

April 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



Association Contact Information

www.miralagoshoa.com

www.texas.fsrconnect.com/miralagos

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

Matt Urbaniak,
Assistant Manager
Matt.Urbaniak@fsresidential.com

817-473-6787 (office)
817-473-4978 (fax)

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 Garrett

Cecelia White, Co-Chair

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!**

Board of Directors

Joshua Spare, President

Eric Blackwell, Vice President

Robert McLain, Secretary

Jessica Cafferata, Treasurer

John Hughes, Director

board@miralagoshoa.com

Safety

Robert McLain, Chairman

safety@miralagoshoa.com

Meetings:

1st Tuesday monthly



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

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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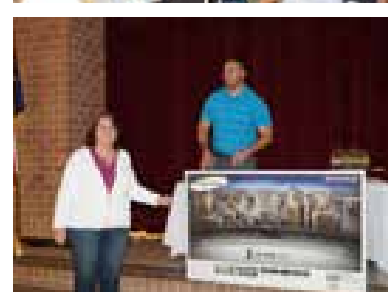
Mira Lagos Homeowners-

2016 has begun! Our transition from Developer to Homeowner control meeting has occurred with much success! Thank you to all those that homeowner's who made it out to our Annual Meeting on February 25th, 2016. We had over 175 in attendance that evening which ranks

as one of our best. We shared quite a bit of information regarding our progress this past year.....and of course, gave away some great door prizes to some very deserving homeowners to lighten things up!

I hope you all had a chance to meet the developers at Hanover, Dick LeBlanc and Walter Damon at the meeting. This was an emotional, yet exciting time for them. Hanover had been preparing Mira Lagos to be the great community that it is and having the support of all of you meant the world to them that evening. They are pleased with how many of you showed up to learn more about your community as well as taking part in an election to vote in the three new board members, John Hughes, Eric Blackwell, and Robert McLain. If you didn't have a chance to meet them at the meeting, I am sure you will see them around the community because they are very active in many of our social events throughout the year.

Here are a few pictures from the evening! It was a pleasure seeing and meeting the flood of new homeowners that came out to take part in this event. As I stated that evening, please email me if you have concerns or questions, I'll be happy to respond. I am looking forward to this new adventure in this New Year to come. Excited about the news that



Josh Spare had shared regarding the planned amenity center. As things become more finalized, I will send out more updated information as it comes available to me via eNews and newsletters.

2016 here we come...

Brought to You By Your Neighbor &
Mira Lagos Expert



"Our broker Christina Kang did an amazing job for us! We could not ask for any better customer service!"

Everett & Rebecca Walden

FREE MARKET ANALYSIS
Christina Kang 817.739.7433

Is The Sale of Your Home Taxable?

There are a few basic questions to answer to help determine if the sale of your home is a taxable event.

Have you lived in the house as your primary residence for two of the past five years?

Have you ever rented your house out, or used it for business purposes?

Did you sell your house for a gain of \$250,000 or more if single, or \$500,000 or more if married and filing jointly?

Have you sold another principle residence within the past two years?

Did you purchase your house within a 1031 tax deferred exchange?

These answers will go a long way to determining if you will owe federal income tax on the sale of your home.



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



What's Happening



Grand Prairie T F Y A S

Farmers Market Opening Day and Strollin' with the Mayor

Date: 04/02/2016 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Location: Market Square

120 W. Main St.

Grand Prairie, Texas 75050

Meet at Grand Prairie Farmers Market for "Strollin' with the Mayor" – a two-mile walk through the downtown area to kick off Opening Day for the 2016 Farmers Market season. To participate in Strollin' with the Mayor, gather at 8 a.m. at Market Square, 120 W. Main St., for Mayor Ron Jensen's opening remarks followed by a two-mile stroll through downtown. Mayor Jensen will share the 2016 schedule for the Cyclin' with the Mayor community bike rides.

Grand Prairie Farmers Market is open 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturdays April through December, featuring locally grown fruits and vegetables, meats, honey, pasta, spices, tamales, candles, soaps and more. For more information about the Grand Prairie Farmers Market, call 972-237-4599.

Free Electronics Recycling

Date: 04/02/2016 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Location: Development Center Parking Lot

206 W. Church St.

Grand Prairie, Texas 75050

Items accepted include computers, laptops, printers, VCRs, DVD players and TVs.

No registration required. Proof of residence in the form of a driver's license or water bill required. For more information, call 972-237-8151 or visit gptx.org/recycling. There is also a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day at the same time and place as the Electronics Recycling Event. Registration is required for Household Hazardous Waste. Register online at www.gptx.org/WQ/HHW

Concerts in the Park

Date: 04/08/2016 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Location: Central Park -

Summit Plaza Garden

2975 Esplanade

Grand Prairie, Texas 75052

Spring Concerts in Central Park 7-9 p.m. – rain or shine – March 25, April 1, April 8 and April 15.

Rain venue: The Summit Ballroom

Concerts in the Park are sponsored by: Grand Prairie Arts Council and City of Grand Prairie Parks, Arts and Recreation Department
Information: Grand Prairie Arts Council, 972-642-2787

Low Cost Pet Vaccination Clinic

Date: 04/09/2016 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: Prairie Paws Adoption Center
Conference Room

2222 W. Warrior Tr.

Grand Prairie, Texas 75052

972-237-8575

Grand Prairie Community Job Fair

Date: 04/09/2016 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Location: The Summit

2975 Esplanade

Grand Prairie, Texas 75052

Sponsored by L.I.F.E. Women's Ministry at Abundant Life Assembly of God Church.

For more information, contact Betty Trask at 972-268-4477 or trask.betty@gmail.com

Main Street Fest

Date: 04/22/2016 - 04/24/2016

Location: Market Square

120 W. Main St

Grand Prairie, Texas 75050

The City of Grand Prairie Parks, Arts and Recreation Department is hosting the 5th Annual Main Street Fest, scheduled for April 22-24 on the 200 block of W. Main Street and surrounding areas. Along with our selected performers, the festival will celebrate

the fun, festive, family atmosphere of Grand Prairie with LIVE! music featuring headlining performances, novelty entertainment, carnival rides, an arts & crafts area, business expo, food and beer gardens, a KIDZONE and so much more!

Information: mainstreetfest.com

Get Fit Run for Shelter 5K and 1-Mile "Chase the Chiefs" Fun Run

Date: 04/23/2016

Location: First United Methodist Church

121 N. Center St.

Grand Prairie, Texas 75050

Registration is underway for the 2nd Annual Get Fit 5K & "Chase the Chiefs" 1-Mile Fun Run, Saturday, April 23, 2016. Proceeds from the run will benefit LifeLine Shelter for Families Inc. And Get Fit GP health initiatives. Register Online

8:00 a.m.: The event will kick-off with kids and adults running with both Grand Prairie Police and Fire chiefs during the "Chase the Chiefs" 1-Mile Fun Run.

8:30 a.m.: The 5K will start at the corner of Main and Center St. Enjoy Get Fit GP partner booths and give-a-ways, music, a warm up with Camp Gladiator and awards after the run!

Contact Danny Boykin at dboykin@gptx.org or 972-237-8084 for more information.

Cinco de Mayo Celebration

Date: 04/30/2016 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Location: City Hall Campus

317 College St.

Grand Prairie, Texas 75050

Parade begins at 10 a.m.

Free entertainment: noon-6 p.m.

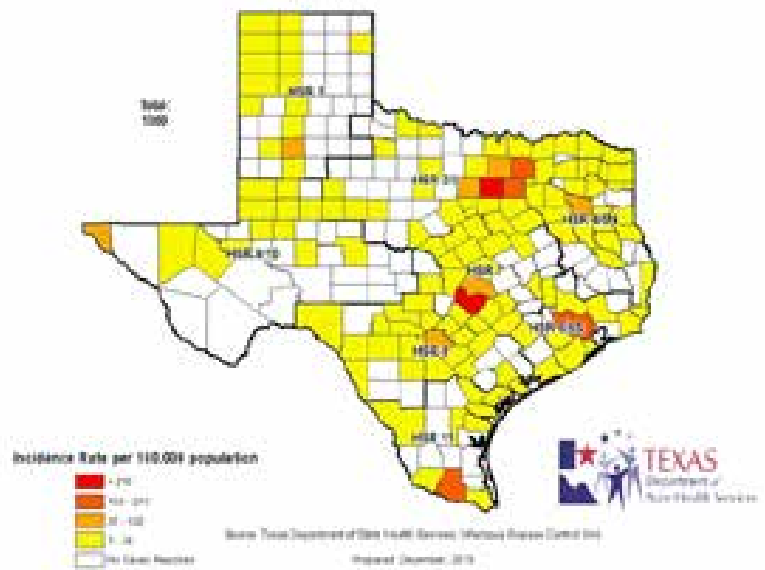
Featuring GPISD performers, mariachi bands, folkloric dancers and vocalists. Tex-Mex festival foods, bounce houses and more!

For more information, call 972-237-8100.




MIRA LAGOS
SPRING FLING
Saturday April 16, 2016
11am – 1pm
Fun for the entire family!
South Pool • 3025 S. Camino Lagos • Grand Prairie, TX 75054
 ML HOA Social Committee at social@miralagoshoa.com
 We're always looking for new volunteers...including teens!

Incidence Rates of Pertussis Cases in Texas, 2015*



Pertussis (commonly known as “Whooping Cough”) has made its presence known in Tarrant and Dallas County the past few years. According to the Texas Department of State Health Services Infectious Disease Control Unit, in 2015 Tarrant County was one of two counties in Texas that ranked the highest incident rate, at more than 210 per 100,000 population. (1)

What is pertussis? It is a very contagious bacterial disease that is potentially fatal, especially to an infant under 1 year of age. It is only found in humans. It can be transmitted by coughing, sneezing or by sharing a breathing space. The bacteria releases toxins which damage the cilia (tiny, hair-like extensions in the respiratory system) and cause the airways to swell. (2)

Symptoms: Once infected it takes seven to ten days for symptoms to appear. The symptoms could start as a runny nose, nasal congestion, watery eyes, fever, and coughing. After a few weeks, severe coughing attacks are caused by mucus thickening inside the airways. This can lead to vomiting a red or blue face, extreme fatigue, a cough that ends with a high-pitched “whoop” sound during the breath following the cough. Infants may not cough, but struggle to breathe or stop breathing. (3)

According to the CDC website, babies are at the greatest risk for getting pertussis and experiencing major problems from the illness. The following is offered as a strategy to protect people from pertussis:

Vaccinate pregnant women with the DTap or Tdap vaccination during pregnancy between week 27 and 36 of the pregnancy. By doing this, the mothers build antibodies that are transferred to the newborn.

Make sure everyone that will interact with the baby has a current pertussis vaccination. Those that plan to come into contact with the baby should be vaccinated no less than two weeks prior to contact with the baby.

If you have any questions, please consult your primary care physician. Please do your part to help keep our community safe.

Robert McLain
 Mira Lagos Safety Committee

Sources: 2015 Incidence Rate Map. Texas Department of State and Health Services. <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/asse/is/0176/1111/848/921/998/999/31564230-7399-43d7-9d45-921d3a67da03.jpg>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/about/causes-transmission.html>
 The Mayo Clinic Web site. <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/whooping-cough/basics/symptoms/con-20023295>

Pools 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!

Something is Hidden.
Can you find it?

We have hidden in the
 Mira Lagos Messenger,
A FLOWER!

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.



Welcome New Board Members



Thanks to all that participating in the Mira Lagos Annual Meeting Election! We had six candidates and 3 seats open for the now homeowner board. Arquila Todd, Deirdre Garrett, Eloy Villafranca, Eric Blackwell, John Hughes and Robert McLain. The turn-out in votes was exceptional this year and made for great Annual Meeting. Above are the newly elected board members. Robert McLain, John Hughes, and Eric Blackwell. Please take the time to help me welcome them to the Board! Congrats to you all!

We are looking forward to a successful new chapter to the Mira Lagos Homeowners Association!

Spring Gardening Tips

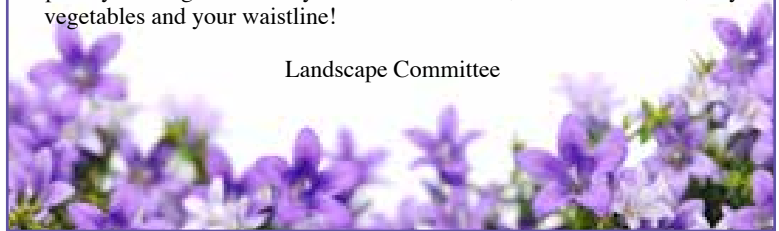
Winter never arrived this year and, so you probably got a head start on lawn and garden chores, but if not, don't despair. By April in North Texas, we should be safe from late season freezes. If you haven't already started planting, now is the time to get inspired and make a plan.

- Sow vegetable and flower seeds or plant bedding plants.
- Plant summer flowering bulbs, perennial flowers shrubs and trees.
- Fertilize lawn and existing trees. Aerate lawn if soil is compacted. If needed use Broadleaf weed killer on lawn, but avoid getting it on desirable plants and trees.
- Add compost to garden soil and work it into the soil.
- Lightly prune trees to raise the canopy height, and remove diseased and crossing branches before it gets too hot.

It is a great time to audit your sprinkler system by checking your controller settings and looking for leaks before letting it run on auto pilot. One inch of water per week is ideal for lawn, plants and trees. April and May is also thunderstorm season. If mother-nature doesn't provide enough rain, be sure to supplement with your sprinklers, so that plants develop a strong root system heading into summer.

Everybody knows that a nicely landscaped yard increases property values, but did you know that gardening is also good for your health? So impress your neighbors with your manicured lawn, beautiful flowers, tasty vegetables and your waistline!

Landscape Committee



Mira Lagos Annual Luau and BBQ Cook-Off
Saturday, May 21, 2016

Luau party

Let's start the summer off right! Join us at the South Pool for some of the best BBQ in town, check out our local Grillmasters, music, dancers and family fun! Grillmasters...Get Ready!



Community Partners

Mira Lagos would like to thank to Mansfield Methodist for assisting with the upcoming Spring Fling, April 16th!



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.

Kids Corner

simple paper plate butterflies



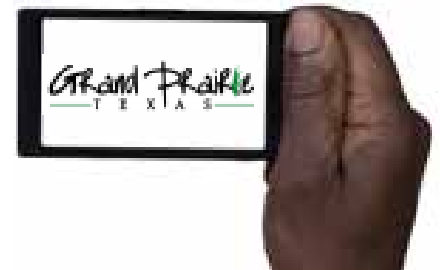
We love simple crafts that can be set up and made using only a few materials and done in those little snippets of time that busy families have. Yesterday we hit the gym, the grocery store, the beach, and two school conferences. It was a busy day to say the least but when my daughter and I were briefly in the playroom I noticed she'd covered a book in gems and asked her if she wanted to make a craft with them. We didn't have time to make this complicated and I think it turned out perfectly simple. I started making one after I

cut two plates by accident but she ended up finishing mine too! This easy paper plate craft is great for fine motor development (picking up and placing all those little pieces) too. Gather your materials. You will need a paper plate, pipe cleaner, glue, scissors, and some fun collage material like gems, buttons, sequins.... whatever you have on hand.

- Start by cutting two triangles out of the plate.
- Add glue. Much like her brother at this age adding glue is rather dramatic at times.
- Add on the gems and buttons.
- She had to spill them all over the table so she could find the "most amazing ones." Seems logical!
- Let dry enough so that the gems don't fall off. Add the pipe cleaner. She finished mine while hers was drying so you can see tons of glue on mine.

<http://www.notimeforflashcards.com/2014/03/paper-plate-craft-butterfly.html>

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.

Developer/Homeowner Transition: A Guide To Success

www.NeighborhoodLink

When an association is developed, the builder/developer/declarant commits large amounts of resources and dollars to construction of the project and its infrastructure and amenities. In order to protect his investment, provisions are built into the association's legal documents which allow him to exercise control over the direction and processes of the community until a time certain either a firm date several years in the future, or when a certain percentage of units have been sold to homeowners. As you can see, that developer control period can last months or even years.

During that time, the developer's representatives serve as members of the Board of Directors, and, as such, they are bound to act as fiduciaries and in the best interest of the association. It is a fine line to walk, since some decisions which are right for the community may result in unanticipated expenses for the developer.

Also, during that time, there are usually benchmarks that give homeowners some limited participation in the affairs of the association. These benchmarks can include formation of an advisory committee to make recommenda-

tions to the Board, and/or phased-in appointment of homeowners to the Board of Directors. At some point, however, the developer must turn over control of the association to the owners. A responsible developer will have encouraged homeowner involvement and training along the way, so that the owners are well prepared to assume the responsibility of directing association operations.

Transition is usually accomplished at a special meeting held for the purpose of electing homeowners to serve on the Board of Directors. Once the owners are in control, the real work begins! The only thing that ends at that meeting is the developer's control over the functioning of the association not his responsibility to it, and probably not his involvement and interest in it. He may still be selling homes and may still retain seats on the Board.

The newly elected owners now have a huge responsibility. They must insure that (1) the developer provides the association with any and all pertinent information; (2) the association reviews that information and questions the developer on any vague or ambiguous issues; and (3) the Board develops a strategic plan to go forward from that point.

One of the first steps a new Board should take is an audit of the association's financial situation. It is important for members of the Board, as well as all the owners, to satisfy themselves that while the developer was in control, all income and expenses were properly accounted for. That includes, but isn't limited to, the financial obligation of the developer himself, if any, and aggressive pursuit of delinquent accounts.

Good legal advice can also be important to the community. The association should retain independent counsel who is well versed in community association law, and who can ensure that the developer

Throughout the transition process described above, professional management can and should serve as advisor to the Board, custodian of the association's books and records, and the entity to which the Board turns to assist in the development of long-term plans and goals to make sure that a community's early due diligence translates into future continued success and financial stability for the owners. If that happens, all parties involved developer, transition board members, future board members, owners, and management will gain great satisfaction in a job well-done.

Attention Renters: Welcome to the Neighborhood

If you rent a home in our community, you're part of our community association, and we welcome you. We'd like to meet you at our community events, meetings, and social gatherings.

Sometimes we can't reach you to announce a party or meeting, especially if you're leasing from an out-of-state owner or a corporation. If this is you, please let our manager or a board member know your name, address, and phone—and we'll include you on all our mailing lists.

In case your landlord hasn't passed along this information, here are a few tips to make living in our community enjoyable and stress free:

- All residents—owners and renters—must comply with association rules and regulations. They're reasonable rules protect property values, preserve the nature of our community, and make more life enjoyable for everyone. If you need a copy of our rules, please contact the manager or a board member. The association has the legal authority to enforce all rules, which we do—equitably and consistently. We don't like to take action against those who may not have received this important information, but it's our obligation to do so.

- Renters are entitled to all the privileges of association membership except voting. We can't extend those privileges to you if we don't know who you are. Contact our manager or a board member and let us know how to reach you. That gives you the advantage of knowing what's going on in the community.
- You don't have to own your home to be interested in your community. If you'd like to volunteer for a committee or other type of service to the association, we can't wait to meet you. Responsible, service-minded residents are the backbone of our association regardless of their ownership status.
- If your lease is about up, and you're moving away, we're sorry to see you go; but, please notify the manager or tell a board member.

So, welcome to our community. We want you to enjoy your experience here—perhaps enough to become an owner someday.





Tax time is approaching and the Internal Revenue Service is letting taxpayers know what they should be looking out for this tax season. Of course, this 2016 tax season is really all about the tax year 2015. The IRS reminds everyone to have the correct forms they need to file.

Important documents:

- W-2's from employers
- 1099 forms from banks and other payers
- 1095-A form from the Marketplace to claim the premium tax credit

The deadline to file or mail your tax return is Monday April 18. The deadline is later than normal because Washington, D.C. will celebrate Emancipation Day on Friday, April 15, which was the original due date. To get more information you can check out the IRS website. When many Americans file their individual tax returns this year, they will take the IRS's standard deduction, which is based on age, income and filing status, and changes from year to year. For the calendar year 2014, the standard deduction is \$6,200 for singles and married people filing separate returns, and \$12,400 for married couples filing jointly.

But for those who either aren't eligible for the standard deduction or choose to itemize, every penny counts, and these frequently missed deductions can make a big difference when their tax bill is due.

State Tax or Sales Tax?

For many taxpayers, one of the first questions they consider when beginning their tax prep is whether to take the standard income tax deduction or itemize their deductions. But residents in the seven U.S. states without an income tax (Alaska, Florida, Nevada, South Dakota, Texas, Washington and Wyoming) know there's

another way: deducting state tax.

Luckily, U.S. residents outside of those seven states have the option to claim either state and local sales taxes, or state and local income taxes, whichever is greater. (But don't claim both!)

"After last year, the IRS allowed a sales tax deduction to occur in lieu of state income tax," says Curtis Erickson, a certified public accountant, personal financial specialist and certified tax coach in the income-tax-free state of Washington. "People think that's just a general table amount that the IRS allows based on their adjusted gross income, but you could still take the standard deduction and add expenditures for home improvements, or if you bought a new vehicle or a recreational vehicle, it could be a pretty significant deduction." The IRS offers a sales tax deduction calculator to help taxpayers determine the amount of taxes they are eligible to claim.

Re-Determining Dependents

The IRS says children can be declared dependents until age 19 if they're not in school, 24 if they are and at any age if they're permanently disabled. But many people aren't aware that parents can also qualify as dependents, according to the IRS. Americans of the so-called "sandwich generation," those people financially supporting both parents and children, might find extra relief at tax time by broadening their definition of dependent to match the IRS's.

"If you're providing more than half of a parent's financial support, you may be able to claim your parent as a dependent," Erickson says. "If that's the case, besides getting a dependent deduction, you may also be able to claim your parents' medical expenses when you itemize your own medical expenses."

Dependent status isn't only limited to parents and children, however. The IRS has allowances for more than 30 types of relatives, and says that a standard deduction for dependents is either \$1,000 per deduction, or the individual's earned income for the year plus \$350, whichever is the larger amount. For an easier breakdown, the TurboTax blog offers a handy cheat sheet.

Need a Bandage? Save the Receipt.

Whether caring for an ailing parent, making home improvements per a doctor's advice or writing off the mileage to shuttle dependents back and forth to appointments, deductions for medical care are the most overlooked deductions and can help create a healthy return for qualifying taxpayers.

"The deductions that most people know about are the ones they get handed to them in the mail – mortgage interest, property taxes and charitable deductions," says Dan Connors, a CPA in private practice in Missouri. "Probably the most hidden deductions are medical deductions because they are not reported to the IRS by medical providers, and the 10 percent income threshold for them makes the deductions meaningless for a great number of people."

From smaller items like hearing aid batteries and bandages, to larger expenses, including health care premiums, wages for a home health care worker and nursing home care, many health care expenses qualify, provided they account for more than 10 percent of earned income. Connors says large-scale home renovations done per a doctor's direction or to make a home more accessible might also qualify as a medical deduction.

A Penny Saved ... Is Next Year's Deduction.

Whether you're working with a CPA, walking into a H&R Block or Jackson Hewitt office at the last minute or filing at home via TurboTax or other online tax prep software, think twice before simply taking a standard deduction. Itemized deductions may take more time to organize and report, but for those who qualify, they can help minimize your tax bill and maximize your return. Those savings, in turn, can help send a dependent child off to college, hire help to care for an aging relative or make some much-needed home repairs. And be sure to save all those receipts; they'll come in handy next year.

Source: <http://money.usnews.com/money/personal-finance/articles/2015/01/20/ease-your-tax-burden-with-these-hidden-deductions>

APRIL IS NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

join us in
CELEBRATION



Nearly a quarter century ago, the Autism Society launched a nationwide effort to promote autism awareness, inclusion and self-determination for all, and assure that each person with ASD is provided the opportunity to achieve the highest possible quality of life. This year we want to go beyond simply promoting autism awareness to encouraging friends and collaborators to become partners in movement toward acceptance and appreciation. Let's embrace a new perspective. For over 50 years we have worked in communities (both large and small) to ensure our actions, through our services and programming, supported all individuals living with autism. Let's expand this work to focus on the rest of us – ensuring acceptance and inclusion in schools and communities that results in true appreciation of the unique aspects of all people. We want to get one step closer to a society where those with ASDs are truly valued for their unique talents and gifts.

Join us in celebration for 2016 National Autism Awareness Month! National Autism Awareness Month represents an excellent opportunity to promote autism awareness, autism acceptance and to draw attention to the tens of thousands facing an autism diagnosis each year.

How is it celebrated?

- Presidential/Congressional declarations
- Online events and activities
- Local events and activities through affiliates
- Partner opportunities

What can I do?

- Download the NAAM poster and distribute to schools, libraries and community centers in your neighborhood.
- Recognize someone who is affected by autism and share your nomination on social media.
- Sign up for e-newsletter Autism Matters to continue sharing ideas on how to make a better world for autism here.
- Share your experience/stories with NAAM or autism with us!

Put on the Puzzle! The Autism Awareness Puzzle Ribbon is the most recognized symbol of the autism community in the world. Autism prevalence is now one in every 68 children in America. Show your support for people with autism by wearing the Autism Awareness Puzzle Ribbon – as a pin on your shirt, a magnet on your car, a badge on your blog, or even your Facebook profile picture – and educate folks on the potential of people with autism! To learn more about the Autism Awareness Ribbon, click here. To purchase the Autism Awareness Puzzle Ribbon for your shirt, car, locker or refrigerator, click here.

Connect with your neighborhood. Many Autism Society local affiliates hold special events in their communities throughout the month of April. But if you can't find an event that suits you just right, create your own!

Watch a movie. Did you know that something that seems as simple as going to the movies is not an option for many families affected by autism? The Autism Society is working with AMC Theatres to bring special-needs families Sensory Friendly Films every month.

Donate to the Autism Society: Help improve the lives of all impacted by autism with a financial gift to the Autism Society. Every dollar raised by the Autism Society allows us to improve the capabilities and services of our over 100 nationwide affiliates, provide the best national resource database and contact center specializing in autism, and increase public awareness about autism and the day-to-day issues faced by individuals with ASD and their families. <http://www.autism-society.org/get-involved/national-autism-awareness-month/>

CCRS – Did you know?

Mailboxes

Mailboxes not only serve a functional purpose, but also provide curb appeal. If your mailbox is looking less than appealing, it may be time for a makeover or replacement. The Governing Documents are specific as to the material that the mailboxes are to be constructed along with the numbers of the address block must be installed on the front façade or on the mailbox of each residence. For specifications, please see Section 4.8 of the Governing Documents.

Yards

As with fences and mailboxes, our yards are essential in providing curb appeal and beautification throughout Providence. Landscaping is one of the most time consuming parts of maintaining our homes, but is also one of the most vital. During these hot summer months, it is crucial that we water our yards and that our trees and shrubbery get plenty to drink. The sun of the summer also leads to the growth of pesky weeds. Please ensure that your yard is treated and that your tree wells and flower beds are free of weeds; one weed can quickly spread and create a problem not only in your lawn, but in your neighbors' as well. The most simple part of landscaping is the mowing and edging; however, this is also the most noticeable when it is being neglected. Please do your part in keeping Mira Lagos beautiful. For more information on lawn maintenance requirements, please see Section 4.16 in your Governing Documents

Who to Call



- Non-emergency Police(972)-237-8700
- Fire Department(972)-237-8300
- Animal Services
- Loose animals, barking dogs (972)-237-8575
- City Code Enforcement
- storing vehicles, unkempt yards(972)-237-8049
-or (972)-237-8296

- Oncor - Street lights out(888)-313-4747
- <https://www.oncorstreetlight.com>

- Grand Prairie Peninsula PID(972)-237-8091
- Garbage and Recycling(972)-237-8151
- Water Department(972)-237-8200

PARKING



The public streets in Mira Lagos fall under Grand Prairie's regulation so there are no laws forbidding street parking.

However, there are some factors you might consider:

- Street parking creates risks for children at play.
- Minimizing street parking improves the neighborhood appearance and is most appreciated by others who live in the area. Street parking is a common concern expressed by residents.
- Street parking tends to reduce the desirability of the neighborhood for new home buyers.

Obviously there are times when your family or visitors must park on the street, but if so please park in the direction of traffic and not by a fire hydrant or near an intersection.

If you see a vehicle that has been parked for more than a few days you call the Grand Prairie code compliance or non-emergency police department (972)-237-8700 to report it. The police have access to vehicle owner information that the HOA does not have, so reporting it allows the Code Compliance or police to make contact with the owner and inform if the vehicle needs to be moved.

Please note that the gated area of Las Brisas have their own restrictions which may restrict overnight parking. In addition, RV's boats, trailers are prohibited anywhere in the community (including driveways) for a period of time. These kinds of vehicles should be stored off site and are to be in the community for loading and unloading only.

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Recipe Of The Month

Cinnamon French Toast Sticks

PREP TIME 5 mins

COOK TIME 10 mins

TOTAL TIME 15 mins

French toast you can eat with your fingers and tastes like cinnamon doughnuts!

Author: Nagi | RecipeTin Eats

Recipe type: Breakfast, Brunch

Serves: 2-3

INGREDIENTS

- 4 thick slices white bread (see notes)
- 1½ tbsp butter
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup milk
- Salt
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ tsp cinnamon powder
- Maple syrup to serve (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut each slice into 4 sticks. (Remove the crust if you want - this is optional. Makes it look neater.)
2. Combine the eggs, milk and a pinch of

salt in a bowl large enough to roll the bread sticks in.

3. Combine the cinnamon and sugar on a plate.
4. Heat half the butter in a large pan over medium high heat.
5. Roll the sticks in the egg mixture quickly (do not soak them), shake off excess and place in pan. In my pan I can fit 8 sticks so I cook them in 2 batches.
6. Turn to cook each side until golden.
7. Immediately transfer to the plate with the cinnamon sugar and roll to coat. It's important to do this quickly while they are hot straight out of the pan so it sticks.
8. Melt remaining butter and cook the remaining french toast sticks.
9. Serve immediately with maple syrup to dunk the sticks in.

NOTES

1. French toast is best made using stale bread. Fresh bread soaks up too much egg mixture, making it soggy on the inside and



your sticks will flop when you pick them up.

2. It is best to use a loaf so you can cut thick slices as the thicker the sticks are (and the staler the bread is), the stiffer the sticks are (ie. they won't flop when picked up using fingers).



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