (24 Hr. Dispatch)

Joseph.Cormier@cd4.hctx.net

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## THE RISING OIL LEVEL AT THE TEXACO STATION

*A House Detective Mystery by Gordon R. Watson*

I turned into the Texaco station in downtown Tomball with my black and white 1954 Packard Clipper. The front tires ran over a signal hose, causing a bell to ring in the station's office. It alerted one of the employees to rush out to service my car. I recognized the young man, Dave, as he rushed up in his crisp, brown Texaco jacket and hat. I rolled the window down, and the cold January air rushed in. I love the fragrance of a good gas station: a mixture of gasoline, oil, and new tires, all rolled into one perfect perfume. I also love the sounds of a gas station: the "zzzzzzzzzzzzzzloop" of the air wrench removing lug nuts along with the occasional "ding" of a tire running over the signal hose.

"Welcome to Texaco."

He smiled broadly. "Fill 'er up? I'll check this here Packard with our Circle of Service."

I had heard about Texaco's "Circle of Service." Basically, the Texaco man circles your car washes all windows, examines the wiper blades, checks all four tires, looks under the hood for anything odd (oil mainly), and, of course, adds fuel. This sort of service sold lots of services, tires, batteries, and oil. No station made much on gasoline. I looked at the price: \$.25/gallon for Standard and \$.29 for premium.

I smiled back. "Yes, fill her up with Sky Chief." Sky Chief was Texaco's highest gasoline grade. The big Packard Clipper V-8 preferred the good stuff.

He unscrewed the gas cap and put the nozzle in. Then he started at the left rear tire and looked at its tread and appearance. Next he moved to the left front and repeated his observations. Then he opened the hood, checked the battery appearance and connections. He pulled out the engine oil dipstick, wiped it with a red rag, reinserted it, and pulled it out again.

He looked around the hood and said, "Oil looks good."

Then he washed the windows, front, sides, and back. Circle of Service.

While I was waiting, a woman came in with her beautiful red and white 1955 2-door hardtop Chevrolet Bel Air V-8 running

badly. Dave ran over to her, and I could see he was talking about her problem. He did his circle of service, and came back to her with a very puzzled look. He had the dipstick, held with a red rag.

"Mam, you have something very odd happening here. You have too much oil in the engine. It looks like you are several quarts high!"

She frowned. "It's always low. No matter how much I add. I have to keep adding oil."

Being a detective, and sensing an interesting mystery, I opened the door and walked over. Dave was puzzled. He looked at me and said, "This is highly unusual. Maybe you can help me figure it out."

I looked at the dipstick. Then I looked at the woman. "Mam. Show me where you are



checking the oil."

She got out of the car and walked around to the open hood. "Well, this is odd. The dipstick I am using is still in the engine. Right there." She was pointing at the automatic transmission dipstick.

Dave looked at me, and I looked at him. He turned to the woman and smiled.

"Mam, you are checking the transmission fluid level."

He pulled the stick out. "Your transmission fluid is a bit low, and you are adding oil to the engine when it doesn't need it. Now you probably have four extra quarts. You are lucky that you didn't break something. It's running poorly because the crankshaft is probably hitting the oil. Pull it into that bay, and I will drain some out for you."

As she got in her car to move it, Dave shook my hand. "It is always nice to have a detective around...even if he isn't an automotive detective."

I smiled. "It was a team effort."

I gave a five-spot to Dave to pay the \$3.29 for the gasoline needed. He went back to the office and shortly returned with my change. As I drove away, my rear tires ran over the hose. I heard the bell "ding" in the office. The woman looked up, smiled, and waved happily at me as I drove by. I was on my way to another case.

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## Crape Murder

By Gordon R. Watson

When should you prune a Crape Myrtle? One of the best answers is “never.” According to some, too many “professionals” prune them way too far back to the point where such pruning is known as “Crape Murder.” It’s very important when choosing crape myrtles to choose the correct variety for the space you have. Some are thirty feet tall, and some are less than ten. Still, pruning is sometimes necessary if branches cross, rub, or are inappropriate in some way. In general don’t remove any branch bigger than a pencil. Sometimes the plant is too big for the space, so must be pruned, though it would be far better to move the plant and replace it with a smaller one.

If you must prune, the best advice seems to be late winter or early spring before the new growth starts. Above all, when you plant a Crape Myrtle, keep in mind that it isn’t a bush. It is a tree, so you really do want it to grow without much pruning. The photograph is not from Village Creek, but it was taken nearby. It is a very good example of how NOT to prune a crape myrtle. It really shouldn’t look like a hat rack when done.

For further reading, here is a good start:

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/publications/stopthecrape.html>



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## Don't Forget Required Minimum Distributions

By Gordon R. Watson

Most Village Creek residents are not seventy and a half, but some of us are already there. Others have parents who are nearing that age, so this advice is for almost everyone. Don't let your parents overlook this advice.

You cannot keep tax-deferred retirement funds in your account indefinitely. You generally have to start taking withdrawals from your tax-deferred retirement plan account when you reach age 70½.

The penalties for not taking Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) are very harsh. While those companies holding your investment will probably make sure you take it, there are situations where they don't. It is YOUR responsibility to make sure it happens.

You can check out the IRS web site, but I highly recommend that you contact your financial advisor or the company that holds your investment to make sure that you or your loved ones do not miss this critical financial event.

[https://www.irs.gov/Retirement-Plans/Plan-Participant,-Employee/Retirement-Topics-Required-Minimum-Distributions-\(RMDs\)](https://www.irs.gov/Retirement-Plans/Plan-Participant,-Employee/Retirement-Topics-Required-Minimum-Distributions-(RMDs))

## SUDOKU

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View answers online at [www.peelinc.com](http://www.peelinc.com)

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The goal is to fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9. Each digit may appear only once in each row, each column, and each 3x3 box.

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# The Village Gazette

## VILLAGE CREEK RECOMMENDED RECIPE

*The following recipe is from Laura Domangue, member of the Architectural Review Committee. She says this is her go-to recipe when she needs something quick & easy:*

### AUNT DOODIE'S CAKE

1 box yellow cake mix  
1 box instant chocolate fudge pudding  
1 cup sour cream  
1 cup oil  
3 eggs  
6 oz. semi-sweet chocolate chips  
1/2 container chocolate frosting

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Mix all ingredients except chocolate chips and frosting. Spray Bundt pan with Pam. Put 1/3 of batter in pan. Sprinkle 1/2 of the chocolate chips on top. Put another 1/3 of batter and sprinkle with remaining chocolate chips. Put remaining batter on top and bake at 350 degrees for 45-50 minutes. Remove from oven. Take out of pan and cool on wire rack. When cool, put on cake plate. Melt 1/2 tub of frosting in microwave (about 20 to 30 seconds). Drizzle over cake. Enjoy!



## SPECTRUM'S VILLAGE CREEK WEBSITE

*By Gordon R. Watson*

You may have found it difficult to find some things (such as meeting minutes) on Spectrum's Village Creek website. Here are some hints. First, go to Spectrumam.com. Of course, if you haven't already registered, you will need to register a new account. If you are already registered, you will need to sign in.

Find the black box on the home page and...

1. Click "Documents" in this black box.
2. Go to the right of the blue box (scroll down to a Category) and select one of the following:
  - a. Forms
  - b. Governing Documents
  - c. Financial Reports
  - d. Meeting Minutes
  - e. Miscellaneous
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  - g. Studies



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2. Thanks to those who use an excellent web site, Nextdoor.com, as a place to reunite lost pets with owners. This web site allows thousands of people in and beyond Village Creek to help look for lost pets. Above all, it is well known for getting animals back home. Posting signs on poles or mailboxes is discouraged because of the damage they do. If you do post there, please remember to remove them when your issue has been resolved.



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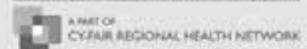
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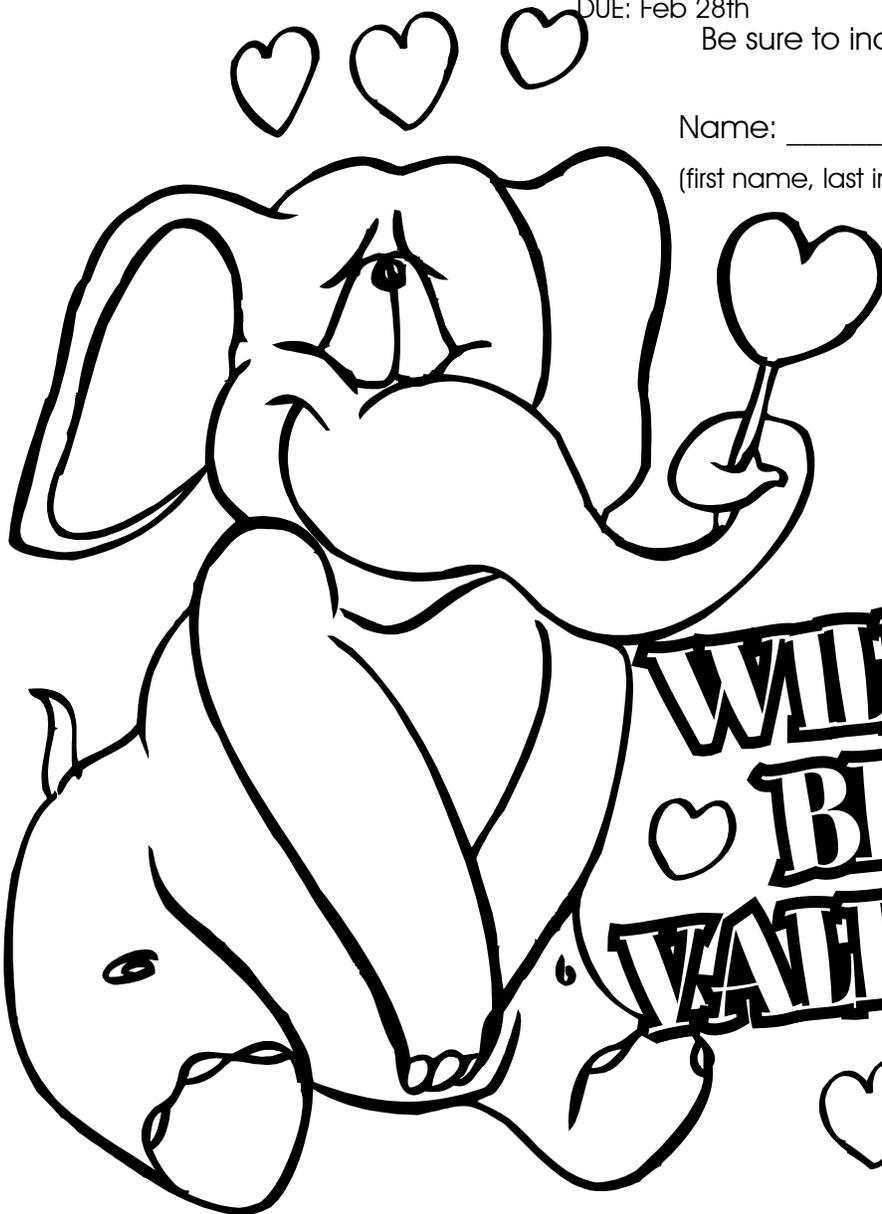
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