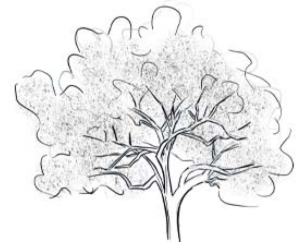




Gardens of Oak Hollow

A SMALL COMMUNITY WITH A BIG HEART

Neighborly News



Number 068

22 August 2023

Welcome



RANDOM ACTS of KINDNESS



Input From Your Neighbors

Special thanks to Rock Pena who is constantly updating his landscaping on Shadow Park North

Kudos to Bart Baker! He is always out working to make our green spaces look their best.

Thank You!

You do a good job picking up after Fido



But Please

Put the 'package' in your trash not mine!



Hazardous Waste

Do you have old items that you want to dispose of? For example, auto fluids, batteries, cooking oil, fluorescent light fixtures, household cleaners and solvents, oil filters, paint, pesticides, printer cartridges? This waste should never be placed inside any cart for curbside collection and always brought to HHW Drop-Off Centers.

Monthly Drop-Off Events

Friday, September 1

8:00AM to 1200 PM

Bitters Bulky Waste Collection Center

1800 Wurzbach Parkway.

Guidelines

- A recent CPS Energy bill showing payment of the Environmental Fee and picture ID are required.
- Contents should be kept in the original container.
- If the container is leaking, transfer contents to a leak proof or lined cardboard box.
- Do not mix different materials in the same container or bag.
- Place all items in a box and put it in the trunk or truck bed during transport.
- A technician will unload the HHW materials and return the containers upon request.

- If materials are brought in a non-approved container, it will not be returned.
- Paint and other liquid waste are limited to five 5-gallon cans or 25 1-gallon cans with a 220-pound limit.

Harvest Month



In Old England, September was called *Haervest-monath* (Harvest Month) -- the time to gather up the rest of the harvest and prepare for the winter months. For today, we are hoping for a break from this heat.

"There are flowers enough in the summertime,
 More flowers than I can remember—
 But none with the purple, gold, and red
 That dye the flowers of September!"
 —Mary Howitt (1799-1888)

September's name comes from the Latin word *septem*, meaning "seven." This month had originally been the seventh month of the early Roman calendar.

"Just For Fun" Days

- September is National Happy Cat Month
- September 11: National Hug Your Hound Day
- September 13: Kids Take Over the Kitchen Day
- September 19: International Talk Like a Pirate Day
- September 24: National Punctuation Day

Powerful Message #2

In a previous Newsletter, I posted a story "Powerful Message" about the movie



"Sound of Freedom". Children in South America being abducted by human trafficking gangs.

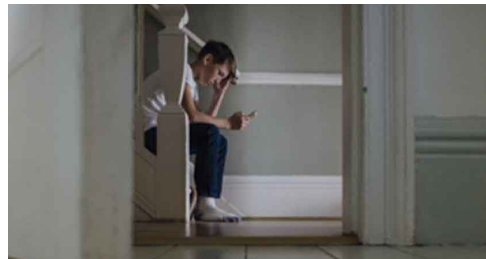
But what about San Antonio?

Last week I attended a Prayer Breakfast for the Ransomed Life organization. I was not familiar with that organization, but I wanted to learn more about their work in our local community.

This Ransomed Life map speckled with little red hearts, hitting every corner of San Antonio, represent one or more child sex trafficking victims in that zip code.

Sextortion

One terror that I had heard about was young people "meeting" someone on line who ends up talking them into sneaking out an meeting them. I learned that is just the tip of the iceberg.



The goal of the FBI Stop Sextortion campaign "is to alert young people to one of the risks that they can encounter online," said Supervisory Special Agent Brian Herrick, assistant chief of the FBI's Violent

Crime Section. “Both youth and caregivers need to understand that a sexual predator can victimize children or teens in their own homes through the devices they use for gaming, homework, and communicating with friends.”

Financial Sexplotation

The danger to our children and grandchildren is much more than being snatched off the street.

Last December the FBI issued an alert about a “staggering increase” in cases — 7,000 reports in the last year alone. Those reports have resulted in at least 3,000 victims and over a dozen related suicides.

A large percentage of these sextortion crimes originate outside of the United States, primarily in West African countries such as **Nigeria** and **Ivory Coast**, per the agency.

Words From Edie

I served as a chaplain at a children’s home for nine years. I’ve worked with the victims of these kinds of abuse. It is real and it can and does happen.

This topic is difficult to talk about. It seems as though such awful things could not happen to our families, and we feel sorry for those who are impacted.

Montgomery’s message to us is that it *can* happen to our family members.

Here are some steps you can take to help your family members be safe:

1. Talk. If you have young people in your family who ever use the internet, they are old enough to discuss this. Mention this article and ask them what they know about the topic. It will give you an idea of what they have already learned. Sometimes our children and grandchildren know a lot more

than we think they do. If they know nothing, you can educate them.

2. Reassure. Always reassure them that you will always love them, even if they do something stupid. We have all visited the land of stupid at some time in our lives.

3. Caution. Use caution yourself. Be wary of posting pictures of your grandchildren on social media sites. Yes, they are adorable. However, if you must post pictures, use initials instead of names. Don’t give the bad guys information that they can use to harm the people you love.

4. Safe-Word. One of the scams uses artificial intelligence to duplicate the sound of your loved one’s voice. The bad guys get a recording from a TikTok or SnapChat and clone the vocal tones and inflections. It is uncanny how accurate it is.

-- You get a call from what you believe is your grandchild begging you to help them by sending money. It is heart-stopping and you will feel compelled to do anything you can to help. Meanwhile, your loved one is not in danger at all.

-- The way to guard against this is for you and you loved one(s) to create a **safe word** ahead of time. They can use this **safe word**, an unusual or random word, by tossing it into their message to you if they are truly in danger. Extortionists will not be able to use it, because they don’t know it exists.

5. Common Sense. Remember that children are not the only people who are vulnerable to extortion. Anyone can be scammed. If your voice is on the internet, you need a safe word too. Don’t say or do anything on-line that you would not in person. Use extreme caution. If someone you’ve met on-line wants to meet you in person, the lobby of the police sub-station is an excellent location.