

# ONION CREEK MEADOWS property owners association

P.O. Box 434

Manchaca, Texas 78652

Volume 2013

Neighborhood Newsletter

Issue 4- December

## Read Me- I'm Your Newsletter

As we saw the **Red Cross Disaster Aid** truck go down the street again we were reminded that many in our neighborhood are still struggling with the after effects of our rainiest October on record, effects which include the destruction of much of a lifetime of possessions and memories for some households. We went from drought to flood in hours. So our thoughts go out to all who suffered such heavy losses, and our wish is for there to be healing of homes and hearts. We walk with you in spirit.

Our hearts are warmed by stories of neighbors volunteering to help by bringing food, washing flood-soaked bedding and clothing, tearing out damaged walls, shoveling debris, even providing temporary housing. You are the **BEST!**

\*\*\*\*\*

However you and your loved ones celebrate the year's ending, we wish you happy holidays and a healthy prosperous 2014, and we hope to see you at our various neighborhood gatherings during the coming year. Make it one of your New Year's resolutions to get to know your neighbors.

## When our little creek became a raging river

So much water falling in such a short time quickly changed shallow slow-moving Onion Creek into a raging destructive force that had disaster crews scrambling to handle water rescues and forcing more than 1,100 of people along its shores and lowlands from their homes. **Floodwaters roared into neighborhoods along Onion Creek at nearly double the average flow rate of Niagara Falls**, the U.S. Geological Survey said.

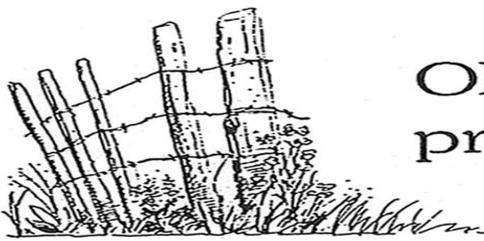
The USGS said waters were moving at **120,000 cubic feet per second** and reached a record height of 41 feet at U.S. Highway 183. as recorded by water (cont pg 3)



## ANNUAL HOLIDAY LIGHTING CONTEST

Get ready! Get set! GO! Once again your **Onion Creek Meadows Property Owners Association** is happy to announce the **2013 Holiday Lighting Contest**, so it's time to get those boxes of decorations from the attic or garage and check out the light bulbs. Anyone is free to decorate, of course, but **only paid members of the Association are eligible to compete** for the cash prizes. **Top prize this year is \$150. cash. Second place is \$100. and third place, \$75.** (See, any prize will more than cover your membership fee if you have not already paid up.) **Honorable Mention is a paid one year membership to the Association.**

Judging is done by an impartial panel of three from outside the neighborhood, and this year they will be judging entries on **Saturday December 14th and Tuesday December 17th.** Board Treasurer **Sherry Krupinski** chairs this



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## BRIDGES AND WATER CROSSING DAMAGED

Across Onion Creek and Bear Creek, Arroyo Doble houses along the shoreline also suffered property losses due to water damage. **Hummingbird House**, an event venue at Bear Creek took a crippling hit to its buildings, fences and landscaped grounds. Bear Creek seemed to have the most flood debris stacked up along its banks as waters receded.

### ONION/BEAR CREEKS AT TWIN CREEKS RD

The bridge over Onion and Bear Creeks at Twin Creeks Road had its asphalt decking shredded by the force of the water and weight of debris, some of which stacked over 10 ft. up on the roadbed. The creek had topped the 20 ft. high overpass during flood stage. Twin Creeks Road at Arroyo Doble was closed for several days until weather cleared and allowed repair crews to resurface the bridge. We helpfully kept each other informed of the repair status of both bridges by emails and calls, and finally County workers resurfaced the bridge and connected Arroyo Doble with the outside world again.

### LOW WATER CROSSING AT OLD SAN ANTONIO ROAD AFTER 10.13.13 HEAVY RAINS



Another weather front which produced significant rainfall occurred on October 13th. Heavy flooding carried debris downstream, mostly trees and branches, which made the Onion Creek low water crossing bridge at Old San Antonio Rd (above) impassable. This one-lane bridge is due to be replaced with a higher wider two-lane structure by the end of 2014.

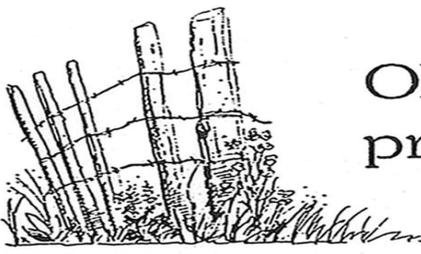
Although this earlier drenching caused little widespread damage, several families in the Shawnee intersection at Turley suffered significant interior water damage because water backed up into several homes when a drainage ditch was blocked by debris.



**10.31.13- Note that waters of Onion Creek and Bear Creek (above) rose over the road bed on the Twin Creeks Rd. bridge. The bridge is normally 20 ft. above the creeks. On both sides of the guard rails the receding creek is still just below the bridge decking.**



**10.31.13 Flood waters stripped the asphalt surface from the Twin Creeks bridge road bed over Onion Creek**



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## Won't you help us help you?

The goal of your Onion Creek Property Owners Association is to coordinate a consistent, appealing look and feel to the neighborhood and protect associated property values and quality of life for its residents. Only 81 of our over 200 residents have sent in their 2013-4 dues to help us with that goal.

**NOTE: OCMPOA has no legal authority to enforce Deed Restrictions, a document you signed when you purchased your property. OCMPOA can be a resource to find help, should the need arise.**

Maybe you've just forgotten, so won't you clip the coupon on page 8 and mail it in *today* with your check for \$20. to the address supplied? Thank you.

## Flood (cont. from pg 1)

gauges at the bridge at US 83 and Onion Creek. The creek rose an astonishing 11 feet in 15 minutes between 6:15 and 6:30 a.m.

In our Onion Creek Meadows neighborhood, **every** home on the creek side of Onion Creek Drive from the bend to the barrier had significant water inside. From a dock and outdoor furniture being swept away at Peggy Pryor's on the south end to a complete immersion in eight feet of floodwater at the Kramers on the north, the waters pushed into every nook and cranny and grabbed and swept along everything within reach. One homeowner had to swim out a window when the water inside rose to 5 feet inside his home. Two vacant homes were flooded but were the least complicated to restore because there was no furniture to remove, but other home owners sadly had to sort through what was salvageable from what was beyond repair, making tough decisions. Flood waters loosened brick walls and caused them to collapse. Gratefully, no lives were lost, and to our knowledge, no one here reported family pets missing or lost.

In **Katie Kramer's** words: "I woke up at 2:30 to find the creek was a river, high up in the yard (not expected for the 5" rain prediction). We immediately started clearing out our room down below the house for about 45 minutes in our pajamas, moving everything up to our patio/deck, still in denial it would ever reach up in the house. Once the water below rose to our upper thigh level we decided rain was not going to stop anytime soon, so we better grab what we can and stuff our cars for the next hour. Meanwhile our 3 yr old was still sleeping. My parents took over an hour to find a route to get to us from Shady Hollow. When they did arrive at 4:30, they luckily had backed our cars out of garage into the street because the creek was now coming around the house and up across our driveway; if we had waited even 15 more minutes our cars would have been flooded. We shut off our main power and evacuated

(cont' from previous column)

ourselves at 5 am. along with the Pierces next door. When we returned at 7:30, we found water at 4 ft. inside the house, 5 ft. outside, and 8 ft. in our second garage where we lost 2 vehicles and a motorcycle which were totally submerged. *What's most important is we got out with our babe and dogs.*

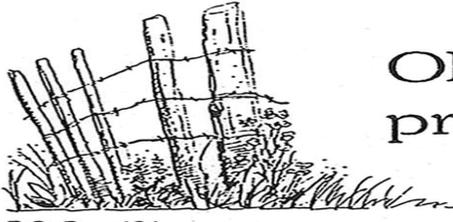
The force of the water knocked the stone off the outside of Pierces' home, and blew down two entire rock walls of our room on the lower floor."

## DID YOU KNOW THIS ABOUT ONION CREEK?

**Onion Creek** is a small tributary of the **Colorado River** beginning 12 miles southeast of Johnson City, flowing 79 miles eastward and joining the Colorado 7 miles northwest of Garfield. A scenic waterway passing through mainly rural areas until it gets to Travis County, Onion Creek is the source of McKinney Falls. Texas Wildlife and Parks considers Onion Creek "seasonal" and "restrictive," meaning that at certain times of the year its depth is not suitable for recreational use. (We know!) On the stretch to McKinney Falls, several easy rapids provide passage for canoes and kayaks, gentle enough for even inexperienced boaters. A heavy rainfall can cause drastic changes in the nature of a waterway, morphing a slow-flowing shallow stream into a dangerously deep roaring force of nature. in as little as 10 minutes. Take care.



**The rolled up blue tarp snagged in the tree on the right showed how high the water had risen at the east end of Onion Creek Drive by the dead end, estimated at 8-9' high. Debris left on the opposite curb of the street indicated how far the flood waters spread before receding.**



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*Clip and save*

## HANDY PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency Police/Fire 911

Non-emergency Police 311

OCMPOA President Jim Cullen 512.447. 8201

Aqua Texas emergency calls 877. 987-.2782

Non-emergency Sheriff calls 512..974.0845

County Commissioner Gerald Dougherty 512.854.9333

Pedernales Electric Cooperative 1.888.883.3379

A shout out to the **VOLUNTEERS** who walked this newsletter to your front door: Delivery coordinators Andrea and Ryan Fontana, and delivery persons Marilyn Buckland, Debra Tompkins, Sherry Krupinski, Trudy Richards, Emma and Nathaniel Duhon, Robin Field, Tony and Luz Lopez, Lisa Putman and Robert Walker.



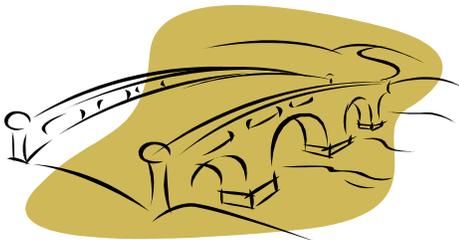
*Especially at this time of year, our thoughts and prayers are with our men and women who serve our country here and overseas. We thank them for their service and wish them a safe and healthy return home.*

## MICROCHIP YOUR PETS



Sadly, Onion Creek Meadows is often the dumping ground for unwanted pets. A few find permanent homes here but more often they are turned over to Animal Control where, if not adopted, they may be euthanized. You can protect your pets by having them **microchipped** so they can find their way back to you. **Austin Animal Center microchips for free.** Be sure to register your pet after chipping.

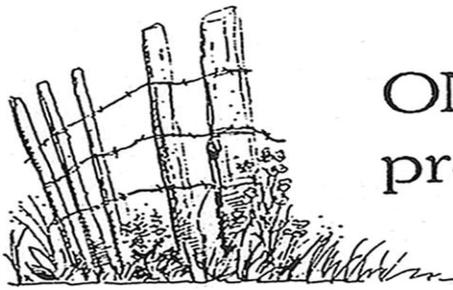
## BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS



Final preparations for the new two-lane bridge on Old San Antonio Road to parallel the single lane existing one will finish soon, but construction which will take about ten months will not be complete until the end of 2014. Some of the right-of-way land for the larger wider bridge is still being acquired. New construction will elevate the roadway above the flood plain, more pertinent than ever after the beating the old structure took on October 13th and October 31st.



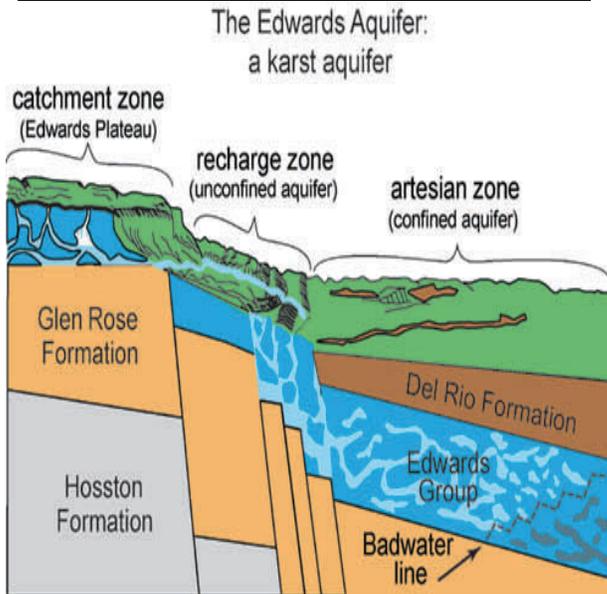
Onion Creek makes a series of waterfalls at McKinney Falls State Park (Upper Falls seen at normal flow).



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This above drawing illustrates the various sections of the **EDWARDS AQUIFER**. Of particular concern to environmentalists is the recharge zone, that part of the land which takes in water and stores it, sending it onward through various channels and fractures in the rock. The recharge zone is home to 15 endangered species whose habitats would be diminished if SH45SW were to be built over that part of the aquifer.

## Halloween "Rain Bomb" May End Drought

The past three droughts in the last five years have ended with large rain events. A large amount of water which falls in a short time is called a "rain bomb." BSEAQ says the two recent rain bombs have recharged the aquifer, and it is presently flowing at *three times its usual rate*. While water restrictions may be lifted entirely by the end of the year, we are still cautioned to conserve water whenever we can.

## OF WATER AND TRAFFIC NOT ENOUGH OF EITHER ?



**When Precinct 3 re-elected Gerald Daugherty its County Commissioner, we elected 45 Southwest's most vocal supporter.**

A recent commission vote unanimously backed the 3.6 mile toll road. Daugherty, who also served as our commissioner in 2002-2008, represents rapidly growing southwestern Travis County and long has championed the 45SW as a vital link from the southern end of MoPac to FM1626 in Hays County. SH45SW would link existing roads to form a ring around Austin and allow northbound and southbound traffic to bypass the downtown I-35 congestion. Estimates put the cost of 45SW at up to \$100M. Austin is about the only city its size in the country that does not have a ring road around the metro area. We are also consistently high on the list of the ten worst cities for traffic congestion in the country.

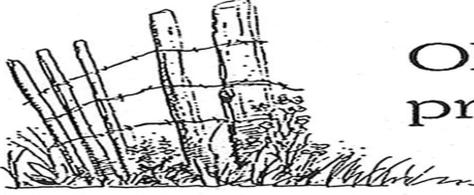
That's the traffic story. Here's where the water comes in. The road has long been opposed by environmentalists because it would cut across the **recharge** zone of the Barton Springs portion of the Edwards Aquifer, an area which is a habitat for some 15 endangered species as well as the main water supply for close to 3 million people.

When the amount of water taken out of the **aquifer** exceeds the amount of **recharge** (water coming in), the water level falls. When this occurs over a long period of time, as it does during a drought, wells begin to dry up and become polluted. Our population explosion brought a greater demand for water at the same time we had very little rainfall.

**The Edwards Aquifer stretches from the Rio Grande near Del Rio to Salado in Bell County, covering approximately 4000 square miles.** An **aquifer**, simply put, is a body of rock that in cracks, channels and fractures can store and release quantities of water miles away. A **recharge zone** is where surface waters enter the aquifer.



# MERRY CHRISTMAS



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## In Memoriam

Edna Dell Burns of 13430 Onion Creek Drive left her earthly life on October 26th. She is mourned by her husband Louis Porter Burns and daughter Melissa Blair, as well as many others. Edna was born in Booneville, Arkansas, July 10, 1936.

Retiring after many years as a telephone operator with Southwestern Bell, she served 17 years as her church secretary. Edna sang with a passion, whether at home or at church, and gave much pleasure to others by playing the piano and organ. Her family says that God called home another angel to sing in his heavenly choir, no longer in pain and forever at peace.

Edna was interred in Live Oak Cemetery on October 30th. Memorials can be sent to First Baptist Church Building Fund, 104 S. San Marcos, Buda TX 78610



## MANCHACA HISTORY EXPLORED IN NEW BOOK

*Images of America: Manchaca* (published by Arcadia Publishing, \$21.99) illustrates in 200 vintage photographs the history of our unique community. Spanish land grants opened the area for settlement in the 1830s. By 1850 a stage coach stop was established, which brought more settlers. The Great Northern Railroad laid tracks by 1881, and a new school and mercantile stores soon followed. By 1900, Manchaca was a bustling community. [www.arcadiapublishing.com](http://www.arcadiapublishing.com)

## OF WATER AND TRAFFIC (cont. from pg 5)

**Our aquifer is one of the most prolific in the world**, discharging about 900,000 acre feet per year. The plentiful water fed by the rivers from the Edwards Aquifer was the primary reason Spanish missionaries established so many missions in Central Texas, like the Alamo in San Antonio. Immigrants flocked to the area because of the abundant food and energy supported by the rivers, the same rivers from which farmers and ranchers irrigate their lands today.

Until recent years, San Antonio, New Braunfels, San Marcos and Austin have been able to support large populations without the need to develop other water resources. Whether you believe in climate change or not, the severe droughts of recent decades combined with our population growth have decreased our water supply and limited its use. Farmers and ranchers of all stripes have had to limit their crops and sell off their herds.

## NOW COMES PROP 6 WHICH VOTERS JUST APPROVED

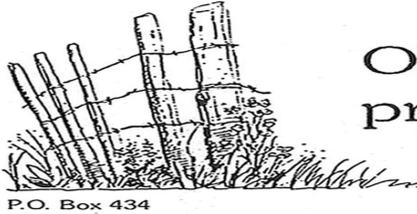
**Proposition 6**, if it does what it is written to do, is an *historic* piece of water legislation which has been in the planning stage for nearly **two** decades. A revolving loan program of \$2 billion from the state's Rainy Day Fund will enable local governments to plan and implement local water projects and hopefully ensure enough clean water supplies needed to protect public health and bolster our economy for the next **50** years. Better harvesting and storing of rainwater when it is plentiful and conservation of water resources are part of the plan which will provide a better hedge against times of drought. Losses from the continuing 2011 drought have already cost Texans billions of dollars in lost income, according to figures supplied by the *American Statesman*.

To bring this full circle and tie the two together, yes, SH45SW does encroach on the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone, but it also partially answers the desperate need for freer flowing transportation routes. Prop 6, on the other hand, addresses the need for innovative efficient methods of dealing with our increasing water needs. They are linked. *As in life, we have to give to get.*

## TEXAS SH130 LAGS

Traffic on Texas 130 is not keeping pace with the original predictions, and Moody's (a rating agency) says that as a result they are lowering the rating for the \$1.18 billion debt owed by the operators. That privately-owned section of 130 has been under-used despite having truck tolls dropped to the same as for cars. We recently took 130 to Georgetown, cutting 20 minutes off to our final destination, Temple, while cruising along 130 at a steady 75 mph on a Friday afternoon. Well worth that toll!





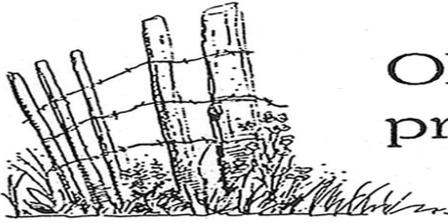
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## OCMPOA BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2013-2014

<b>Jim Cullen</b>	Board President Database, Membership	512-447-8201 <a href="mailto:jcullen@austin.rr.com">jcullen@austin.rr.com</a>
<b>Andrea Bright-Fontana</b>	Board Vice-President Activities Chair	512-577-6368 <a href="mailto:abrightfontana@gmail.com">abrightfontana@gmail.com</a>
<b>Sherry Krupinski</b>	Board Treasurer Welcome Chair OCMPOA Alert Back-up	512-1144 <a href="mailto:sherrykrupinski@yahoo.com">sherrykrupinski@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Lisa Putman</b>	Board Secretary Deed Restrictions Heep Ranch Development	512-517-5095 <a href="mailto:lisaatthelake369@gmail.com">lisaatthelake369@gmail.com</a>
<b>Trudy Richards</b>	Board Member FaceBook Page	512-560-7543 <a href="mailto:trudy_richards@hotmail.com">trudy_richards@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Phyllis Stegall</b>	Board Member Newsletter Editor OCMPOA Alert List Yahoo Group Administrator	512-291-0202 <a href="mailto:pjstegall@austin.rr.com">pjstegall@austin.rr.com</a>
<b>Tony Lopez</b>	Board Member Activities Neighborhood Watch	512-291-4992 <a href="mailto:lucym165@yahoo.com">lucym165@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Debra Tompkins</b>	Board Member Webpage Administrator Nominations	512-282-2380 <a href="mailto:deblou4@juno.com">deblou4@juno.com</a>
<b>Gabe Tamayo</b>	Deed Restrictions Chair	512-282-6529 <a href="mailto:gabetamayo@austin.rr.com">gabetamayo@austin.rr.com</a>
<b>Robin Haralambous</b>	Garage Sale Coordinator Heep Ranch Development	512-569-9850 <a href="mailto:robin_302@yahoo.com">robin_302@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Ron Ralph</b>	Heep Ranch Development	512-280-9648 <a href="mailto:ronralph@austin.rr.com">ronralph@austin.rr.com</a>



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## MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM (From July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014)

Onion Creek Meadows Property Owners Association  
P.O. Box 434  
Manchaca, TX 78652

**Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Lot(s) For Each Per Year Total\***

**Property Owner Membership:** \_\_\_\_\_ X \$20.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

\*Multiple lot owners may choose to pay (1) the minimum \$20 dues for a single lot and one membership vote or (2) \$20 for each additional lot which entitles you to an additional vote.

### Join your **ONIONCREEKMEADOWS@YAHOOGROUPS.COM**

Here is a useful (and often very busy) on-line forum to share your neighborhood news directly neighbor-to-neighbor, such as offering free or for sale items or services, sharing seeds and plants and gardening advice, locating lost and found pets or other items, looking for household help or services, asking questions about area concerns, making announcements or sharing information you think others might be interested in. Anyone living in Onion Creek Meadows and its surrounding neighborhoods is welcome to sign up.

This site is monitored for content and appropriateness by two moderators. **Please be polite or your message will not be posted.** Join now at **onioncreekmeadows@yahoogroups.com**

### Get OCMPOA Alerts

If you are interested in reporting or receiving information about unusual or suspicious activity in the Onion Creek Meadows area, be sure your email address is on **ocmpoalertlist@gmail**. This is a **free** valuable service available to anyone living in OCM. Your email address will not be shared with anyone else.

### 911 Emergencies

In an emergency your **first** call is to **911**. Make sure that your house has numbers easily readable from the street, especially at night, and that lights are on outside to guide the emergency crews. If possible, have someone outside to help direct emergency vehicles exactly where help is needed.

### Non-Emergencies

The **non-emergency** Sheriff's Department number is **974-0845** to use if you want to notify them you will be out of town and would like them to keep a close watch on your house. When you call, wait out the options until a live voice comes on the line. Ask your neighbors to keep an eye out too.