

May 2016

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MIRA LAGOS

Messenger



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Who to Follow on Twitter

@MiraLagosHOA

Association Information and Neighborly News

@GrandPrairiePD

Grand Prairie Police Department



@gp_tx

City of Grand Prairie, Texas



@GrandFunGP

City Parks, Arts and Recreation Department

@mansfieldisd

Mansfield Independent School District

@Gpscanner

Grand Prairie Scanner, local Police, Fire, EMS

@DFWscanner

DFW Scanner, area Fire, Police, EMS

Who's your favorite? Tweet to @MiraLagosHOA with hashtag #MLMessenger!

Find us online at:

www.facebook.com/MiraLagosHOA

www.twitter.com/MiraLagosHOA



As a nonprofit hunger relief organization, we distribute donated, purchased and prepared foods through a network of more than 340 Food Assistance Partners in 13 counties. Every day, we support the nutritional needs of children, families and seniors through education, advocacy and strategic partnerships.



North Texas Food Bank
 4500 S. Cockrell Hill Road
 Dallas, TX 75236-2028
 214.330.1396
 ntfb.org



Association Contact Information

www.miralagoshoa.com

www.texas.fsrconnect.com/miralagos

On-Site Management
 Stacy McGrath, General Manager
 manager@miralagoshoa.com

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 Assistant Manager
 Matt.Urbaniak@fsresidential.com

Cynthia Prox, Administrative Assistant
 Cynthia.prox@fsresidential.com

817-473-6787 (office)
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South Pool Office "Veranda"
 3025 S. Camino Lagos
 Grand Prairie, TX 75054

Office Hours
 Tuesday-Saturday
 8:30 am-4:30 pm
 Closed Sunday and Monday

FirstService Residential
 Customer Service
 (877) 378-2388

Mail Payments to:
 Mira Lagos Homeowners
 Association Inc.
 c/o FirstService Residential
 PO Box 678065
 Dallas, TX 75267-8065



Relationships based on respect, trust and effective communication are the cornerstone of our success.



Committee Chairs
 Chair Meetings: Bi-monthly



Communications
 Carlos Cucalon
 communications@miralagoshoa.com
 Meetings: monthly

Social
 Deirdre Garret
 social@miralagoshoa.com
 Meetings: 2nd Wednesday monthly

Landscape
 Pam Downs and Lisa Watkins,
 Co-Chairs
 landscape@miralagoshoa.com
 Meetings: 1st Wednesday monthly

Welcome
 Elissa Sherlock
 welcome@miralagoshoa.com
 Meetings: monthly/electronically

Pool and Sports
 Mike Joffrion
 poolsandsports@miralagoshoa.com
 3rd Tuesday (Apr-Sept)

New Members welcome on all committees!

Safety
 Robert McLain, Chairman
 safety@miralagoshoa.com
 Meetings:
 1st Tuesday monthly

Board of Directors
 Joshua Spare, President
 Eric Blackwell, Vice President
 Robert McLain, Secretary
 Jessica Cafferata, Treasurer
 John Hughes, Director
 board@miralagoshoa.com

Mira Lagos Messenger

Is the only authorized and official monthly publication for the residents of the Mira Lagos Community with news and calendar of community events endorsed by the Mira Lagos HOA & its members.

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Spring Welcome Reception



Welcome to Mira Lagos! That's what you hear when attending one of our Welcome Receptions. We hold our meeting Receptions twice annually, and we are so amazed to see how our community continues to grow. We work with builders, management and neighbors who are kind enough to drop us an email letting us know when someone new has moved in. Our Welcome Committee is made up of 31 active volunteers. Our volunteers help our community from delivering welcome bags filled with goodies and information to a jar opener and everything in between!

Our Receptions are well attended. It could be the egg rolls, punch, cookies, the wonderful gift baskets designed and created by the Committee volunteers, or it could be new neighbors who want to meet other new neighbors. For whatever reason if you are new we hope to see you at our next event in August.

The Mira Lagos Welcome Committee has pledged to go above and beyond to help build a more active community. Several of the ladies that have attended the Reception have become good friends and socially interact by attending Ladies Monday Nights Out and other social clubs held in our neighborhood.

We hold Ladies Monday Nights Out on the first and second Monday of the month. On the first Monday we play Left Center Right (LCR) which is a dice game for three or more players that does not require deep concentration. However, on the second we play BunKo, a little more challenging game as it is difficult to talk and count the dots at the same time! The hostess usually provides the entree and guests bring side dishes, spirits, etc. We send all our invitations through Evite and if you'd like to join our game nights please send us your name,

contact number and Evite to welcome@miralagoshoa.com. Participation is not mandatory but we strongly encourage your response to the invitation either with a "yea" or "nah," in order to keep your name on our list.

On a separate note, I'd like to point out that several of our new neighbors are retired military, and I along with the Welcome Committee want to extend a special "thank you" for your service to our country. You are a very special neighbor in our book! We would also like to extend our thanks to the Police Officers that make Mira Lagos their home, your service is also recognized and appreciated.

Elissa Sherlock
Welcome Committee Chair
welcome@miralagoshoa.com



What's Happening



UPCOMING EVENTS

Mayfest

Date: 04/28/2016 – 05/01/2016

Location: Trinity Park

2401 University Drive

Fort Worth, TX 76107

Mayfest is the biggest party in Fort Worth! Four days of live music, festival food, carnival rides, performing arts, pet adoptions, USATF-certified 5K, 10K, and 1K Fun Run, more than 60 Art and Gift Market vendors, free children's activities, special attractions - the list goes on and on! Held on the first weekend in May on 33 glorious acres in Fort Worth's Trinity Park, Mayfest is one event you won't want to miss!

Cost: May vary, please visit event's website for more information
<https://www.mayfest.org/>

Craft Fair Day at Farmers Market

Date: 05/07/2016 | 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Location: Market Square

120 W. Main St.

Grand Prairie, Texas 75050

Join us at the Farmers Market for our first Craft Fair Day of the 2016 season. In addition to our weekly farmers and vendors, a number of craft vendors will be onsite selling homemade crafts, jewelry, art, woodwork, lawn art, and much more.

Smartscape Plant Sale

Date: 05/14/2016 | 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: Home Depot

5280 S. SH 360

Grand Prairie, Texas 75052

Speak with plant experts, get ideas and tips about xeriscaping (low water-use landscaping) to help you save money, beautify homes, reduce storm water pollution, and attract native butterflies and hummingbirds. Giveaways, workshops for kids and more. Hosted by the City of Grand Prairie Public Works and Parks, Arts and Recreation Departments, along with the Home Depot.

Honor the Fallen Prairie Run

Date: 05/14/2016

Location: AirHogs Ballpark

1600 Lone Star Parkway

Grand Prairie, Texas 75050

Benefiting Guns and Hoses of North Texas and the Texas Police Chiefs Foundation

Dragon Boat Festival

Date: 05/21/2016 | 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Location: Loyd Park

3401 Ragland Rd

Grand Prairie, Texas 75052

Join the Grand Prairie Chamber of Commerce for the 3rd annual Grand Prairie Dragon Boat Festival at Loyd Park. Dragon Boats are 40 feet long and seat 20 paddlers, 1 drummer and 1 steersman. There will be several food and craft vendors, a playground for the kids, a beach area, and spectacular boat races!

Cost: \$10 per car for parking.

Information: www.gpdragonboat.com

2016 Relay for Life of Grand Prairie

Date: 05/21/2016 | 4:00 PM - 05/22/2016 12:00 AM

Location: Reagan Middle School

4616 E. Bardin Road

Grand Prairie, Texas 75052

Celebrate. Remember. Fight Back. The American Cancer Society Relay For Life event is a life-changing experience that gives everyone in communities across the globe a chance to Celebrate the lives of people who have battled cancer, Remember loved ones lost, and Fight Back against the disease. Each year, more than 4 million people in over 20 countries take part in this global phenomenon and raise much-needed funds and awareness to save lives from cancer. For more information visit <http://www.cancer.org/involved/participate/relayforlife/index>

Low Cost Pet Vaccination Clinic

Date: 05/28/2016 | 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Location: Prairie Paws Adoption Center

Conference Room

2222 W. Warrior Tr.

Grand Prairie, Texas 75052

Spay Neuter Network is an organization that offers low cost vaccinations and services for pets. They offer offsite vaccination events for dogs and cats quarterly at the Prairie Paws Adoption Center.

For more information you can contact Prairie Paws at 972-237-8575.

Memorial Day Ceremony

Date: 05/30/2016

Location: Grand Prairie Veterans

Memorial

925 W. Conover Dr.

Grand Prairie, Texas 75050

Honor the men and women who have given their lives for our great nation. The ceremony includes a bag piper, column guard, 21 gun salute, vintage air craft fly over, live orchestra and more. After the ceremony, enjoy hot dogs, lemonade, chips and cookies provided by local Rotary Clubs.

Information: 972-237-8100,
www.GrandFunGP.com

For more information on what's happening in Grand Prairie go to <http://www.gptx.org/about-us/community-calendar>.

**Make Your
Plans Now to
Attend These
Fun Events!**



Annual Luau and BBQ Cook-Off Saturday, May 21, 2016, 4p-7pm at the South Pool!

Neighbors, mark your calendars to attend the biggest Mira Lagos event of the year: The Annual Luau and BBQ Challenge on Saturday, May 21st at the South Pool on S. Camino Lagos from 5 pm to 8 pm!

Start the afternoon off soaking in the sun or splashing in the pool as you take in the succulent sights and scents of the BBQ on the grills. Yes, back by popular demand is the BBQ Challenge with prizes for the BEST BBQ in Mira Lagos!!!

DJ Shon returns with pool-side music and entertainment and the Polynesian Dancers never disappoint with their outstanding show and fire dancers! Of course, there will be games, refreshments including Dippin' Dots and Smoothies and of course catered BBQ.

Itinerary:

- Luau and BBQ Event begins at 4 pm.
- BBQ judging will begin about 5 pm, with top prizes! Winners announced and each Grill Master will be recognized.
- Catered BBQ will begin about 4:30pm. Arrive early! Served until the food is gone!!
- Polynesian Dance Show featuring Fire Dancers will begin at dusk about 6:00pm

Grill Masters: There's still time to enter the ML BBQ Challenge!!! Send an e-mail by Friday, May 13th to social@miralagoshoa.com for more information.

The Social Committee is seeking Teen Volunteers!
Earn your community service hours during the Mira Lagos Social Events and Activities. Contact the Social Committee at social@miralagoshoa.com for more information.

Mira Lagos HOA Social Committee

NATIONAL WOMEN'S CHECK-UP DAY

What is National Women's Health Week?

National Women's Health Week is an observance led by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health. The goal is to empower women to make their health a priority. The week also serves as a time to help women understand what steps they can take to improve their health. The 17th annual National Women's Health Week kicks off on Mother's Day, May 8, and is celebrated until May 14, 2016.

What steps can I take for better health?

To improve your physical and mental health, you can:

- Visit a doctor or nurse to receive regular checkups and preventive screenings.
- Get active.
- Eat healthy.
- Pay attention to mental health, including getting enough sleep and managing stress.
- Avoid unhealthy behaviors, such as smoking, texting while driving, and not wearing a seatbelt or bicycle helmet.

How can I participate in National Women's Health Week?

The Office on Women's Health invites women across the country to:

- Spread the word through social media. Use the #NWHW hashtag.
- Organize events or activities.

WomensHealth.Gov

Share your announcement!



If you have a Mira Lagos senior who will be graduating this year, and what to share the news, please send:

- Name of graduate
- Recent photo
- School name
- Parent's names
- Plans for after graduation

Your email to communications@miralagoshoa.com means you grant us permission to use and publish the photograph and information you provided.

Something is Hidden. Can you find it?



We have hidden in the Mira Lagos Messenger,
AN EMERALD!

Please email manager@miralagoshoa.com in the subject line put "I FOUND IT", a random drawing, WINS! Provide page item is on, name, address and phone number in the email.

Good Luck and have fun!
If you find it there is a \$20.00 gift card.

HOA POOL RULES



1. NO LIFEGUARD on duty. Swim at your own risk.
2. Children under the age of 14 MUST be accompanied by a resident, 18 years or older, possessing a valid pool card.
3. Only 4 guests allowed per residence. A resident, 18 years or older, possessing a valid pool card, MUST accompany all guests.
4. Proper swimwear required.
5. Persons with skin diseases, open sores or wounds, inflamed eyes, nasal or ear infections or any communicable diseases are not allowed to use the pool.
6. For the health and safety of the residents, rubber pants in addition to swim diapers are REQUIRED for all non-toilet trained children.
7. NO water wings allowed without a U.S. Coast Guard approved life vest, properly fitted with age and with adult supervision. NO rafts allowed.
8. NO diving allowed.
9. NO pets, NO smoking, NO alcohol or glass objects of any kind allowed in pool area. NO food or drink allowed in the pool water.
10. Radios and other noise should be maintained at a low level at all times.
11. DO NOT ride bikes, tricycles, scooters, roller blades, skateboards, or any other similar vehicle in the pool area.
12. Running, roughhousing or general horseplay that may endanger the safety of others is NOT allowed.
13. Foul language and/or threatening behavior will NOT be tolerated.
14. Emergency equipment is to be used for emergencies only.
15. Access to the equipment room is restricted.
16. NO trespassing after pool hours or during pool closures.
17. The Homeowners Association or Management Company is not responsible for personal property, accidents, injuries or theft.
18. VANDALISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. To report vandalism, call police immediately, then notify Management Company 817-473-6787.
19. Pools WILL CLOSE during inclement weather.
20. In case of EMERGENCY, CALL 911.

Violation of pool rules may lead to revoking of pool privileges and/or criminal prosecution.



Pool will open May 1st

If you are a new homeowner and have not obtained your pool card, stop by the onsite office prior to May 1st. If you have lost your card, we will require a \$25.00 replacement card fee. Your old card will be turned off and a new card will be issued.

Remember pool rules apply to everyone. If you fail to follow the posted rules, you are subject to losing your privilege to the pools. Tenants must have written homeowner approval prior to receiving a card, also a copy of the lease agreement is necessary to obtain pool access.

Let's make this a great pool season! Can't wait to see you out there!

Grand Prairie Snap & Send!



Grand Prairie residents using the city's new "Snap and Send" app can now report issues, such as street light outages and code violations, using their smartphones. The app, currently compatible with iPhone, iPad and iPod touch, allows users to specify the location of an issue and attach a photo to send directly to city staff as well as track the status of their service requests.

Search "Snap and Send Grand Prairie TX" in the Apple App Store and download for free. The city plans to make the app available for Android users in the future.

Residents can also report issues directly through the city's website at gptx.org/report or call city offices at 972-237-8000.

Self Defense Class

On March 10 in the gymnasium at Cora Spencer Elementary School the Mira Lagos HOA Safety Committee hosted a Women's Self-Defense class. Instructors from Natural Way Martial Arts led a group of 13 ladies through natural body motions and fundamental principles of self-defense movements. These techniques involved natural body motions such as walking, twisting, etc., were used to prevent certain strikes, block incoming attacks and respond with a counter-attack.

This class provided hands-on training for our residents. The training was divided in two sections: individual training where the movements were taught, and paired-up training in which the ladies practiced the movements learned. The simplicity of the movements allowed for easy to learn techniques that can be safely executed in practice and in everyday situations.

Based upon demand, future classes may build upon the introductory class to include throws, sweeps and takedowns.

The Mira Lagos HOA Safety Committee would like to extend special thanks to Instructors Doug Stephens and Tom Schamp (second-degree black belts), and assistant Camm Schamp, for their work leading the class.

Information about: Natural Way Martial Arts. The Natural Way teaching method, called "Chayon-Ryu," was inaugurated in 1970 and has been used all over the world as an effective and safe way to teach martial art and self-defense techniques to students of all ages. This method has been used as the teaching method for the credit martial art classes at various Universities throughout the United States. In 1997 the Texas Martial Arts Hall of Fame selected "Chayon-Ryu" as "System of the Year." The Texas State Resolution 989 was presented to Pyung-Soo Kim founder of "Chayon-Ryu" in the Texas Senate Chamber of the Texas Capitol in Austin, Texas, honoring the 45th anniversary of Chayon-Ryu martial art system and its outstanding contributions to the community.

Chayon-Ryu has been available in the Dallas/Fort Worth area since 1994. While the local school is in Arlington, future plans include building interest to open a local school in or near Mira Lagos. Several students of Chayon-Ryu already reside in Mira Lagos, including one Master and one second-degree black belt.

To receive a free pocket calendar from Chayon-Ryu, visit the web site at www.miralagoskarate.com, go to the 'Contact Us' page, fill out all blanks and include, "I saw you in the Mira Lagos Messenger" in the message box. Remember to include your mailing address.

For more information, visit www.miralagoskarate.com.

For information about Chayon-Ryu, visit www.chayonryu.com.



5 Easy Ways to Improve Your Landscape

1 Mow your yard weekly, cutting off 1/3 of the leaf blade. Regular mowing helps control weeds by not allowing seed production, while stimulating the grass to thicken up. Healthy grass crowds out weeds and shades the ground to help retain moisture. In hot dry climates, most grasses will be healthier if cut about 3 inches tall. Pull weeds if possible or use liquid weed killer (hose end sprayer) for broadleaf weeds. There are different products for Bermuda and St. Augustine. If grass is actively growing (green) you can use fertilizer or a weed and feed product depending on your preference. Keep all weed killers away from trees, shrubs and gardens. Do not mow when grass is wet!

2 Level your soil, by filling in low spots with top soil as needed. Over time, our clay soil tends to compact, due to foot traffic. If soil is compacted, aerate with a core aerator to allow air and nutrients into the soil before adding top soil.

3 Raise the canopy on your trees, by pruning off lower branches flush with the tree trunk. Removing the lower branches encourages trees to grow up instead of out. Prune trees before it gets too hot. Regular pruning of small lower branches, will help to shape young trees without stressing them out, and allows sun to get to your lawn. Overgrown trees block visibility of your house and invites crime. Trees that come into contact with your house damages your shingles and gives wildlife access to your attic.

4 Plant Flowers! Adding color to your landscape improves curb appeal. Add Annual flowers (flowers that produce seeds and die at first frost) in front of shrubs for instant color, and use Perennial flowers (flowers that die down at frost, but come back year after year) for seasonal bloom. Use a mixture of leaf colors and textures to add interest. Pay attention to sun exposure, water requirements and

height and width of mature plants. Add mulch to gardens to help retain moisture, but keep it from touching your foundation (to help prevent termites)

5 Get acquainted with your sprinkler system. Verify your controller settings, and check for leaks on a regular basis, to conserve water and prevent heart attacks from high water bills. In general, lawn grasses and plants need at least 1 inch of water per week year around. In the Summer be sure to water trees and shrubs deeply once a week if mother nature is not providing rain. Soaker hoses work great to conserve water and allow the soil to absorb water instead of running off.

If you have any questions regarding landscaping, suggestions for future articles, or to join the Landscaping committee, email landscape@miralagoshoa.com.



Find your physician at Answers2.org or call today 214-947-6296

5 Interesting Facts About Cinco de Mayo



Cinco de Mayo is not only celebrated in Mexico, but in the United States of America and around the world. It's not just another excuse to celebrate Mexico's cuisine or at times known as the "Mexican St. Patrick's Day." Cinco de Mayo has a relevant meaning in the history of Mexico and especially if you understand what it is all about. Here are five interesting facts about Cinco de Mayo:

1. In case your Spanish is muy rusty- Cinco de Mayo translates to May fifth.
2. It's not Mexico's Independence Day- It's a very common misconception. Mexico's famous call to arms to overthrow the Spanish was on September 16th, 1810, which is celebrated as Mexico's Independence Day.
3. It celebrates a victory against France - In May 5th, 1862 the French army was making a military advance in Mexican soil to force the government to pay for a debt owed. In the city of Puebla, Mexico, the Mexican military with no training and sub-standard weapons fought and won against the more organized French army. Call it luck or divine intervention, but "The Battle of Puebla" is now celebrated every May fifth.
4. It's not such a big deal in Mexico - Don't get me wrong, The Battle of Puebla is very important and usually celebrated with family gatherings, fireworks, feasts and more, but mainly in Puebla, the city where the battle took place. However, Cinco de Mayo is not such a big deal as their Independence Day.
5. It's a bigger deal in the United States – The largest celebration is usually held in Los Angeles, California. Last year's Festival de Fiesta Broadway drew approximately 300,000 people. Cities like New York City, Denver and Houston also throw large parties in honor of the day.

Now that you learned a couple of things open the avocados, warm up the tortillas, set up the grill and the fajita meats, and invite your neighbors to join you and yours this Cinco de Mayo for a fiesta.

Mira Lagos Pet Tips



Simple steps to help prevent your pet from overheating. With the summer approaching here are a few tips that can help proactively keep your pets safe this summer.

Made in the Shade

Pets can get dehydrated quickly, so give them plenty of fresh, clean water when it's hot outdoors. Make sure your pets have a shady place to get out of the sun, be careful to not over-exercise them, and keep them indoors when it's extremely hot.

Know the Warning Signs

Symptoms of overheating in pets include excessive panting or difficulty breathing, increased heart and respiratory rate, drooling, mild weakness, stupor or even collapse. They can also include seizures, bloody diarrhea and vomit along with an elevated body temperature of over 104 degrees. Animals with flat faces, like Pugs and Persian cats, are more susceptible to heat stroke since they cannot pant as effectively. These pets, along with the elderly, the overweight, and those with heart or lung diseases, should be kept cool in air-conditioned rooms as much as possible.

No Parking!

Never leave your animals alone in a parked vehicle. On a hot day, a parked car can become a furnace in no time—even with the windows open—which could lead to fatal heatstroke. Also, leaving pets unattended in cars in extreme weather is illegal.

Make a Safe Splash

Do not leave pets unsupervised around a pool—not all dogs are good swimmers. Introduce your pets to water gradually and make sure they wear flotation devices when on boats. Rinse your dog off after swimming to remove chlorine or salt from its fur, and try to keep your dog from drinking pool water, which contains chlorine and other chemicals that could cause stomach upset.

Street Smarts

When the temperature is very high don't let your dog linger on hot asphalt. Being so close to the ground, your pooch's body can heat up quickly, and sensitive paw pads can burn. Keep walks during these times to a minimum.

Landscape and Landscape Border Guidelines

Landscape and Landscape Maintenance requirements are governed by Mira Lagos's Declaration of Covenants, Easements and Restrictions.

You do NOT need ACC approval:

- If you are replanting/replacing undesired, damaged, or dead plants with like plants of the same variety.
- If you are updating/replacing seasonal plants.
- If you are mulching, mowing, weeding, trimming or any other type of maintenance activity designed to keep your yard and landscaping in a healthy, neat, and attractive manner.

You need ACC approval:

- If you are constructing new flower/landscape beds or planting in new locations.
- If you are removing and not replacing plants.
- If you are changing the size, shape or dimensions of your flower/landscape beds.
- If you are installing borders on your flower/landscape beds.
- If your changes would affect the irrigation or drainage on your lot or your neighbors' lots.
- If you are planting in easements or drainage swales.
- If you changing the size or variety of a tree than what was originally planted.

When constructing your flowerbed, please keep in mind the following guidelines:

- Un-mortared brick borders are not permitted. If using brick, it must be mortared with no holes visible.
- Mortared and un-mortared stone and concrete borders are allowed, provided they



are neat, evenly aligned, and properly maintained.

- Flowerbeds and flowerbed borders are not allowed to abut public sidewalks as this area is usually a utility easement and a right-of-way. Also this is to minimize trip hazards as well as muck and debris from draining onto the sidewalks.
- A flowerbed border might change the drainage of your residence and lot. Please insure adequate drainage measures including drainage holes installed in the borders to keep your home warranty from being voided.
- Irrigation systems might need to be updated or modified following the installation of your flowerbed. Please insure your sprinklers are up to the job.

- Landscaping beds and borders may not encroach into a utility easement or drainage swale. Variances can be requested for backyard plantings, and to screen electrical boxes and air conditioning units.
- Borders and tree rings situated in the grassy strips located between the street curb and the sidewalk (the City of Grand Prairie's right-of-way) are not permitted.
- All damage to landscaping, irrigation, fences, sidewalks and curbing must be repaired immediately following the installation of your flowerbed and borders.
- Homeowners should be aware that any plantings in front and backyard utility easements may be removed by utility companies for utility access and maintenance.

I want to send out a **huge Thank you** to all those that dropped off stuff for the Mira Lagos Trash off. We had a huge success getting Peninsula Residents to clean up their garages and yards.

Thanks also to Mission Arlington!
They had enough household goods to fill a big box truck.



Are you paying too much in property taxes?

If your answer is yes, then you probably won't be too happy with an even higher tax bill. The time to act is NOW. Your taxes are rising. You can't save if you don't protest. The deadline to protest is May 31st. The most important right you have as a taxpayer is your right to protest your taxes. As a taxpayer, you have the right to protest any of the Appraisal District's actions and the right to lower your property taxes.

Here are three common misconceptions of your right to lower your property taxes:

1. You will lower your property taxes by telling the Appraisal District that your "taxes are too high."
2. Lowering the assessed value of your home will lower the amount you can sell your home for.
3. If I protest, the Appraisal District will retaliate against me and my property taxes will increase.

You will lower your property taxes by telling the Appraisal District that your "taxes are too high."

Your total property tax bill is the result of the county's combined current tax rate and the appraisal district's assessed value of your home, less any exemptions. Property taxes include County, City, School Districts, and in some areas, it will include Hospital District and College District taxes. In 2014, Tarrant County's net taxable value, which takes exemptions into account, rose by nearly \$6.8 billion, according to certified tax rolls released by the Tarrant Appraisal District. You should expect a similar hike in property taxes this year.

Your property's appraisal value is one of two components that determine your property tax bill. The first component is your home's assessed value listed on The Notice of Appraised Value. The Tarrant County Appraisal District must send The Notice of Appraised Value to residential homeowners by April 1, 2016. If the assessed value has increased, the notice must show an estimate of how much tax you will have to pay using the previous year's tax rate.

Your 2016 real property taxes are determined by the Appraisal District's assessed value of your home. The Appraisal District uses a mass appraisal method to assess your home's value. This method determines the appraised value of your home by using comparable home sales that occurred within the last two years. You have 30 days from the date of notice or by May 31st, whichever date is later.

You will NOT know the amount of property taxes you owe until it's too late to protest. The second component of your tax bill is the tax rate. Tarrant County will not adopt tax rates for the current year until September 29th. By October 1st, the tax assessor will mail a tax bill to each property owner listed on the tax roll. Your tax bill is based on the appraised value that was provided to you in the Notice of Appraised Value on April 1st.

Therefore, the only way to lower the amount of property taxes you owe is by lowering your home's assessed value by May 31st.

Lowering the assessed value of your home will lower the amount you can sell your home for.

If you are concerned that lowering your appraised value of your home through protest will lower the selling market value of your home, DON'T! Lowering your appraised value will not affect the amount you can sell your home for. The selling market value of your home is determined by recent sales in your area, not by the appraisal district's value. The assessed value appraisals are prepared exclusively for property tax purposes.

When you sell your home, the purchase price is not a matter of public record. Without the actual sale amounts the Appraisal District relies on private databases to determine the assessed value, including the Multiple Listing Service. MLS includes the sellers' listed price, not the actual purchase price. The limited data makes it difficult to accurately value properties and fairly assess taxes. In 2014, Tarrant County Appraisal District increased the value of about 260,000 homes. Approximately 75% of them increased by up to 10% and 31,000 increased more than 10%.

If I protest, the Appraisal District will retaliate against me and my property taxes will increase.



The value CANNOT be increased at informal hearings. The assessed value very rarely increases at the appraisal review board hearing. Approximately only one in 10,000 values are raised at the appraisal review board, and are typically raised because of extenuating circumstances. Savings of protesting property taxes far exceeds any risk.

The Appraisal District does not visit properties because the property taxes have been protested. You can request that they inspect the property, if you believe that it is in your best interest. For example, if they have a higher square footage listed for your homestead. In general, they do not have time or the staff to individually visit protested properties. There are only a couple hundred staff appraisers in each county. With close to one million homes in Tarrant County, it would be impossible for a staff appraiser to inspect each home.

Only .5% of all homeowners attempted to lower their property taxes last year. Remember, you can't save if you don't protest. The deadline to protest is May 31st.

For more information, you can check out www.contestpropertytaxes.com. This website was created Ali Crocker and Jennifer Valdez are the two attorneys who do this for a living and gave me this information.



May 2016 – Calendar

- 05/03 – National Teacher Day
- 05/04 – Star Wars Day (May the forth be with you)
- 05/05 – Cinco de Mayo
- 05/08 – Mother’s Day
- 05/09 – National Women's Check-Up Day
- 05/21 – Annual Luau/BBQ Cook Off
- 05/28 – National Burger Day
- 05/30 – Memorial Day

How to make **GUACAMOLE**

You'll need:

- 2 ripe Hass avocados
- 2 tsp. lime juice
- 2 tbspd. cilantro (chopped)
- ¼ cup red onion (finely chopped)
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- OPTIONAL: ½ jalapeño, including seeds (finely chopped)



The steps:

1. Cut avocados in half and then remove the pit
2. Scoop avocados and place in a medium bowl
3. Toss and coat with lime juice
4. Add salt and mash until smooth
5. Fold in the remaining ingredients and mix well
6. Taste the guac and adjust seasoning if necessary

Did you know? A plastic wrap tamped down snugly to the surface of the dip, to limit as much oxygen exposure as possible, alongside your lime will keep your guacamole fresh the longest.

If you have any recipes you'd like to share with the community please feel free to reach out to communications@miralagoshoa.com.

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Your Homestead Exemption Deadline is April 30th!

If you owned your home and have lived in it since January 1st, you may be eligible for a homestead exemption. The Texas legislature increased the exemption to \$25,000 in 2015, so if you qualify, be sure to file the appropriate paperwork with the Tarrant County Tax Appraiser's office. You do not need to file every year. Once you have filed, the tax appraiser will hold your homestead exemption information for future years. Even though we pay taxes to two different tax offices, you do not need to file this form in both tax offices. File in Tarrant County, as Dallas County relies on Tarrant County values to calculate the amount of city and PID taxes they collect. A copy of the exemption form can be downloaded from:

http://www.tad.org/templates/TAD/pdf/homestead_exemption_request_2015.pdf



Broker & State Certified Residential Real Estate Appraiser (# TX-1336180-R)