“Friends of River Chase” Participate in Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup

On July 22, five “Friends of River Chase” volunteers enjoyed a nice walk along FM 306 while beautifying the countryside. Thank you to Kathy Williamson, Don and Pat Fletcher, Ana Whitney, and Clay Whitney for their efforts. Our next Adopt-a-Highway cleanup will be in October. With cooler weather, we hope to have a larger turnout. Stay tuned. The exact date will be announced at a later time.

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

How much are your POA amenities worth? This is an interesting question posed at a recent meeting of area POA officers. It intrigued me, so I did some research and enlisted the help of our friends at Real Estate Haus.

We estimated the value of our amenities. Most of that value is in the acreage and its location. The POA owns 32.9 acres at the clubhouse park and 27.6 acres of riverfront and 20.7 acres of creek bottom at the river park. Based on current selling price of an acre lot and river front property, it’s estimated our amenities are valued about $5,432,000.

If our amenities are worth an estimated $5,432,000, then every POA member owns an equal share, or 1732nd (there are 1732 lots in River Chase) which is $3,136 per lot. That’s your “piece” of our community.

The results of this exercise are obvious. The amenities have value and this value is added to the value of your property. The folks at Real Estate Haus helped compile the following table which illustrates how much more our individual properties are worth compared to other nearby communities without river access, based on home sale prices.

(continued on page 3)
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Kim Wallis, GRI, ASP
(281) 725-8497
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Danielle Rollo
(830) 624-6753
DanielleRollo@DanielleSellsTexasHillCountry.com
President’s Message (continued from front cover)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Average Sales Price per Sq. Foot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Pinnacle</td>
<td>$159.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gruene Haven</td>
<td>$143.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Country Estates (Gated)</td>
<td>$150.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Havenwood (Gated)</td>
<td>$157.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Chase</td>
<td>$162.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we average the cost per square foot for the first four communities, the average is $152.60 per square foot. Buyers’ value in River Chase is almost $10 more per square foot than a house selling in the other communities without river access. The fact is people are willing to spend $10 more per foot to live in our community with our amenities. If you own a 2,000 square foot house that increased value amounts to an additional $20,000 of equity. Or if you own a 3,000 square foot house, then you have $30,000 additional equity because you live in River Chase. This is just another way of showing our amenities have value.

Your Board of Directors (BOD) has been working on the 2018 budget. The majority of our revenue comes from the annual dues, which have been fixed at $150. This brings in about $250,000 each year and is necessary to maintain the 82 acres, clubhouse facility, swimming pools, tennis courts, and other assets. Unfortunately, service expenses and the age of the amenities, like the river park road, are driving the operating costs higher. But the revenue remains fixed. The BOD has voted to raise the annual dues by $50. We feel this is the amount necessary to maintain the amenities and the increased value of your individual properties. I’m sure everyone agrees that $200 a year is a small amount to pay to maintain this increased value. Every one of us spends more than that per year just to maintain our own property. I’d appreciate your assistance by voting for the $50 annual increase.

Paul Bower

A Call to Leadership

The Nominations Committee is announcing the open positions needing to be filled this year.

At the annual meeting in November, the property owners will elect:

➢ One (1) Director to serve a 3-year term on the Board of Directors

Following the annual meeting, the Board will appoint:

➢ One (1) member to serve a 3-year term on the Architectural Control Committee
➢ and a treasurer

Volunteering to run for the Director position or serve as treasurer or ACC member

If you’re interested in volunteering for any position or you would like to nominate a neighbor, please complete the application (Click on Documentation in the left column, then Click on “Application – Declaration of Intent to Run”).

Forward the completed form to: nominations@riverchasepoa.org

For the Director position, the deadline for receiving the Declaration of Intent to Run is Monday, August 31st @ midnight.

For the ACC & treasurer positions, the deadline for receiving the Declaration of Intent to Run is Sunday, September 30th @ midnight.

Description of duties on next page….

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Member FDIC
**NBRCPOA Board of Directors Duties**

1. **MEETINGS:** Attend and represent the members’ interests at regular and special BOD meetings and the annual membership meeting.

2. **OVERSEE OPERATIONS:** The BOD provides direction and funds for the operation of the Association. The BOD decides what gets done and approves money to do it.

3. **COMMITTEES:** The BOD oversees several standing committees and usually each member of the BOD serves as a liaison to a committee (i.e., Events, Common Areas, Communications, DCCR Review, etc.).

4. **VIOLATIONS and DISPUTES:** The BOD reviews violations and approves fines. They provide a forum for Members to air disputes and give guidance on resolving them.

5. **TIME:** A member of the BOD spends no less than 20 hours a month working on BOD-related duties.

**NBRCPOA Architectural Control Committee Duties**

1. **MEETINGS:** Attend regular and special ACC meetings. The ACC meets semi-monthly, usually every other Wednesday evening.

2. **OVERSEE OPERATIONS:** The ACC reviews and evaluates applications for new homes and improvements to members’ lots. They are charged to accept or deny applications depending on whether the applications meet all requirements specified in the DCCRs.

3. **TIME:** An ACC Committee member spends no less than 20 hours a month working on committee-related duties.

**NBRCPOA Treasurer Duties**

1. **MEETINGS:** Attend and represent the financial interests at regular and special BOD meetings and the annual membership meeting.

2. **ACCOUNTING ACTIVITIES:** Approve invoices for payment, determine G/L coding and other accounting transactions

3. **MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS:** Review preliminary month-end reports and make any necessary corrections, produce and distribute final monthly financial package.

4. **ANNUAL BUDGET:** Work with the Board, community manager, and committee chairmen to produce the POA budget which is presented at the annual meeting.

5. **ANNUAL AUDIT:** Provide auditor with reports and requested information, review and concur the auditor’s findings, approve auditors accounting entries.

6. **ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE ACTIVITIES:** Review preliminary month-end reports and make any necessary corrections, produce and present final report to directors in their executive session, work with community manager to produce courtesy reminders and late fee letters.

7. **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS:** Provide Board and Association membership with analysis of proposed financial actions such as maintenance fee increases, budget revisions, major projects, etc.
Notes from the Treasurer
By Ric Hastings

This will be my next to last report to the community as treasurer. I’m going back into retirement effective January 1, 2018. I know! I know! Hold the rejoicing! It’s taken three years to get rid of me. Obviously in that time, you’ve learned how obstinate and persistent I am. But all things must end, and I’m going to let someone else manage the books after December.

I’m pleased to report that your Board has done a good job of managing the finances while assuming the responsibilities of self-management. What they’ve learned by taking personal responsibility for operations is how poorly we’ve been served by management companies the last 5-10 years. Those lessons have financial impacts. For instance, our three septic systems (clubhouse, pond, and river park) have apparently never been serviced. We had a red tag on one of them which no one knew about. No one can remember when last the air conditioners worked in the restrooms at the pool. When we replaced the broken compressors, we discovered the controlling thermostat was in an outside closet which made the units work overtime and probably wore the units out more quickly. So we moved the thermostat inside and replaced the water heater for the pool bathroom showers. Also, the security system at the clubhouse didn’t provide much security and had to be upgraded.

But the results are visible. The bathrooms at the pool are cool (and pleasant smelling). You also have hot water to take a shower. The clubhouse park and grounds are beautiful. You can now play tennis without chasing an errant bounce. The trash at the river park is much less a problem.

As a community we’ve been trying to do these things and stretch our limited funds by utilizing volunteer workers to do the maintenance. We’ve been successful at what we could do. However, what we’ve learned is a lot of maintenance needs to be done by professionals. The pool is a good example. We’ve been lucky a professional “pool guy” provides his services for a nominal fee. This saves the Association quite a bit of money when compared to the cost of services from a pool company.

**From a financial perspective, we’ve realized it costs more to maintain our amenities than money we have available.**

Once again there’s been chatter about the need for a maintenance fee increase. At the July Board meeting, I presented a financial analysis that articulates our dilemma and highlights the needed increase. Below are some charts from the two models I presented.

The first model uses:
- 2017 projected expenses
- results from our recent budget workshop
- the anticipated expenditures from last year’s Reserve Study

The first chart shows our income, expenses, and reserve contribution for the next nine years. It shows that if we continue with our minimalist/volunteer strategy to run our POA and maintain our amenities, we’ll only be able to make minimal, decreasing contributions to our reserve fund. As a result, the second chart shows if we also follow the anticipated maintenance schedule from...
the Reserve Study we'll eventually deplete the reserve (in years 2022 & 2025) and the amenities won't get maintained.

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The second financial model uses the basis from the first model but adds additional income that would be realized if we increased the maintenance fee from the current $150/yr. to $200/yr. beginning in 2018. Since I didn’t change any other assumptions, all the additional income goes directly to the reserve contribution. The second chart shows the reserve problems, like repairing the river park road, go away and we have additional funds that can be used for “improvements.” I boldly suggested using the additional funds as follows:

- To build needed storage and office facilities in 2018. I estimate a little less than $100K for that project.
- To build a significant new amenity (perhaps a pool) in 2022. I estimate about $500K for that project.

Vital ICE: App Technology That Speaks for Us During a Medical Emergency

Comal County citizens are fortunate to have Doeppenschmidt Funeral Home making this potentially life-saving app available to us at no charge as a way of showing their gratitude for allowing them to serve the community. All that is required by the user is downloading the app and entering the unique four-digit code at start-up. That code is 3434.

When the unexpected happens, being prepared and having your personal information quickly and easily available can help to save a life.
Even with these additional expenditures, you can see that a $50/yr. increase will provide sufficient funds to maintain our existing amenities and possibly have some left over to make improvements the community chooses.

Also at the July Board meeting, one of our property owners, Lynda Escalante, presented some research about what effect our current amenities have on our property values. She looked at the average selling price per square foot for River Chase compared to other surrounding communities – The Pinnacle, Gruene Haven, TX Country Estates, and Havenwood. These communities are very similar in type and size of houses, location compared to downtown New Braunfels, and demographics of owners. The difference in selling price, mostly attributed to our amenities, especially access to the Guadalupe River through our river park, was between $3 and $12 per sq. ft. If the amenities go away or degrade to the point they become unusable (river park road for instance), each of us will lose between $7,500 and $30,000 in the value of our property. If your house is bigger than 2,500 sq. ft., then you’re going to lose more.

Those of you who’ve dealt with me in the past know I sometimes get bogged down in the details, maybe even get lost in them. I have a lot of details behind these charts and would love to share them with you. We can discuss whether my assumptions are right, wrong, or indifferent. Email your questions, comments, or requests to ric.hastings@gvtc.com and I’ll take time to discuss them with you.

However, I purposely presented only summary charts here because the details don’t really matter. I just wanted a way to paint a picture of the problem we have.

It’s clear that whether you’re a person who takes advantage of the river park or uses our community pool and clubhouse, your property is more valuable because we have those amenities. The value will suffer if we don’t take care of them!
The 2017 River Chase Freedom & Fireworks Bash was like a dream. For a few brief moments, I got to take a step back, look around, take in the spirit of the community, and enjoy the beauty of it all. It reminded me of a nostalgic Norman Rockwell painting. The feeling in the atmosphere that night was profoundly alive. The morning began with a patriotic, kid’s decorated bike and pet parade. Then, after a much-needed snack, we had a great time playing an old fashioned game of kick ball which the kids loved. We also had our annual Pie Baking Contest, Kid’s Cookie Baking Contest, Pinto Bean Jackpot, and BBQ Cook Off. The night ended with a wonderful fireworks show.

I’m still beside myself how wonderful the day was. I owe that to the MANY volunteers who helped me throughout the day. I want to extend a special thank you to Jessica Young and her family for overseeing the contest judging which was a huge task. They did a fantastic job! There were so many volunteers who gave time the days and weeks before, during, and after the event. Many stepped up to help without being asked. Please know, with deepest sincerity, I appreciate each and every volunteer. Volunteers are what make River Chase the BEST community in New Braunfels to call home.

Huge thank you to the awesome guys (and gals) in the BBQ cook off! The heat index reached 106 degrees not factoring in cooking next to a BBQ pit. Thank you to all 11 teams for cooking the Boston butts that provided delicious pulled pork sandwiches for our picnic. We fed about 750 of our neighbors and their families and guests.

The contest winners were:
Cookies – Hope Reichert & Katelynn Felderhoff, Patriotic Iced Sugar Cookies, winning $25 and a custom made mixing bowl
Pies – Noelle Neely, Chocolate Bourbon Pecan Pie, winning $25 and a custom made pie plate
Pinto Bean Jackpot $200 – Tim Germadnik and Christie Storer
BBQ Cook Off by category – Chicken $125, Will Balthun; Ribs $175, Mike Tutt; Brisket $175, Jamie Browder and Todd Thetford
BBQ Cook Off team winners - 3rd place Pulled Pork $50, Aaron Miller; 2nd place Pulled Pork $150, Tim Germadnik; and Grand Champion Pulled Pork $350, reigning champion Will Balthun. Congratulations to all the winners and a job well done to everyone that participated!

Our River Chase Veterans Association gave a special presentation during the announcement ceremony. They honored the active and retired military present, recognized the Valasquez and Heminger families who recently received new homes in River Chase through the Homes For Our Troops organization, presented the colors and Pledge of Allegiance, offered a prayer over our nation, our community, and our meal. It was an honor to coordinate with them.

Thank you to Liz Murray for singing the National Anthem, Lara Falardeau for the stunning photographs, Hiliary Bailey for the contest trophies, Donna Balterra for donating a brand new PA system, Todd Menger for donating a 150 gallon water tank, Tom Kelly for providing trash services, the Galloway family for donating their services, Jessica Etzler for organizing the face painting, our hardworking Board of Directors and Common Areas Committee, and, of course, the Fireworks and Safety Committee.

The fireworks display coordinated by my husband Regy was unbelievable! The show lasted over 30 minutes complete with patriotic music and a stunning grand finale. I’m so proud of the team of neighbors, our family, and friends for the days of work they put into creating that show and the manpower to help reduce the risk of fire hazards.

And last, but certainly not least, thank you neighbors for supporting us in making this whole event happen – not only in the form of monetary donations to pay for the fireworks and meat, but also in your encouragement to ensure this event continues year after year. Thank you for your praises and heartwarming comments, for sharing your memories with us, and for coming together as a community with genuine love for each other for a purpose greater than any of us. God bless all of you, God bless River Chase, and God Bless America.
The Art of Neighboring
By Chelsea Ormond

When we purchase a new home we consider many desirable features like location, schools, and amenities. But have you ever considered who the people will be living in the homes around you? If you were given a blank block map, how much could you fill in about your eight closest neighbors? Can you fill in their first and last names? What do they do for a living? What are their beliefs? Regrettably, for a majority of the small group of River Chase ladies who began this study, we became aware of just how little we knew about the people we chose to surround ourselves with. Many of us have lived next door to these neighbors for months and even years.

The Art of Neighboring by pastors Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon is a Christian-based movement that dares you to quite literally “love your neighbor as yourself.” The six-week study inspires, challenges, and guides you through helpful ways to get to know your neighbors on a more personal and, hopefully, spiritual level. The book serves as a tool reminding us through scripture the value in the relationship of being a good and loving neighbor. The end result creates a powerful ripple effect of stronger neighborhoods, better and safer towns, and, ideally, a more loving world.

Following the principles in this book had positive effects on each of us in our small group. The transformation we witnessed in some of the relationships among neighbors was significant and even contagious. We knocked on doors with treats, hosted block parties and dinners, and organized a community prayer walk to encourage all River Chase residents to walk and meet families as they passed by.

The Art of Neighboring can be read individually, but I strongly believe having a group to hold you accountable, share stories, seek advice, and pray with made the study more successful for us. We encourage you to be vulnerable, be available, and boldly pursue a deeply meaningful and loving relationship with your neighbor. Just a simple knock on the door is all it takes to open it to unlimited opportunities.

If you’d like to know more about the art of neighboring and how you can facilitate a study please visit this site.
Here’s a review of the fun and exciting family events and presentations our River Chase Kid’s Club had during our summer program. Special thanks go to the following people:

■ Trent Uehling with Texas Moonlight Cinema for our summer kickoff Family Movie Night event showing Disney’s Moana.
■ Mr. Blaine Eaton and his grandson Curtis with the South Texas Amphibian & Reptile Society (STARS) for the educational, live snake and reptile presentation. You may have heard a few weeks later Mr. Eaton and Curtis were involved in a rollover accident on IH-35 while on their way to a presentation. Thankfully, both were okay but they did lose some of their specimens and a lot of the equipment was damaged. If you’d like to support their continuing educational efforts, there’s a [GoFundMe account](#) set up for their equipment loss.
■ Family physician Dr. Eric Francis, MD; Registered Nurse Liz Murray; New Braunfels Community Liaison Police Officer Andrew Kempker; San Marcos Fire Chief Les Stephens; and the Canyon Lake Fire Department for our wonderful Community Heroes presentation. The children really had a blast at this event.
■ NBISD science teacher Mrs. Linda Peters for organizing our Science Technology Engineering Art and Math (STEAM) experiment day. A big thank you goes to all the volunteers who helped the children with the experiment stations. Special thanks to Pizza Hut for donating our ‘solar oven’ boxes and the coupons to Schlitterbahn and Pizza Hut.
■ Mr. Kelly White for making sure the pool was sparkling for our Ice Cream Social and Family Swim Night.
■ The River Chase Gardeners for generously sponsoring our last story time and providing the supplies for our Texas wildflower seed balls the children had fun making. I’m sure the children will be delighted to see their flowers growing this spring!
River Chase Veteran’s Association (RCVA)

The River Chase Veterans Association (RCVA) is having a busy summer. We welcomed two new heroes to the neighborhood on June 9th thanks to the great work of the Homes for Our Troops organization. Congratulations and a great big WELCOME to Sgt. Juan Carlos Vasquez and Sgt. Jeff Hemenger and their families. We thank you for your service and sacrifice and are thrilled to have you as neighbors in River Chase!

In July, we were honored to attend the Freedom Fireworks Bash. RCVA member Lara Falardeau was present to capture the entire event with her outstanding photography. RCVA members visited with neighbors near our tent at the tennis courts, offering candy, information about RCVA, and a raffle for vintage patriotic quilts representing US colonial flags donated by member Lynda Jackson.

After President Jim Kelch posted the colors of our beautiful flag, Vice President Joe Byers spoke briefly to introduce board members and explain the ongoing projects and goals of the RCVA. One of these is the Memorial Garden project taking place near the RC clubhouse. We’re excited that Certified Landscape Architect Sam has graciously donated the design for the Memorial Garden. We’re also thrilled John Canavan will donate labor and equipment to assist in construction of the project. Further fundraising efforts are welcomed through cash donations and the sale of challenge coins and tribute bricks.

The Memorial Garden is quickly becoming a reality and we hope all River Chase residents feel inspired to take part in this beautification project. Nearly everyone who lives in River Chase is either a veteran, knows a veteran, remembers a veteran, or has relatives who are or were veterans. Signing on for donations of tribute bricks will create a lasting honor to those who have faithfully served our nation.

Tribute bricks will be available for $75 to $90 with various personalization options offered. Please stay tuned for more information on ordering bricks or challenge coins as details will soon be available on our website.
Summer gifts us one of my favorite fruits ever! **Cherries** become plentiful around the first weekend of June. That’s when prices are lowest and the flavors are the most succulent. And cherries are amazing for your **glow-mode**.

The only time I’ve seen cherries on a tree was in the south of France, driving to Roquefort to see the famous cheese caves. Driving down this foggy, one and a half lane road, lined by a river and hills, was a small grove of cherry trees. Some had already been harvested, but some trees were heavily laden with the biggest cherries I’ve ever seen. Stunning!

Cherries don’t grow in Texas that I know of, but you always know when they are in season. The bins in the grocery store are full of burgundy colored orbs of sweet delight. And cherries are as good for you as they are delicious.

Not only are they easy to eat, but cherries are full of anti-inflammatory, **anti-aging**, anticancer, anticarcinogenic and antimutagenic compounds. I can see your **glow-mode** flickering with anticipation now!

The most significant cancer-fighting compounds are quercetin and ellagic acid. Quercetin is a potent anticancer agent with strong anti-inflammatory properties. It fights free radical damage from aging and inflammation, which is the root of most diseases. Ellagic acid is anticarcinogenic, antimutagenic, antiviral and antibacterial, causing the death of cancer cells. The color comes from a phenolic called anthocyanin, the same polyphenol that gives red wine its color. You have to love the amazing power of food!

Even though cherries are seasonal, you can get organic frozen cherries all year round. Tart is better for you than sweet because of the sugar content. Smoothies, snacks and sauces are great ways of using them, but my favorite way is as a sorbet.

**Cherry Sorbet**

6 cups pitted cherries - use an olive pitter or crush with a knife and remove pit

1/2 cup water

zest of one lime

juice of one lime - always zest first, then juice

1/4 cup organic sugar

1/8 teaspoon cinnamon

Heat the water, sugar, and cinnamon in a small sauce pan over medium heat until the sugar is melted. Remove from heat and let cool to room temperature.

Put the cherries, lime zest and juice, and sugar mixture in a large blender and puree until smooth. This is too much for a food processor. You can always add a little more water if you think it's too thick. The consistency will depend on the cherries.

Pour the mixture into the frozen bowl of an ice cream/sorbet maker. Turn it on and let churn about 25 minutes. My sorbet maker only has one speed and it says it takes about 25 minutes.

When it’s smooth and the consistency you want, put the sorbet into a freezer proof, air-tight container and put it in the freezer for at least an hour before serving.

**Glow-mode** comes from a healthy, happy, **ageless lifestyle**. Nature provides so you can benefit. Keep your intake as clean, lean and organic as possible, and you too can achieve your **Glow-mode**!

Happy Living!
What’s the difference between home decorating and home staging? I can tell you there’s quite a difference in the end goal.

In a design project, decorating is done for the current home owner. Decorating recommendations are driven by what’s needed to make the home most appealing and comfortable for the people living there. The goal is to create the ideal environment that is their refuge from the outside world and is their place to entertain. Depending on what the owners are looking for, that may mean just rearranging the furniture or décor pieces they currently own, or purchasing items to make the look complete. It’s important to consider the style, colors, prints or patterns that appeal to the owner. After all, they’ll be the ones living there.

Some designer-done homes look completely impractical to live in. Equally concerning is they so strongly bear the style of a particular designer it makes one wonder if the home owner had any say in the end result.

In a home staging project, decorating is done for the potential buyer. Good home staging is very focused on the likely target buyer. The goal is a faster and higher-dollar sale for the home owner.

Bad home staging tries to appeal to “everyone.” Some bad home staging advice might be paint everything white or beige, remove all personal items, avoid any surprises. This frequently results in a bland and boring environment. It won’t offend anyone, but it doesn’t get them terribly excited (or motivated to buy) either. In fact, if you tour six badly staged homes in a day that follow this advice, you probably wouldn’t remember any of them. Guess what, neither will potential buyers!

Home staging should include a measure of style and flair. It must delight potential buyers and leave them with something to remember at the end of their day of house-hunting. As a home stager, when you have a clear picture of the target buyer you’re decorating for, this is much easier to achieve.

When considering the services of a home designer or stager, schedule a consultation with that person. Some designers will even offer a free hour of consultation. For the designer it’s just as important to know the owner, or potential buyer in the case of staging, as it is to know the house. A good designer or stager will listen to what the homeowner is saying and what they want to achieve. Together, both can come up with an action plan.
River Chase Gardeners

The River Chase Gardeners meet the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the clubhouse. Meetings are open to all River Chase property owners. Here’s a list of our upcoming programs:

**September 7** – *Hill Country Archeology for River Chase Residents* presented by Dr. Clark Wernecke, Dept. of Anthropology at Texas State University. Learn about the indigenous people of our area, what artifacts tell us about them, and the type of artifacts we may find on our properties. You don’t want to miss listening to Dr. Wernecke – he’s a real Indiana Jones.

**October 5** – *Feral Hogs* presented by “Buba” Ortiz with Ortiz Game Management and Hog Removal of Texas. Learn more about the feral hog problem and what you can do to help protect your property.

**November 2** – *Landscaping 101* presented by Emily Hunter with Spring Creek Gardens. Learn the basics of designing and installing landscaping around your home as well as the renovation of existing landscaping. Emily will address layout, spacing, watering, drainage, maintenance and of course, our deer friends.

**December** – no meeting

*Be sure to follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com)!*

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**Texas Persimmons: A Real Treat**

The Texas persimmons are ready to be picked. Only the female trees will bear fruit, so you’ll have to look for these. The fruit makes a delicious jelly that’s easy to prepare. When picking the persimmons, you want them to be somewhat soft to the touch. If they’re still green or purple and firm, leave them on the tree to ripen. You’ll probably need 6 to 8 cups of fruit to get enough juice for one recipe. If you don’t have enough juice after one picking, or if you have juice left over, you can freeze it until you get more persimmon juice to add to it.

We printed this recipe several years ago and want to do so again since we have many new families. This particular persimmon is native to Texas, so please don’t remove these trees from your property if at all possible. They make great under story trees and provide habitat and food for wildlife.

**Texas Persimmon Jelly Recipe**

Wash the fruit, removing any stems. Any fruit that is not ripe enough can be sorted out and left at room temperature a day or so to ripen. Place the fruit in a large pot or Dutch oven. Add water ½ to 2/3 the depth of the fruit. Bring the fruit and water to a boil. As it begins to boil, mash the fruit to break them open. Let boil about five minutes. Then press out the juice with a food mill or China cap (it will be thicker than normal fruit juice). Measure *4 cups of persimmon juice* and place in a saucepan. Add *3 tablespoons of lemon juice* (I like freshly-squeezed). Bring the persimmon and lemon juices to a boil. Then add *one box of Sure Jell no sugar needed pectin* (pink box – can be found at Walmart). Bring it to a hard boil and add *3 cups of sugar*. Stir and bring to a boil again and boil about one minute. Pour the jelly into freezer containers or jelly canning jars to within a half inch of the top. Do not overfill. As the jelly cools in the canning jars, the heat from the mixture will cause the seals to pop (seal). After letting the contents cool, freeze the jelly until use. Once the jelly has been opened, use within four to six weeks.
Plant Identification

The River Chase Gardeners have placed ID signs on all plants in the two butterfly gardens located by the clubhouse. The signs give both the common and scientific names. You can now easily identify those plants you may want to put in your landscape. These names should also aid you in finding the correct plant when you go to the nursery.

These plants were chosen because they’re either butterfly host plants or they provide nectar needed by bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Another important characteristic is they’re fairly deer resistant.

So the next time you’re at the clubhouse park, take a few moments to check out the plants and identify those you’d like to add to your yard.

NOTE: The River Chase Gardeners have begun potting plants for our spring plant sale to be held at the clubhouse on April 5, 2018. We’ll have many of the same plants found in the butterfly gardens available for sale at that time. Mark your calendar now for this event. You won’t find better prices and we’ll have an even larger selection than at our last sale.
The Day Tripper ~ Bamberger Ranch Preserve – “Selah”  
By Brenda Stoeck

Located about five miles south of Johnson City, about an hour’s drive from River Chase, is the Bamberger Ranch Preserve. In 1969 J. David Bamberger sought to buy the worst piece of ranchland he could find in the Hill Country with the specific intention of restoring it back to its original habitat. Over the last 48 years the 5,500 acre ranch has become one of the largest habitat restoration projects in the state, winning numerous awards.

To give you some background on J. David Bamberger, he began his career selling Kirby vacuum cleaners door-to-door in the 1940s. He became very successful and was able to bank a lot of money. Another vacuum salesman, Bill Church, needed a financial backer for his regional chain of fried chicken stands, so he and David became partners. The rest is history, as these chicken stands eventually became known as Church’s Fried Chicken. Needless to say, this partnership made David extremely wealthy and it allowed him to try to fulfill his lifelong dream of habitat restoration. As a young teenager in rural Ohio, Bamberger’s mother gave him a book about farm life called *Pleasant Valley*. After reading the book, David decided there was no more noble cause a man could undertake than restoring the land, while still using it to his benefit.

I was fortunate enough to tour Bamberger Ranch Preserve along with my Master Naturalist classmates. When entering the preserve the first thing you see is the Selah-Bamberger Ranch sign. “Selah” is a biblical term from the Book of Psalms that means “pause and reflect.” Mr. Bamberger thought it a fitting name for the conservation work he’d dedicated his life to.

As you continue the drive along the windy, dirt road you’ll eventually come to the location of the start of the tour. There you’ll spot a headstone of what appears to be a single grave surrounded by an iron fence. Upon closer inspection, the inscription reads...

"In memory of man, 2,000,000 B.C.-A.D. 20_?_, He who once dominated the earth destroyed it with his wastes, his poisons and his own numbers.”

This statement makes one stop and think about the impact we have on our planet and what future we leave for generations to come.

From here we began our three hour tour of the ranch lead by Ranch Manager Steven Fulton. We saw the results of 37 years of habitat restoration beginning with the removal of a large amount of Ashe juniper and the replanting of native grasses. It’s hard to believe that almost 50 years ago this rugged landscape looked more like a dry moonscape covered with junipers (cedars) and is now lush with tall grasses, a diversity of trees and plants, and crystal-clear streams.

Everyone then boarded the Bluebonnet, an open-air, covered trailer, for the rest of the tour. Our first stop was Madrone Lake where we observed “The Rain Machine” demonstration which uses a series of boxes and trays to show what happens when it rains on grassland compared to juniper-covered land. With the removal of Ashe juniper and the replanting of native grasses, long absent springs are now constantly flowing. After the rainfall demonstration we walked the nature trail which took us through a spring fed valley and beautiful, wooded area. Many of the plants and trees along the trail had been planted as part of the restoration project and were identified with markers. (continued on next page)
Day Tripper (continued)

Back on the trailer, we drove across pastures to a herd of endangered Scimitar-horned Oryx. Extinct in their native Africa, the Bamberger Ranch has been assisting with the conservation and propagation of their gene pool. The on-site herd is maintained at 40-60 animals on 643 acres that were purposely set aside for these animals. The trailer then turned around and drove by the “chiroptorium”, a man-made bat cave which houses one million Mexican Free-tailed bats.

Our tour finally ended at Hes’ Country Store, the ranch’s museum, where Mr. Bamberger, at age 89 and still possessing the charm of a vacuum cleaner salesman, spoke to our group about his life and what brought him to where he is now.

While Selah, Bamberger Ranch Preserve is not open to the public on a daily basis, there are ways to visit the ranch. There are workshops, field days and public tours throughout the year. The preserve also provides hands-on science classes and nature camps for school children. Public tours are scheduled several times during the year and cost $20 per person. Please check the website for more information.

NOTE: If you’re unable to visit the Bamberger Ranch Preserve but would like to learn more about this restoration project, pick up a copy of Water From Stone, The Story of Selah, Bamberger Ranch Preserve by award-winning author Jeffrey Greene. He provides a lyrical and compelling portrait of J. David Bamberger and his transformation from corporate businessman to internationally recognized conservationist.
CONSTRUCTION OF NEW HOMES AND SALES IN RIVER CHASE

The brisk pace of new construction in River Chase has continued through the second quarter of 2017. In April 2017, the agents of Real Estate Haus counted the homes that were built or in progress of being built, and the total number of homes at that time was 1,107.

We completed an updated count in July 2017 and found that there were 1,141 homes built or in progress. The developer originally sold 1740 lots in River Chase. Some property owners own multiple lots and have combined or re-platted them. There are approximately 399 single lots available for building.

Home sales prices have also continued to rise in the Texas Hill Country and River Chase continues to be a top seller. According to the Central Texas MLS, in the last 12 months:

- River Chase - 66 homes sold - average of $162.01 per sq. ft.
- Havenwood - 35 homes sold - average of $157.54 per sq. ft.
- Texas Country Estates - 7 homes sold - average of $150.29 per sq. ft.
- Gruene Haven - 4 homes sold - average of $143.55 per sq. ft.
- The Pinnacle - 3 homes sold - average of $159.03 per sq. ft.

All of these communities have similar locations, school districts, and age of homes. There are major differences however in the amenities:

- River Chase has the 32 acre clubhouse complex with pools, tennis courts, baseball field, trails, fishing pond and the 58-acre private river park with pavilion, basketball court, picnic tables, barbecue pits, dinosaur tracks documented at the Heritage Museum and HOA dues of $150.
- Havenwood is a gated community with 3 pools, a pavilion, and sports courts. Residents must pay for road maintenance. HOA dues are $785 annually plus a $600 working capital assessment for new property owners.
- Texas Country Estates is a gated community with no amenities. The HOA dues are $450 per year.
- Gruene Haven has no HOA and no amenities.
- The Pinnacle has sports courts and trails and annual dues of $120.

With so much more to offer than just a home site, it is no small wonder that River Chase outsells other communities. Contributed by Lynda Escalante