

Mesa Park MESSENGER

Volume 18, Issue #5

December 2011/January 2012

A little Christmas trivia

(Answers are at the top of page 4)

1. What are the names of the eight reindeer that pull Santa's sleigh?
2. What song contains the line "Jack Frost nipping at your nose?"
3. How many candles are there on an Advent Wreath?
4. What color is Santa's belt?
5. What *Saturday Evening Post* artist was known for his whimsical Santa pictures?
6. In what state does most of the movie "White Christmas" take place?
7. What catalog company had their first catalog available for Christmas 1872?
8. What are the two names of the towns in "It's A Wonderful Life?"
9. The movie, "34th Street" takes place in what city?
10. What state has the world's tallest living Christmas tree?
11. Scrooge's first name is what?
12. Who wrote A Christmas Carol?
13. In "It's A Wonderful Life," what did Clarence receive for accomplishing his mission?
14. What Christmas carol demands figgy pudding?
15. What river did General George Washington cross on December 25, 1776?
16. Elvis Presley recorded a sad Christmas song in the fifties of what color?
17. Which song is considered America's most popular Christmas song?
18. Name Eartha Kitt's 1953 famous seductive Christmas song?
19. What popular Christmas song did Judy Garland sing in the 1944 movie, "Meet Me in St. Louis?"
20. In the song, "I'll Be Home for Christmas," what do they request to have waiting for them upon their return?

Results: 15-20 Correct – You don't need any Yuletide spirit! 9-14 Correct – You could use something in your stocking! 0-8 Correct – Are you the Grinch?

Save your empty aluminum cans all year round

Bob Grissom

Don't forget to save your empty aluminum cans to donate to the Blue Santa project. This is an ongoing project, not just for Christmastime.

The cans are redeemed, the money going to purchase toys, so that not one needy child goes without a toy at Christmas. This program is sponsored by the Austin Police Department, and is another way our crime fighters work to make our community a better place to live.

It is easy.....just save your aluminum cans and drop them off at 11703 Shoshone Drive. There are receptacles by the garage just waiting to be filled.

Proper mulching techniques

Mulches are materials placed over the soil surface to maintain moisture and improve soil conditions. Mulching is one of the most beneficial things a home owner can do for the health of a tree. Mulch can reduce water loss from the soil, minimize weed competition, and improve soil structure. Properly applied, mulch can give landscapes a handsome, well-groomed appearance. Mulch must be applied properly; if it is too deep or if the wrong material is used, it can actually cause significant harm to trees and other landscape plants.

Benefits of Proper Mulching

- Helps maintain soil moisture. Evaporation is reduced, and the need for watering can be minimized.
- Helps control weeds. A 2- to 4-inch layer of mulch will reduce the germination and growth of weeds.
- Mulch serves as nature's insulating blanket. Mulch keeps soils warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer.
- Many types of mulch can improve soil aeration, structure (aggregation of soil particles), and drainage over time.
- Some mulches can improve soil fertility.
- A layer of mulch can inhibit certain plant diseases.
- Mulching around trees helps facilitate maintenance and can reduce the likelihood of damage from "weed whackers" or the dreaded "lawn mower blight."
- Mulch can give planting beds a uniform, well-cared-for look.

Trees growing in a natural forest environment have their roots anchored in a rich, well-aerated soil full of essential nutrients. The soil is blanketed by leaves and organic materials that replenish nutrients and provide an optimal environment for root growth and mineral uptake. Urban landscapes, however, are typically a much harsher environment with poor soils, little organic matter, and large fluctuations in temperature and moisture. Applying a 2- to 4-inch layer of organic mulch can mimic a more natural environment and improve plant health.

The root system of a tree is not a mirror image of the top. The roots of most trees can extend out a significant distance from the tree trunk. Although the guideline for many maintenance practices is the drip line—the outermost extension of the canopy—the roots can grow many times that distance. In addition, most of the fine, absorbing roots are located within inches of the soil surface. These roots, which are essential for taking up water and minerals, require oxygen to survive. A thin layer of mulch, applied as broadly as practical, can improve the soil structure, oxygen levels, temperature, and moisture availability where these roots grow.

Types of Mulch

Mulches are available commercially in many forms. The two major types of mulch are inorganic and organic. Inorganic mulches include various types of stone, lava rock, pulverized rubber, geotextile fabrics, and other materials. Inorganic mulches do not decompose and do not need to be replenished often. On the other hand, they do not improve soil structure, add organic materials, or provide nutrients. For these reasons, most horticulturists and arborists prefer organic mulches.

Organic mulches include wood chips, pine needles, hardwood and softwood bark, cocoa hulls, leaves, compost mixes, and a variety of other products usually derived from plants. Organic mulches decompose in the landscape at different

(Continued on page 3)

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Resident of Mesa Park

29 years as a Realtor in Austin, TX

22 years with Coldwell Banker United Realtors

Between 9/7/2011 to 12/6/2011. Five properties "Sold" avg price \$213,000. Four "Under Contract," avg price \$193,000. Eight properties "Active," avg price \$175,000. Call me if you need further information.

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SCOTT PATTERSON

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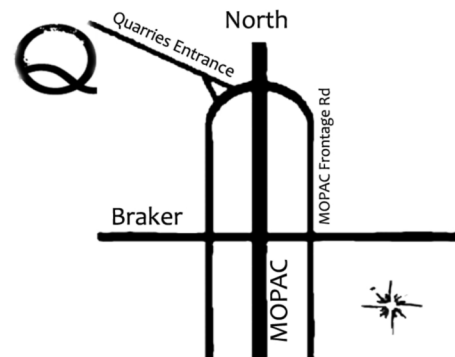
for our Mesa Park Neighbors!

Just bring this ad in for

\$25/SINGLE MONTHLY RATE

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with no processing fee!



Walking Directions:

The Quarries walk-in gate is located at Spotted Horse and Mesa Woods Drive.

Driving Directions:

From Braker go north on the service road. The service road will turn to the left under Mo-Pac Expy and you want to be in the right hand lane. Immediately after crossing under Mo-Pac, take the first right into The Quarries. the Fitness center is toward the back of the complex behind the fields.

Proper mulching techniques *(continued from page 1)*

rates depending on the material and climate. Those that decompose faster must be replenished more often. Because the decomposition process improves soil quality and fertility, many arborists and other landscape professionals consider that characteristic a positive one, despite the added maintenance.



be effective in suppressing weeds and reducing maintenance, but it often causes additional problems.

Problems Associated with Improper Mulching

- Deep mulch can lead to excess moisture in the root zone, which can stress the plant and cause root rot.
- Piling mulch against the trunk or stems of plants can stress stem tissues and may lead to insect and disease problems.
- Some mulches, especially those containing cut grass, can affect soil pH. Continued use of certain mulches over long periods can lead to micronutrient deficiencies or toxicities.
- Mulch piled high against the trunks of young trees may create habitats for rodents that chew the bark and can girdle the trees.
- Thick blankets of fine mulch can become matted and may prevent the penetration of water and air. In addition, a thick layer of fine mulch can become like potting soil and may support weed growth.
- Anaerobic “sour” mulch may give off pungent odors, and the alcohols and organic acids that build up may be toxic to young plants.

Proper Mulching

It is clear that the choice of mulch and the method of application can be important to the health of landscape plants. The following are some guidelines to use when applying mulch.

- Inspect plants and soil in the area to be mulched. Determine whether drainage is adequate. Determine whether there are plants that may be affected by the choice of mulch. Most commonly available mulches work well in most landscapes. Some plants may benefit from the use of a slightly acidifying mulch such as pine bark.
- If mulch is already present, check the depth. Do not add mulch if there is a sufficient layer in place. Rake the old mulch to break up any matted layers and to refresh the appearance. Some landscape maintenance companies spray mulch with a water-soluble, vegetable-based dye to improve the appearance.
- If mulch is piled against the stems or tree trunks, pull it back several inches so that the base of the trunk and the root crown are exposed.
- Organic mulches usually are preferred to inorganic materials due to their soil-enhancing properties. If organic mulch is used, it should be well aerated and, preferably, composted. Avoid sour-smelling mulch.

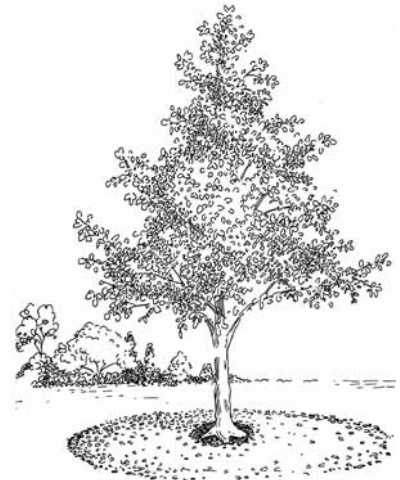
Not Too Much!

As beneficial as mulch is, too much can be harmful. The generally recommended mulching depth is 2 to 4 inches. Unfortunately, many landscapes are falling victim to a plague of overmulching. A new term, “mulch volcanoes,” has emerged to describe mulch that has been piled up around the base of trees. Most organic mulches must be replenished, but the rate of decomposition varies. Some mulches, such as cypress mulch, remain intact for many years. Top dressing with new mulch annually (often for the sake of refreshing the color) creates a buildup to depths that can be unhealthy. Deep mulch can

- Composted wood chips can make good mulch, especially when they contain a blend of leaves, bark, and wood. Fresh wood chips also may be used around established trees and shrubs. Avoid using noncomposted wood chips that have been piled deeply without exposure to oxygen.
- For well-drained sites, apply a 2- to 4-inch layer of mulch. If there are drainage problems, a thinner layer should be used. Avoid placing mulch against the tree trunks. Place mulch out to the tree’s drip line or beyond.

Remember: If the tree had a say in the matter, its entire root system (which usually extends well beyond the drip line) would be mulched.

(c) 1998, 2004 International Society of Arboriculture.



The week of Nov. 28th kept the APD very busy in Mesa Park and Balcones Woods

Susan McVicker (data comes from SpotCrime.com)

On Nov. 28th, there was a burglary of a residence at 12:58pm at 115xx Toledo.

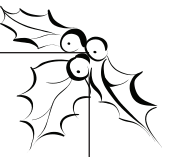
On Dec. 1st, there were seven burglaries. Vehicle at 8:16 am at 117xx Elk Park Trl. , vehicle at 11:09am at 116xx Fast Horse, residence at 7:52 am at 114xx Catalonia, residence at 7:42am at 48xx Gerona. Vehicle at 9:20 am at 113xx Toledo, vehicle at 11:25am at 112xx Toledo and vehicle at 7:38pm at 50xx Dull Knife.

The residents on Fast Horse had their garage and car broken into either in the morning or late that night while they were home. They don't know why they didn't hear anything, but they are very happy the burglars didn't get into the house. Their car had been rummaged through, and then the burglars went into the garage using the residents' garage door opener. They took bikes, bottled water, and rummaged through more stuff. APD and the crime scene investigator were there and took photos, reports, etc. One of the bikes they found at Catalonia belonged to Fast Horse. The rest are still missing. The husband saw a white Honda Accord in the street that morning when he was leaving at 8:05am.

A resident on Catalonia got up that morning (around 7), and saw three police cars outside her house. Apparently, someone had broken in to another house...then they came to her next-door neighbor's house. There were some items strewn across his lawn. It wasn't clear if they were his or from the previous burglary. The police searched their backyard as well as the neighbor's, as they thought the burglar might still be nearby. They couldn't tell if the person was trying to steal from the neighbor or just dumping items he didn't want. Later the resident talked to another neighbor who said he found a bunch of CD's in the back of his pickup truck that morning.

On October 21, a resident on Shoshone received a UPS package delivered to her house. She was home and heard the knock, but could not get to the door right away. When she opened the door to get the package, it was gone. Please be aware of deliveries being made to your home.

It's a good idea to keep your vehicles locked and don't leave items in full view, such as iPods, CD's, iPhones, GPS devices, garage door openers and packages of any kind, etc.



Answers to Christmas quiz on page 1:

1. Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donder & Blitzen.
2. *The Christmas Song*, also known as *Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire*.
3. Four.
4. Black.
5. Norman Rockwell.
6. Vermont.
7. Montgomery Ward & Company.
8. Bedford Falls and Pottersville.
9. New York City.
10. California.
11. Ebenezer.
12. Charles Dickens.
13. Wings.
14. "We Wish You A Merry Christmas."
15. The Delaware River.
16. Blue Christmas.
17. White Christmas.
18. Santa Baby.
19. Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas.
20. Please have snow and mistletoe and presents on the tree

Holiday Decorating Contest

Make sure your house is ready for the Holidays! The MPNA will be judging houses on Dec. 17th and 18th between 6pm and 8pm. We will be driving around the neighborhood and taking pictures of the best decorated homes in Mesa Park. Have your lights on by 6pm.

Thank you for your donations!

MPNA Board of Directors continues to work for you on a volunteer basis. All residents of Mesa Park Neighborhood are members of Mesa Park Neighborhood Association, whether you rent or own your home. If you receive this newsletter, delivered at your door, you are a member. Mesa Park does not charge annual dues, unlike most other neighborhood associations, but we do accept donations.

Donations pay for the "Mesa Park Messenger" newsletter, gift cards for the Holiday Lighting Contest, neighborhood garage sale, "Its My Park Day", the Annual Police Appreciation Event, and other events. We really need your help to keep the newsletter going.

We want to thank all the residents that have donated for the past few months. We really appreciate your generosity.

If you would like to make a donation, please complete the form below and include your check. A minimum amount of \$5.00 would be greatly appreciated.

Donation for MPNA \$ _____

Name: _____

Phone and Address: _____

Email: _____

Mail check to MPNA, PMB 104, P.O. Box 200255, Austin, TX 78720

Helpful numbers

Police Headquarters
Main Switchboard 512-974-5000

Homicide tip line 512-477-3588

Robbery Hotline. 512-974-5092

Sex Crimes tip line 512-974-5095

Auto Theft tip line 512-974-5096

Abandoned Vehicle
tip line. 512-974-8119

Northwest Area
Command 512-974-5591

All the messages are available on-line at
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Mesa_Park_Neighborhood/messages

Neighborhood contacts:

President/Quarries Representative: **David Crowley**, mesapark@crowleyhome.net or 586-9583

Mail donations to MPNA, PMB 104, P.O. Box 200255, Austin, TX 78720

Newsletter Editor, Treasurer & Volunteer Coordinator: **Susan McVicker**, susanmcv@att.net or 917-3018

Neighborhood Meeting Coordinator: **Melissa Conant**, celestembrown@gmail.com

Board Members: **Cindy Lindsay**, 346-2232, TreeTopProp@prodigy.net; **Gina Mattiza**, gmattiza@austin.rr.com; **Terry Tevis**, 736-8469, mpnapres@yahoo.com; **Claudia Ullrich**, claudia.mpna@gmail.com; paulp.mpna@gmail.com, **Mary Kay Tiernan**, mkbarber1@gmail.com

Mesa Park Messenger design: **Julie Kennedy**, julie@digitalcitydesigns.com

Emergency: 911

Police Non-Emergency: 311

NW Austin Police District Representative: SPO Michael J. Whetson #5381, michael.whetson@ci.austin.tx.us, 512-974-5553

Reminder: The MPNA is not an HOA (Homeowner's Association). If you have a complaint or need to report a violation, please contact the appropriate city official for assistance. Thank you!