

THE

# FRONT PORCH News



News and Information from the City of Bulverde and our Neighbors  
Volume 3 Issue 1 ☆ January 2016

Photo © Sam Roberts

THE  
**FRONT PORCH**  
News

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FRONT PORCH NEWS  
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As a City publication, the Front Porch News strives to maintain objectivity and accuracy in all published content. The newsletter must remain neutral in the publication of content that may be considered controversial, biased, or inflammatory within the community (e.g., political content or opinions, religious material, etc.). The newsletter differs from a newspaper in that opinion pieces are typically not included. Publication of contributing partner content is subject to review for applicability and appropriateness of a publicly funded communication initiative. The newsletter is produced in part through public funding, and is accordingly governed by the regulations set forth in Texas State Law.

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# MAYOR'S POINT

**Bill Krawietz**  
Mayor of Bulverde, TX

It is my belief Government needs to be open and transparent. It is important that citizens be kept up to date on matters that may affect them. As Mayor it has always been my intention to do just that in an unfiltered way. The happenings of the City need to be shared—good, bad or ugly.

The Texas Ethics Commission has clear and concise rules on electioneering. They prohibit elected officials from using a taxpayer funded newsletter, such as this one, for campaign purposes or political gain during an election cycle. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide factual, unbiased informatfor the educational purposes of the reader.

This held true during the City's Home Rule efforts. Staff and City Council were well briefed by our legal counsel to what was allowed to be published within this newsletter, or displayed on the City's website. City staff and I double checked each other's documents to make sure everything released fell within these strict guidelines.

Despite my efforts to follow all ethics guidelines as set forth by the State of Texas, multiple ethics accusations were filed

with the Texas Ethics Commission against me personally during the spring leading up to the Home Rule Charter election.

It took the Commission some time to review all the complaints, as they receive many throughout the State each election period. I'm the type of person who doesn't like having things hanging "over my head," and these unfounded accusations bothered me. There is also a matter of having to respond by Certified Mail to each of the allegations, and then the anticipation of awaiting the determination. To make matters worse, I received several Certified Letters from the Ethics Commission thinking it was a ruling, only to open it and find out it was a form letter saying they have not yet reviewed the case. What a letdown.

In the end, every single allegation was determined to be unwarranted by the State Ethics Commission.

My third term as Mayor will expire in May, and I have not yet decided whether or not to run again. However, I most certainly want to leave my options open. So as not to give my harsh critics any ammunition to file Ethics complaints against me, this will be my last Mayor's Point column until June of 2016.

Sorry for the inconvenience that this may cause. I will continue to work with City staff to make sure that the citizens of Bulverde stay well informed throughout these upcoming months.



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# The Scholarship Foundation's Emerging Leaders Series Provides Unique Opportunity for Area Students

The Emerging Leaders Series, sponsored by The Scholarship Foundation, recently welcomed its fifth class of sophomore student leaders from Canyon Lake High School into the annual leadership program. Composed of 28 student leaders, the Emerging Leaders Series is enjoying the largest class to date.



With a mission to provide youth the opportunity to attain life skills through creative environments and focused learning experiences, the Emerging Leaders Series is a unique program that continues to strengthen our community.

During the school year, student leaders will attend four seminars that take them out of the classroom and into creative, focused learning experiences around the community. The series consists of four seminars themed around brain dominance and aptitude, professional etiquette, college preparation and experience, and career development. Each seminar day is led by a group of student leaders who receive guidance and mentoring from a Scholarship Foundation Board Member.

Having already completed the first two seminars on brain dominance and professional etiquette in the fall of 2015, the student leaders are already appreciating the prestigious opportunity and are eager to attend the third (College Preparation) and fourth (Career Development) seminars, in January and March, respectively. To experience a "Year in the Life of an Emerging Leader," visit [www.ScholarshipFoundationELS.org](http://www.ScholarshipFoundationELS.org) and click on "Emerging Leaders Series."

With 92 previous graduates of the Emerging Leaders Series, The Scholarship Foundation is quickly building and developing a group of young leaders who will be even more prepared than their peers

in the increasingly competitive education fields and job markets. With plans for expanding the program to other area high schools, The Scholarship Foundation is eager to build new, lasting partnerships with businesses

and individuals in the community.

For more information about the Emerging Leaders Series, volunteering or partnerships, and donations, please visit [www.ScholarshipFoundationELS.org](http://www.ScholarshipFoundationELS.org) or call Board President Christopher Mammen at 210-685-3187.

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# COMAL COUNTY CORNER

by: Sherman Krause

The Bulverde area continued to grow in 2015, and Comal County is working hard to help meet the needs of that expanding population. A brief recap of the past 12 months gives a sense of how much is happening in the western part of our county.

• After months of planning, we broke ground in July on the new Comal County annex building on Cougar Bend. The foundation has been laid and the steel frame has gone up. Crews are working on the building's exterior now. We're hoping to open the new building—which will provide homes for the County Clerk's Office, County Tax Office, Precinct 2 Constable and Precinct 2 Justice of the Peace—by May.

• In October, we opened Kleck Park, the first county-owned and -maintained nature park in the Bulverde area. The wooded 43-acre tract was deeded to Comal County for use as a park by the Helen Kleck Vivian estate, and we are proud to see Kleck join Jumbo Evans Sports Park as a recreation site provided for Bulverde/Spring Branch-area residents.

• Of course, October also saw significant flooding throughout the Bulverde/Spring Branch area. Lewis and Cibolo creeks caused major damage to both private and public property, and the county has been working to recoup damages through the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Small Business Administration. Comal County was cleared for individual assistance, which means home and business owners can potentially receive grants from FEMA or long-term low-interest loans from the SBA.

It's not too late to register for assistance, if you haven't yet done so, by visiting [disasterassistance.gov](http://disasterassistance.gov).

• Last month, we welcomed the Bulverde Spring Branch Leadership Class to New Braunfels to get a closer look at county government and tour the historic Comal County Courthouse. We loved having them, and we hope they enjoyed their time with us!

If you want to learn more about county government, we have opened registration for the 2016 University of County Government, a nine-week class that will help you learn how the county functions, why it runs the way it does, and how it serves Comal County residents. It runs from 6-9 p.m. every Tuesday beginning March 8. You can apply for enrollment at [mycomalcounty.com/ucg](http://mycomalcounty.com/ucg). We hope to see you there!

2015 was a busy and exciting year. We look forward to making 2016 even better.

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# Bulverde Police Department 2015 in Review



Happy New Year! Ringing in 2016 means another year has come and gone and boy was it a busy year for many here at the City of Bulverde.

This past year the Bulverde Police Department has been very busy working on several major new initiatives. One of the largest this past year was the re-instatement of the D.A.R.E Program at four Comal ISD Elementary Schools in the area. A new partnership agreement with Comal ISD and the City of Bulverde allowed Bulverde PD to provide the nationally recognized Drug Abuse and Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program to over 500 elementary aged students that would have otherwise missed out on this valuable education and mentorship opportunity.

Beyond the D.A.R.E program, Bulverde PD is also expanding several other school-related initiatives such as Internet Safety Awareness,



Standard Response Protocol Training, student mentoring sessions, parent drop off meet and greet opportunities, career day events, etc. Additionally, BPD began working to bring the very well received Police Officers Educating Teens (P.O.E.T) program into several middle school campuses in the community. Building

partnerships to benefit the children of our community was a common goal between the City of Bulverde and Comal ISD in 2015, and will continue to be a majority priority looking forward.



A new programmatic addition to BPD for 2015 was the inception of the first-ever Bulverde Police Department Honor Guard. Four officers volunteered to participate as Honor Guard Members representing BPD, with their first



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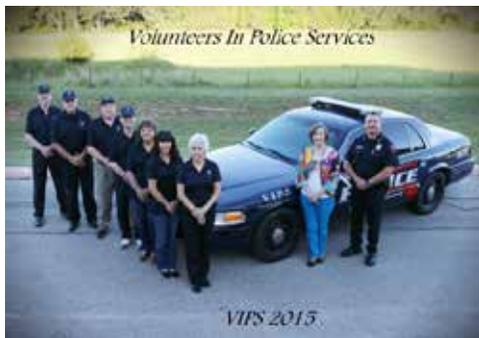
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presentation at the National Police Memorial Event at City Hall in May. To date, they have presented the Colors at many events in and around Bulverde, even teaming up with the Smithson Valley NJROTC for a joint presentation of the Colors at the 2015 Homecoming football game.

BPD was also very busy investigating various grant opportunities over the last year. Several grant applications were successful, and the department ultimately received approximately \$125,000 in grant opportunities, helping keep our local tax rates low. The grants will help provide equipment for better dispatch communications and increased response capabilities within our community. Exploring additional funding opportunities beyond traditional taxpayer resources will continue to be a priority in 2016.

BPD continued to expand our Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS) program in 2015, with our VIPS donating over 800 hours of their time and covering over 7,000 patrol miles this past year, making Bulverde a safer community in numerous ways.



Of course, one of our greatest accomplishments of 2015 was National Night Out (NNO). This year was a huge success with the Bulverde community placing 2nd in Texas and 14th in the Nation for cities our size. It's estimated that 700 Bulverde citizens participated in NNO this year, which is almost double the participants from 2014. Of course we couldn't have put on such a great event without the tremendous support of several of our businesses and numerous citizens (and block hosts!) of our community.

These are just a few highlights from 2015, as we look forward to 2016 with the optimism that the New Year will once again bring even greater successes than the year before.

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# Rescheduled 25<sup>TH</sup> Annual Bulverde Christmas Lighting a Grand Success



For the first time in 25 years, the annual Bulverde Christmas Lighting had to be rescheduled due to torrential rain. Even with this last minute change, the event was a great success. The Planning Committee wants to extend a huge thank you to all the businesses, organizations, and individuals who made the rescheduled 25th Annual Bulverde Christmas Lighting such a wonderful time for all. The Christmas tree provided by the City of Bulverde and all the lights were perfect, making Downtown Bulverde look like a Winter Wonderland. The



children were so excited to see Santa arrive on the Bulverde Spring Branch Fire Truck. They were able to visit with Santa in the special Santa house provided by Storage Solutions.

The vendors provided great food and goodies. Anderson Aviation gave away more than 1200 hot dogs, and people enjoyed delicious fare by Mike's in the Village Restaurant, Hatch 5, and Hair in the Village. The Reel and Bahama Bucks, as well as many other businesses and organizations, were very generous in the goodies they gave away to visitors. Many of the booths had fun activities for the children, while others had some great early Christmas shopping opportunities.

The entertainment was enjoyed by all. Charlie Wood provided music in front of his shop, and Christmas tunes were enjoyed at the Santa house. The Grinch was a big hit at Bags and Brews. All evening, children were encouraged to send off their letters to Santa from the Bulverde Post Office. Vintage travel trailers all decked out for Christmas made possible by Sisters on the Fly (who were in town for a separate event) added to the festivities.



Again this year, children had the opportunity to play in real snow sponsored by the following donors: Spring Branch Bulverde



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Lions Club, ABCD Pediatrics, AM Electrical Contractors, A&E Air Conditioning & Heating, Bookkeeping by Val, Hair Tech Plus, the UPS Store, South Texas Growers, and the Munkres/Wood Families. Admission to the snow area was a donation of nonperishable food to Provisions or an unwrapped toy for the Spring Branch Bulverde Lions Club Toy Drive. This Community is wonderful and giving—over 320 pounds of food items and a full box of toys were collected.



Creek Baptist Church, Give-Away Sponsor – T's Treasures, and the Program Sponsor – ABCD Pediatrics.

Bulverde Police Chief Haecker and his officers worked tirelessly to ensure event participants were safe and that the event ran smoothly. Children enjoyed face painting at their booth as well.

The Chamber would like to thank some of the other businesses that sponsored the event: Printing Sponsors – Clear Visions and Rebecca

This area Holiday celebration is a community effort hosted by the City of Bulverde, the Friends of the Village, and the Bulverde Spring Branch Chamber of Commerce. The event has grown tremendously, and would not take place without the cooperation of many businesses, civic groups and individuals. A special thank you is extended to Pastor Larry Garcia with Hill Country Christian Church, Sam Roberts Photography, Robert Evans, Grandpa's Plumbing, Home Depot, Landscape Lighting Guru, the folks at Greenstone Electrical Services for hanging the Christmas banners along Bulverde Road, and all the many businesses, organizations, volunteers and vendors who worked hard to make the rescheduled 25rd Annual Christmas Lighting such a magnificent local event.



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## ...And Stockings Were Hung by the Chimney With Care...



For several years, local business owner Bonnye Renfrow (Hair Tech Plus) has spearheaded and sponsored a wonderful Christmas Stocking program for the clients of the local food pantry Provisions: A 25:35 Outreach. 2015 proved to be the biggest year yet, as Bonnye and her crew provided 500 stockings full of goodies for the kids! Executive Director of Provisions Dora Baker wishes to thank Bonnye for her generosity and years of dedication to this project. Additionally, Bonnye would like to thank the following folks who worked with her this year to make the project a huge success—

- 🧦 Robbyn Poindexter, who took it upon herself to purchase everything for 115 stockings and stuff them. Go Robbyn!
- 🧦 Glenda Hendrix of Hendrix Enterprise
- 🧦 Tom Hotaling and Joe McNew of the Bulverde Lions Club
- 🧦 Joe Vocks of the Knights Of Columbus
- 🧦 Kim Boren of Blanco National Bank
- 🧦 The clients from Hair Tech Plus for their generous donations
- 🧦 Everyone in the Bulverde/Spring Branch area who donated to the GoFundMe for the project
- 🧦 Wade and Raegan Lowry of the 4-H Club for their help stuffing the stockings



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# What's Happening at the Park in 2016

## Friends of the Park



The New Year is here and the Friends of the Park are planning for another fun-filled year for 2016 at the Bulverde Community Park. So, mark your calendar, grab your friends and families and join us at the park!

### **Music in the Park** (new program)

Kicks off in March

### **Movies in the Park** – 2nd Friday of each month

April 8th

May 13th

June 10th

July 8th

August 12th

### **Bulverde Fun Fest** – 3rd Annual

June 11th

### **Day of Services** – 2nd Annual

August 6th

### **Park Shine** - 4th Saturday of each month

Join the Friends of the Park in efforts to keep our park clean and enjoyable.

If you would like information about becoming a sponsor of Movies in the Park or the Bulverde Fun Fest, or helping to Shine the Park, please contact Merri Harrison at [merri.harrison@yahoo.com](mailto:merri.harrison@yahoo.com).

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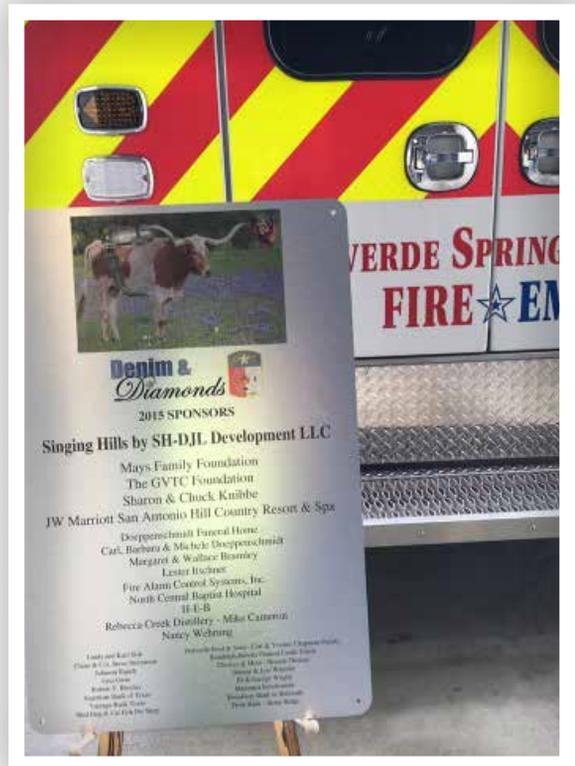
Through the generous support of our community, the Bulverde Spring Branch Fire & EMS Annual Denim & Diamonds event raised funds to replace 13 Air Packs that will soon be out of compliance for our full-time firefighters. These 13 air packs, each costing \$5844.14, meant that close to \$73,000 was the net profit for the event.



“It’s a Guy Thing” and “It’s a Girl Thing” wheelbarrows filled to the brim

The evening was a spectacular gathering of community to ensure that firefighters do not walk into burning structures without the proper equipment. The band, the entertainment, the steak dinner with sixteen other delicious items, the wheelbarrows filled to the brim, and the Yeti filled with Texas liquor all resulted in a most enjoyable evening.

Certainly, the focus of this event was to secure funds for critical equipment. Additionally, your first responders see this as an opportunity for residents and businesses to come together, not just for support, but also to have fun and socialize. Another appreciated benefit behind Denim & Diamonds is the community meets our CEO, Chiefs, Firefighters, and other personnel from Bulverde Spring Branch Fire & EMS in a relaxed setting. Denim & Diamonds is also a wonderful opportunity for firefighters to explain their equipment and their day-to-day lives, and answer any and all questions. A night of appreciation for all that the community and the first responders accomplish every day.



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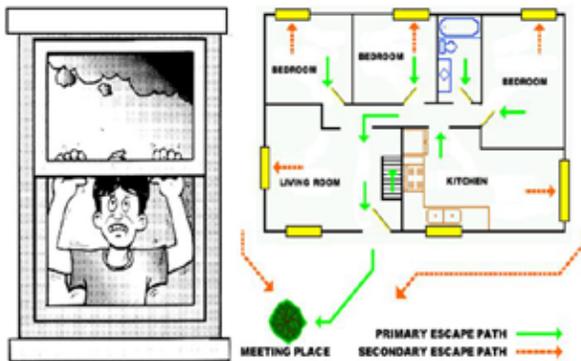
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Fire can spread rapidly through your home, leaving you as little as one or two minutes to escape safely if an alarm sounds. *Exit Drills in the Home* (E.D.I.T.H.) are plans that aid people to be prepared to react to a fire emergency in your home. Most home fires occur at night when people are the least prepared. Nighttime fires can become a disaster if you and your family are not familiar with how to escape during an emergency. Some people might think... "Gee, that's silly. I've lived in this house for 10 years... I know my way around. If there's a fire I can get out." When a fire happens, especially at night, you will be groggy... you will be afraid... you will be confused, even in your own home. Here are five steps to take to help ensure your safety in the case of a home fire:

1. Design your own fire escape plan. Sketch the floor plan of your home on a piece of paper. Indicate on the plan all doors, windows, and other areas for possible escape from each room in your home. Draw arrows to designate the normal exits which would be your primary escape route, and with an alternate color, draw arrows to denote a secondary exit from each room in the home.

## Plan Your Escape!



2. Specify a meeting place. Choose a location outside the home where family members should meet once they have escaped.

3. Smoke Detectors. The number of detectors you need and their location depends upon the layout of your home. There should be one smoke detector located near sleeping areas. It is also a good idea to have at least one detector on each level of your home.

4. 9-1-1. Grab your cell phone, if near you, and call 9-1-1 from outside of the home. It is very important that children also know the "911" phone number in order to report a fire or other emergencies to authorities.

5. Practice, practice, practice! Your fire escape plan may look great on paper, but does it really work? Exit drills in the home will allow you to test the plan and

make adjustments as needed. When practicing your exit drills in the home, remember to use alternate escape routes as well.

If the worst does occur,

- Get out fast!
- Do not stop for anything and do not try to rescue anything, including pets.
- Crawl low under smoke. Smoke contains deadly gases and heat rises. During a fire, the cleaner air will be down near the floor. If you must get out of the house through smoke, get down and crawl on your hands and knees... even down on your belly if you have to... and keep your head close to the floor where the "good" air is so you can breathe easier.



AND STAY OUT... once you are out of the house, DO NOT go back in for any reason. If people are trapped, the firefighters have the best chance of rescuing them. Firefighters have the training, experience, the air packs, and the protective clothing and equipment needed to enter a burning building.

Advanced planning will prepare you so that you are ready for any fire emergency all year and can provide you and your loved ones peace of mind.

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# B/SB Area Chamber of Commerce Events Calendar

## January 11, 2016

BAR-W & Chamber Candidate Debate  
Moderated debate TX House of Representative Seat  
6:00 pm – Meet & Greet  
7:00 pm – Program  
GVTC Auditorium  
36101 FM 3159, New Braunfels, TX 78132

## January 20, 2016

Chamber Annual Awards Banquet  
\*A Member Only Event\*  
6:30 – 9:30 pm  
The Lodge at Bridal Veil Falls  
1619 Cypress Cove Road, Spring Branch, TX

## February 6-7, 2016

Annual Chamber Rodeo  
Tejas Rodeo Company  
401 Obst Road, Bulverde, TX 78163  
Saturday, Rodeo Begins at 7:30 pm  
Sunday, "Family Fun Day", Rodeo Begins at 2:00 pm  
Stock Provided by Diamond Cross Rodeo Company

## February 8, 2016

BAR-W & Chamber Candidate Debate  
Moderated debate Comal County Sheriff Candidates  
6:00 pm – Meet & Greet  
7:00 pm – Program  
GVTC Auditorium  
36101 FM 3159, New Braunfels, TX 78132

*\*\*For information on any of the above events, please see our website at [bulverdespringbranchchamber.com](http://bulverdespringbranchchamber.com) or call the Chamber Office at (830) 438-4285*



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# 2015: The Year In Review

By Sherry Mosier, President, BSBEDF, Inc.



2015 was an extremely busy year and a great deal happened within our community!

In February, after close to a year of planning and extensive community meetings, the City of Bulverde adopted the Downtown Bulverde Village Visioning Plan, creating a framework for the future development of the Downtown Bulverde Village (DBV) area. The Village Merchants Association was created and they are hosting a Second Friday Celebration each month that includes a Farmers Market, Food, Fun, and Music, with the net beer proceeds from each event benefitting a different local charity. They are also hosting Pop-Up Dinners and various art classes, so check them out on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/BulverdeTexas>.

In March, the City of Bulverde finalized their Master Transportation Plan (MTP). The MTP “provides the regulatory authority to require developers to make improvements or take actions as they develop property, to include right of way (ROW) dedications and reservations; roadway, bridge, hike and bike trail, sidewalks, and other infrastructure construction; and ensure local standards are met by other agencies, developers, and utility agencies as development occurs.”<sup>1</sup>

Also in March, the City of Bulverde formally adopted new “best available data” for the Lewis Creek Watershed, initiated back in the

spring of 2014. This engineering model will be used to evaluate new developments’ impacts to the watershed, and provides more accurate data for the City when reviewing proposed master development plans in conjunction with stormwater drainage design. This will help ensure that new developments fully mitigate their stormwater drainage impacts.

In May, the new Home Rule Charter for the City of Bulverde was overwhelmingly passed by its citizens. Home Rule allows the City of Bulverde to proceed with the annexation of several areas in our community—primarily large, undeveloped tracts that had been identified as likely to develop in the near term. Annexing these properties will allow the City to better manage the new development as it occurs in these areas by having the ability to impose the City’s more stringent development regulations (i.e. zoning, architectural standards, traffic mitigation, stormwater mitigation, etc.). In addition, several changes were made to the City’s processes and procedures, as mandated by state legislation and the new City Charter. Two of which are the addition of a new City Council position and the creation of a Board of Adjustment (BOA), which is now responsible for granting variances to the terms of the zoning regulations of the City. The BOA’s denial of a request cannot be appealed to the city council. It can only be appealed to district court, county court, or county court at law.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the City of Bulverde and Comal County, launched a design/engineering effort for SH 46 from Bulverde Road to FM 3159 (Smithson Valley Road). The project is being developed to address safety and mobility concerns in this rapidly growing area of our community. As you may recall, a collaborative effort was organized by the BSBEDF to include the City of Bulverde, BSB Chamber, the County, our regional partners and TxDOT to get this project on the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Regional Master Transportation Plan, and is slated to be funded by Proposition 1 funds in FY 2019.

Additionally, anticipating the passage of Proposition 7, the Texas Transportation Commission unanimously voted to remove the toll designation from the US 281 expansion project in San Antonio and Bexar County. This decision came after the Alamo Regional Mobility Authority and the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization approved resolutions to make the road non-tolled. This expansion will help our community tremendously since a majority of our citizens’ commute into San Antonio for employment and other services.

The Bulverde-Spring Branch Fire & EMS Station #3 opened in Johnson Ranch, and the organization announced a new, three-fold Volunteer Program.

Local resident, Paul Graf, was elected to the Board of Directors for Pedernales Electric Cooperative, giving many citizens in our community local representation when it comes to our electric service.

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<sup>1</sup> *City of Bulverde Master Transportation Plan submitted by HNTB Corporation March 9, 2015*

The BSB Chamber's new "Save Local Now" program was launched. "Save Local Now" ([www.savelocalnow.com](http://www.savelocalnow.com)) is a website and iPhone and Android app that gives people access to exclusive offers from their favorite businesses. The 1st Annual Chamber Rodeo was held at Tejas Rodeo back in February...it was voted "Best New CPRA Rodeo of 2015 \$6,500 and above!" And in May, the Chamber moved to its new location in the Bulverde Crossing Retail Center.

During the May election, Comal ISD's \$150 Million Bond Package passed. Improvements to Bill Brown Elementary occurred over the summer as a result of a collaboration among Comal ISD, the Singing Hills Development, City of Bulverde, Canyon Lake Water Service Company, and TxDOT. The playground was relocated to the back of the school, and traffic was rerouted through the Singing Hills Development along Singing Oaks to help avoid student pick-up/drop off stacking on Hwy. 46. The school is now receiving its water from Canyon Lake Water Service Company, and its sewer system is now hooked up with the City of Bulverde's new centralized regional wastewater facility. Previously, the school used well water and an on-site septic system, which often had major maintenance issues. These new infrastructure improvements will provide better water quality, water pressure, and fire protection as well as avoid the costly issues associated with the former septic system.

The new Comal Trinity Groundwater Conservation District (CTGCD) was created in June, with Comal County Commissioners approving seven appointments to the CTGCD Board of Directors in July. The

Board is meeting on a regular basis to draft the rules of the district.

Kleck Park, a local 43-acre property located along Stahl Road, was donated to Comal County in 2014 by the Helen Kleck Vivian Living Trust and has been developed into a hike-and-bike park for the citizens of the Bulverde-Spring Branch area to enjoy.

During the November election, Comal County voters approved a \$76 million bond initiative for a new County jail, and Spring Branch residents voted to incorporate their ~2 square mile municipality.

Finally, we have an additional exciting recognition to share with respect to one of our local businesses that occurred after last month's article was submitted. Futurex, one of our local technology companies, made the list of "Top 500 Hot Companies to Watch in Cybersecurity" and was ranked No. 295. This list was compiled by a market research firm, Cybersecurity Ventures, out of California and acknowledges innovation within the market versus just listing the biggest or most successful companies. Congratulations Futurex... You Rock!

Please visit our website at [www.bsbedf.com](http://www.bsbedf.com), our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/bsbedf> or call us at 830.885.4331 to learn more about who we are, what we do and how we can help you start or expand your business. The BSBEDF is committed to assisting our community in its efforts to manage growth while maintaining our rural character and quality of life.



**John C. Sykes, D.D.S., P.A.**



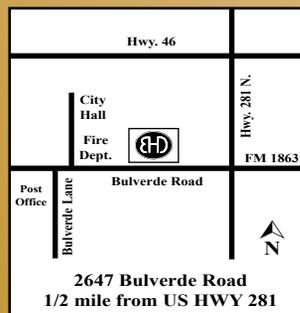
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# Cold Weather and Cats

by: Animal Rescue Connections



The Bulverde/Spring Branch area is at the forefront of a movement to help control outdoor cat populations through Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR). If you have outside cats in your area, please ensure that they are sterilized and vaccinated.



And because colder weather has arrived, please consider building an outside shelter for these cats. Remember that they can provide free, environmentally safe rodent control (which helps control the snakes in the area, too).

Alley Cat Allies has a list of feral cat shelter options which vary in shape, size and level of assembly. Visit <http://www.alleycat.org/WinterWeather> for options ranging from a modified storage tub to an A-frame home.

All outdoor shelters for cats should include an entrance and an exit (each 6–8 inches wide) to enable cats to escape should a predator follow them in the shelter. Make sure the shelter is in a quiet area, elevated, and large enough for 3–5 cats (unless you have fewer) to help them heat the area with body heat. You can insulate a shelter with straw, but avoid blankets, hay, or other materials that absorb moisture.

Two other ways you can help protect cats on these chillier days:

1. Check under your car or to knock on the car's hood before starting it. Cats sometimes will crawl under the car or in the engine compartment for warmth.
2. If you are adding antifreeze to your vehicle, please keep it out of reach of pets and clean up any spills immediately. Antifreeze smells and tastes tempting to animals but is toxic.

If you are interested in learning more about TNR, please visit <http://sanantonioferalcats.org/tnr-schedule/>.

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# Healthy Weight Loss

Is “losing weight” on your New Year’s Resolutions list? You are not alone. More than 35% of Americans are considered obese. There are many reasons to lose weight, most of which are health related, like decreasing your risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, high cholesterol, coronary artery disease, stroke, heart attack, irregular heartbeat, different types of cancer, respiratory problems, sleep apnea, liver and gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, and gynecological problems. Let’s also include the reason to live longer while looking and feeling better doing it.

Unfortunately, there is no “magic pill,” but it is as simple as subtracting more calories (by exercise) than adding them (by eating). The key is 60 minutes of moderate activity every day and eating a healthy diet primarily of fruits, vegetables, nuts, whole grains, low fat dairy, and seafood.

Here are 3 Steps to get you started on the right track.

## Step 1: Start a program

Talk to your healthcare provider to get help choosing the best plan for you. Ask your doctor for the right kinds of activities for you if you have chronic medical conditions like heart disease, arthritis, or diabetes. Your doctor will consider your physical health, calculate your body mass index (BMI), and evaluate other medical treatment options. As you lose weight, you doctor will serve as a valuable resource to monitor your progress while offering advice and support. There is an abundance of good information on the UpToDate website (search term: weight loss treatments).

## Step 2: Set a Goal

Set a realistic goal. Most recommendations state your first goal should be to avoid gaining weight, and to try to lose 0.5 pounds per week. Your overall goal should be discussed with your health care professional.

## Step 3: Make Lifestyle Changes

Slowly add 10 minute intervals of moderate physical activity per day, like a brisk walk. Walking 3 miles per hour and light house cleaning burn 200 calories an hour. Gardening for 1 hour burns 300 calories. Take a pair of walking shoes with you everywhere

you go. When you have 10 minutes, take a walk. The goal is to reduce the amount of time you sit. There are several free online tools that can help you calculate the calories burned during exercise (e.g., [www.myfitnesspal.com](http://www.myfitnesspal.com)).

Keep a log book for 2 days of what triggers you to eat, what foods you eat, when you eat, and where you eat. Develop a plan to avoid triggers and restrict areas where you eat. Make meal plans for the week and stick to a shopping list. Eat fewer foods with salt, saturated fat (meat, cheese, cream, butter), trans fat (packaged baked goods, deep fried foods), cholesterol (animal fats), sugar, and white flour. The tools found on [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) are helpful with meal planning.

Drinking 64 ounces of water and consuming 15 grams of fiber every day is very beneficial for appetite suppression, decreased fat absorption, and colon cancer prevention. Control portion sizes especially with starches, proteins, and foods containing fats. Avoid or restrict alcohol. Avoid distractions and eat slowly to enjoy your food. While none of this information is particularly trendy or unique, all of the advice included here is sound and time tested. Remember, it took you a while to gain the unwanted pounds; it may take you a while to lose them. Don’t get discouraged if the loss is slow—it’s actually healthier to lose weight in a planned, methodical way because it allows time for your body to adjust and for you to develop good, healthy eating and exercise habits.

Wishing you a Happy and Healthy New Year,

Hannah Holwlett, Walgreens Pharmacist

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# The Buzz From the Garden

BY: Lorelei Mayer and Members of the Bulverde Community Garden

The end of 2015 saw a flurry of construction in the Garden. Three projects were completed, expanding the Garden to include more plots, an informational kiosk, and native plant demonstration plot. Two new plots and a paved path around them were built by Eagle Scout Nathan Kendrick. The informational kiosk with a paver platform was constructed by Eagle Scout Nick Blunton. Both young men and their crews worked extremely hard to enhance the Garden with top quality additions. The third project is the native plant demonstration plot. This demonstration plot was created by the Smithson Valley High School club The Humans of Smithson Valley and members of the Native Plant Society. Gulf muhly grass, Lindheimer muhly grass, Mexican feather grass, native Esperanza, flame acanthus, lowery sage, coral honeysuckle, damianita, salvia, cherry Barbados, Turk's cap, and Texas Mountain Laurel are featured in the plot. The plot will be a burst of color when spring is upon us.

2016 promises to bring more expansion to the Garden. Watch for updates throughout the year.



*If you or your business would like to secure a plot (at no cost), please visit the Garden website at [www.bulverdecommunitygarden.com](http://www.bulverdecommunitygarden.com) or contact Joanne Hall at [johall@gvtc.com](mailto:johall@gvtc.com). Donations gladly accepted. Also, interested persons are invited to attend the Bulverde Community Garden Committee meeting on the third Monday of the month at 5:15pm at the Bulverde Spring Branch Activity Center.*



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## EVENTS AT THE BSB LIBRARY IN JANUARY

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- Jan 8:** Adult Ed: No-Knead Bread Class 3:00p–4:15p
- Jan 13:** Lunch & Learn–Scarf Tying 12:00p–1:30p
- Jan 14:** Portraits Through History with portrait artist, Izzy Mason 6:30p–7:45p
- Jan 16:** Revitalizing and Old PC with a Linux Operating System 10:00a–11:00a
- Jan 19:** Adult Ed: Magnetic Perpetual Calendar 6:30p–7:45p
- Jan 22:** Adult Ed: Magnetic Perpetual Calendar 3:00p–4:15p
- Jan 27:** Lunch & Learn-Nature Series-Bats! 12:00p–1:30p
- Jan 27:** UTSA Small Business Development Workshop 3:00p–5:00p
- Jan 21:** Friends of the Library Annual Meeting 5:00p–7:45p
- Jan 30:** Blood Drive at 10:30a–2:30p by South Texas Blood and Tissue. Appointments may be made by signing up at the front desk or by calling 830.438.4864.



### AARP TO OFFER FREE TAX PREPARATION SERVICES

Once again, the AARP foundation is offering their tax-aid assistance program at the BSB Library. This free tax preparation and e-filing service is for taxpayers with low and moderate income, with special attention to those individuals age 60 and older. The service is being offered by appointment only at the Bulverde Spring Branch Library on Fridays from February 5th through April 15, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Call (830)885-2247 to set up your appointment.

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# 13 Simple Outdoor Water Conservation Tips



In 1990, 30 states in the US reported 'water-stress' conditions. In 2000, the number of states reporting water-stress rose to 40. In 2009, the number rose to 45. Central and western Texas has been on every one of these lists. There is a worsening trend in water supply—not only here in Comal County—but nationwide. Taking measures at home to conserve water not only saves you money, it also is of benefit to the greater community.

Water conservation comes naturally when everyone in the family is aware of its importance, and parents take the time to teach children some of the simple water-saving methods around the home—simple methods can make a big difference. In this issue, your Comal Trinity Groundwater Conservation District (CTGCD) presents 13 simple outdoor water conservation tips to help you reduce water consumption in your yard and garden:

1. Plant drought-resistant lawns, shrubs, and plants. If you are planting a new lawn, or re-seeding an existing lawn, use drought-resistant grasses. Many beautiful Texas native shrubs and plants thrive with far less watering than other, non-native species. Replace herbaceous perennial borders with native plants. Native plants will use less water and be more resistant to local plant diseases. Visit a reliable plant grower such as South Texas Growers for reliable choices and information.
2. Xeriscape. Consider applying the principles of xeriscape for a low-maintenance, drought resistant yard. Plant slopes with plants that will retain water and help reduce runoff. Try to group plants according to their watering needs.

3. Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants. Mulch will slow evaporation of moisture while discouraging weed growth. Adding 2" – 4" of organic material such as compost or bark mulch will increase the ability of the soil to retain moisture. Keep the mulch away from tree bases and press the mulch down around the dripline of each plant to form a slight depression which will prevent or minimize water runoff.
4. Don't water the street. Position your sprinklers so water lands on the lawn or garden, not on paved areas.
5. Water your lawn only when it needs it. A good way to see if your lawn needs watering is to step on the grass. If it springs back up when you move, it doesn't need water. If it stays flat, the lawn is ready for watering. Letting the grass grow taller (to 3") will also promote water retention in the soil. Most lawns only need about 1" of water each week.
6. Don't water during dry spells. During dry spells, you can stop watering altogether and the lawn will go brown and dormant. Once cooler weather arrives, the morning dew and rainfall will bring the lawn back to its usual vigor. This may result in a brown summer lawn, but it saves a lot of water.
7. Deep-soak your lawn. When watering the lawn, do it long enough for the moisture to soak down to the roots where it will do the most good. A light sprinkling can evaporate quickly and tends to encourage shallow root systems. Put an empty tuna can on your lawn - when it's full, you've watered about the right amount.
8. Water during the early parts of the day; avoid watering when it's windy. Early morning is generally better than dusk since it helps prevent fungus growth. Early watering, and late watering, also reduce water loss to evaporation. Watering early in the day is also the best defense against slugs and other garden pests. Try not to water when it's windy - wind can blow sprinklers off target and speed evaporation.
9. Add organic matter and use efficient watering systems for shrubs, flower beds, and lawns. Adding organic material to your soil will help increase its absorption and water retention. Areas which are already planted can be 'top dressed' with compost or organic matter. Visit the folks at the Bulverde Community Garden for more garden water-saving ideas.
10. Manage efficient watering. You can greatly reduce the amount of water used for shrubs, beds and lawns by the strategic placement of soaker hoses, installing a rain barrel water catchment system (we'll talk about that next month), or installing a simple drip-irrigation system. Avoid over-watering plants and shrubs, as this can actually diminish plant health and cause yellowing of the leaves. When hand watering, use a variable spray nozzle for targeted watering.
11. Don't run the hose while washing your car. Clean the car using a pail of soapy water. Use the hose only for rinsing - this simple practice can save as much as 150 gallons when washing a car. Use a spray nozzle when rinsing for more efficient use of water.
12. Use a broom, not a hose, to clean driveways and sidewalks.
13. Check for leaks in pipes, hoses, faucets and couplings. Leaks outside the house may not seem as bad since they're not as visible. But they can be just as wasteful as leaks indoors. Check frequently to keep them drip-free. Use hose washers at spigots and hose connections to eliminate leaks.



Published and distributed by:  
**Neighborhood News, Inc.**  
3740 Colony Drive Suite 120  
San Antonio, TX 78230  
(210) 558-3160 \* (210) 558-3163 fax

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Saving water at home does not require a significant cost outlay. Although there are water-saving appliances and water conservation systems such as rain barrels, drip irrigation, and on-demand water heaters which are more expensive, the bulk of water saving methods can be achieved at little cost. Help us conserve the Trinity; connect with us at your Comal Trinity Groundwater Conservation District (CTGCD). Attend the CTGCD monthly meetings, or sign up for our water conservation newsletter at [www.ComalTrinityGCD.com](http://www.ComalTrinityGCD.com). In the next issue we'll publish tips for rainwater harvesting.



Readers, please keep in mind that the Front Porch News always welcomes submissions of great photos! We like to feature local subject matter and/or local artists and photographers. Of particular interest are images of seasonal relevance, including images of holidays (e.g., scenery, people), seasons (e.g., fall, winter, weather- and waterscapes), and images that relate to events that are happening in the area. You know we also love gorgeous photos of animals, so send those along too! Did you shoot an outstanding photo or two at the Christmas Lighting or of beautiful Christmas decorations? A particularly adorable photo of child with Santa? How about an amazing still life or landscape taken along the Guadalupe or at Kleck Park? We would love to share your art with the community.

Please submit photos to editor@ci.bulverde.tx.us. Photos should be submitted as high resolution TIF, PSD, or JPG files. Please do not send PNG or GIF files, as these do not print well. For photos to be considered for the cover, they should be of vertical orientation or of such composition that they could be cropped to vertical. The central image should appear roughly in the lower 2/3 of the image (to accommodate for the printed title of the newsletter). It's important to note that our publication schedule runs almost a full month ahead of the intended publication month, so if you have a shot that would be GREAT for a particular month, we would need to receive it very early in the preceding month (as an example, we would need photos for the February edition within the first week of January).

Our cover is such an important piece of our publication, and we always look forward to sharing visually interesting art with our readers. It's even more special when we can boast about our very talented local artists! We look forward to seeing your submissions.

# On the Cover



Once again, Sam Roberts has provided the Front Porch News with an amazing cover! Nothing says "Happy New Year!" like a fabulous fireworks display! Timing and exposure are EVERYTHING when taking photos of fireworks, and Sam has obviously done some great work with this subject matter! Special thanks also to photographer Lisa Reid for submitting some additional, wonderful fireworks photos! We certainly appreciate our talented contributors who are so willing to share their art with us! Happy New Year, everyone! Here's wishing a healthy, happy, and prosperous 2016 to all of our neighbors!

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**JANUARY 2016**

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

<b>NOTES:</b> Bulverde City Council, Bulverde Planning and Zoning Commission, and Friends of the Park meetings are held at Bulverde City Hall (30360 Cougar Bend)					1 New Year's Day City Hall Closed CISD Holiday	2
3	4 CISD Student Holiday	5 Planning & Zoning 6:30p (Activity Ctr.)	6 SBB Family Lions 6:00p (Activity Ctr.) BAAC mtg 6:30p (Bags & Brews)	7 Wellness on Wheels 1:00p (St. Joseph's Honey Crk.)	8	9
10 S.T.A.G.E. Auditions 4:00p (S.T.A.G.E.)	11 Friends of Library Board mtg. 1:00p (Library) Rural Library District mtg. 4:00p (Library) Comm. Garden Mtg. 5:15p (Activity Ctr.)	12 City Council 6:30p	13	14 Bulverde Lions 7:00p (Bulv. Comm. Ctr.)	15	16 Garden Workshop 10:00a (Activity Ctr.) S.T.A.G.E. Annual Membership Mtg. 6:00p (S.T.A.G.E.)
17	18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day City Hall Closed CISD Holiday CTGCD* 6:00p (JR Fire/EMS station)	19 Native Plant Soc. 7:00p (GVTC)	20 Annual Chamber Banquet 6:30p (The Lodge) SBB Family Lions 7:30p (Activity Ctr.)	21 BSBES 5:30p (353 Rodeo Dr.) ESD #1, 4, & 5 6:30p (353 Rodeo Dr.) Friends of Library Annual Meeting 5:00p (BSB Library)	22	23 Shine the Park 8:00a (Bulv. Comm. Park)
24 31	25	26 Friends of the Park 6:00p	27	28 Bulverde Lions 7:00p (Bulv. Comm. Ctr.)	29 POET Program 5:30p (City Hall)	30

\*Comal Trinity Groundwater Conservation District; Johnson Ranch Fire/EMS station

**FEBRUARY 2016**

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

	1	2 Groundhog Day Planning & Zoning 6:30p	3 BAAC mtg 6:30p (The Makery) SBB Family Lions 7:30p (Activity Ctr.)	4 Wellness on Wheels 1:00p (St. Joseph's Honey Crk.)	5	6 Chamber Rodeo 7:30p (Tejas Rodeo)
7 Super Bowl Chamber Rodeo 2:00p (Tejas Rodeo)	8 Chinese New Year Friends of Library Board mtg. 1:00p (Library) Rural Library District mtg. 4:00p (Library) Comm. Garden Mtg. 5:15p (Activity Ctr.)	9 Mardi Gras City Council 6:30p	10 Ash Wednesday	11 Bulverde Lions 7:00p (Bulv. Comm. Ctr.)	12 BAAC Exhibit Opening Recep. 5:30p (The Makery)	13
14 St. Valentine's Day	15 President's Day City Hall Closed CISD Holiday CTGCD* 6:00p (JR Fire/EMS station)	16 Native Plant Soc. 7:00p (GVTC)	17 SBB Family Lions 7:30p (Activity Ctr.)	18 BSBES 5:30p (353 Rodeo Dr.) ESD #1, 4, & 5 6:30p (353 Rodeo Dr.) The Color of Stars (S.T.A.G.E.)	19 The Color of Stars (S.T.A.G.E.)	20 The Color of Stars (S.T.A.G.E.)
21	22	23 Friends of the Park 6:00p	24	25 Bulverde Lions 7:00p (Bulv. Comm. Ctr.) The Color of Stars (S.T.A.G.E.)	26 POET Program 5:30p (City Hall) The Color of Stars (S.T.A.G.E.)	27 Shine the Park 8:00a (Bulv. Comm. Park) The Color of Stars (S.T.A.G.E.)
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