

LONG CANYON Gazette

March 2011

Volume 4, Issue 3

A Newsletter for the Residents of the Long Canyon

Travis County Commissioner *Karen Huber Discusses Lake Travis Economic Value At Four Points Chamber of Commerce Luncheon*



- Thursday, March 17th
- Time: 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- At River Place Country Club, 4207 River Place Boulevard.

Membership is not a requirement to come to the luncheon but you'll want to register online to ensure your seat and receive early-bird discount pricing! While you are at the Four Points Chamber of Commerce website be sure to check out the other networking activities offered by the chamber including the monthly Happy Hour and bi-monthly networking meetings at Concordia University.

The Four Points Chamber of Commerce provides networking opportunities at social gatherings, luncheons and business network meetings. Now well over 100 members strong and growing, the Four Points Chamber of Commerce brings businesses together along highway 620 from Hudson Bend and Mansfield Dam to Anderson Mill and along Ranch Road 2222 from Jester to Volente to support business growth in the community. For more information about upcoming events contact us at FourPointsChamber@gmail.com, visit www.fourpointschamber.com or call (512) 551-0390. Membership inquiries may also be sent directly to membership@FourPointsChamber.com.

Four Points Chamber of Commerce is delighted to have Travis County Commissioner Karen Huber as the guest speaker for Four Points Chamber's March Luncheon. Commissioner Huber recognizes that as the population in Central Texas continues to grow the demands for water and the impacts on water quality are increasing. Commissioner Huber will discuss the collaborative effort to study and analyze the value of Lake Travis as a significant regional economic engine considering its various revenue streams. Four Points Chamber luncheons provide stimulating discussions for local individuals, businesses and organizations to gain new insights and stimulate business growth.

Landscaping With Deer Resistant Plants

Submitted by Jack Williams

Landscaping in Austin can be fun, but also quite challenging. The unique setting of Austin blends the urban city with the Hill Country of Central Texas. This mix gives the Austin landscape a look and feel unlike any other part of Texas.

With wildlife and people living together, it is common to see deer in neighborhoods all around Austin. The deer can really give headaches to the novice landscaper. When landscaping in Austin, it is important to know the different types of shrubs and perennials you can use to make your yard beautiful and keep the deer from munching on your new plantings. Remember, the plants mentioned are usually deer resistant, but deer will eat almost any plant if hungry in extreme drought conditions.

Every landscape should have the right mix of evergreen shrubs and flowering perennials. This way, your garden doesn't look dead in the winter and will provide color in the spring, summer and fall. Here are a couple of plants that I have had success with while landscaping in Austin.

(Continued on Page 3)

NEWSLETTER INFO

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New Traffic Concerns Raised at RM 2222 and Loop 360

A request is scheduled to come before Austin's Zoning and Platting Commission and the City Council in March which should be of concern to all area residents who travel on RM 2222. If the City Council grants this request, it may well result in an increased risk to traffic safety on RM 2222 in the vicinity of Loop 360.

The case in question is C14-91-0015(RCA) and it is a request by the owners of the property located on the southeast corner of RM 2222 and Loop 360 to change the terms of a public restrictive covenant between the owners and the City of Austin. This property, known as Champion Tract 4, has been a point of contention between nearby neighborhoods and the owners for over 20 years.

In 1991, the Champions filed for zoning on Tract 4 for commercial development. The Champions received their zoning, with certain uses prohibited, and signed a public restrictive covenant with the City which addressed some concerns raised by the neighborhoods. The restrictive covenant included traffic safety and water quality controls as well as landscaping and other provisions intended to improve the compatibility of this development with the nearby residences.

The covenant specifies that access to the property will be from two right-in/right-out-only driveways, one on eastbound RM 2222 and the other on the exit lane from Loop 360 to eastbound RM 2222. Furthermore, in order to guarantee that there would be no left turns into or out of the property onto RM 2222, the covenant requires that there be a solid median in place on RM 2222 before any certificates of occupancy are issued for Tract 4.

The bridge project under construction by TxDOT originally included plans to place a solid median along RM 2222 adjacent to Tract 4. TxDOT was approached by agents for the Champions expressing concern about future access to Tract 4, and eventually TxDOT agreed to modify their plans to allow a left-turn cut-through in the median from westbound RM 2222. TxDOT was not made aware of the restrictive covenant. When TxDOT became aware of the terms of the covenant, the property owners were informed that a solid median would be installed unless the City removed the restriction.

The owners filed to have the restrictive covenant modified to remove the right-in/right-out-only restriction on the driveways to Tract 4. The City then requested an updated Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) from the applicants. Their engineers produced a TIA update which shows no improvement to traffic flow or traffic safety from the proposed change and instead tries to make the case that the change would "do no harm."

From the point of view of residents who travel on RM 2222, the proposed left-turn access poses several concerns. First, vehicles turning left into Tract 4 would be crossing the eastbound lanes of RM 2222 very near the intersection with Loop 360. Not only does this pose a danger to vehicles traveling east on RM 2222 but also to vehicles entering RM 2222 from the exit from northbound Loop 360. Second,

(Continued on Page 3)

Landscaping with Deer - (Continued on from Cover Page)

Evergreen Shrubs:

- Silver Germander
- Pineapple Guava
- Dwarf Yaupon
- Cotoneaster
- Upright and Trailing Rosemary
- Bicolor and African Iris
- Jerusalem Sage

Flowering Perennials:

- Salvia species (Several varieties and colors to choose from--I like 'Hot Lips', Mexican Bush Sage and Salvia Greggii)
- Indigo Spires
- 4 Nerve Daisy
- Copper Canyon Daisy
- Turk's Cap
- Bat Face Cuphea
- Yellow Bell

These shrubs and perennials will vary in height and texture, so be sure to plant in the right location. For example, you don't want to plant a Pineapple Guava in front of a window or an Upright Rosemary too close to a sidewalk--allow for adequate growth. If not, the plants will overwhelm the space and crowd your garden.

By planning ahead and before you begin landscaping in Austin, you will save valuable time, money AND keep deer from eating your plants!

Best of luck and happy gardening.

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New Traffic Concerns - (Continued from Page 2)

vehicles waiting to turn left from westbound RM 2222 will be stacking up as they wait for a break in the eastbound traffic flow. The number of vehicles which can queue up to turn left will be limited by the new traffic signal to be installed at Lakewood Drive. Vehicles waiting to turn left could block the left lane of RM 2222 and possibly block the intersection at Lakewood, particularly during rush hour traffic. Third, the driveway to Tract 4 will be directly across RM 2222 from the driveway to the Bull Creek Market. It is inevitable that some vehicles will attempt to cut across RM 2222's westbound lanes to turn left onto eastbound RM 2222.

All of these scenarios create unnecessary traffic conflicts and decrease traffic safety for local residents and everyone who travels on RM 2222. There are no benefits to the public or to area residents from the proposed changes to the covenant. The provisions of the covenant were designed to provide some mitigation for the negative effects of the intensive commercial zoning approved for Tract 4. As far as the surrounding neighborhoods are concerned, the owners made a deal with the City to obtain their zoning, and now they are trying to renege on their part of the deal. What remains to be seen is whether the City will honor the commitment made to area residents back when the zoning was approved.

Courtyard Homeowners Association, which is the adjacent neighborhood, and 2222 Coalition of Neighborhood Associations (2222 CONA) have already taken positions of opposition to the proposed modifications. Northwest Austin Civic Association and other area homeowner and neighborhood associations are also considering opposing the request.

Concerned area residents and all who travel on RM 2222 can individually indicate their support or opposition to this application to remove the right-in/right-out-only restriction on this property's driveways. The easiest way to do so is to send an email expressing your opinion on this traffic safety and traffic flow issue to both the Zoning and Platting Commission and the City Council before their respective hearings. Below are the email addresses and case information which should be referenced:

Case # C14-91-0015(RCA), Application to amend restrictive covenant, 5617 FM 2222

Zoning and Platting Commission members and their email addresses: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/boards/results.cfm?bid=57>

ZAP group email, including staff, for your convenience:
bbaker5@austin.rr.com, sbald@sbcglobal.net, gregorytbougeois@

(Continued on Page 5)



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New Traffic Concerns - (Continued from Page 4)

gmail.com, prseeger@austin.rr.com, crbanks@hotmail.com, donna.zap@gmail.com, dora.anguiano@ci.austin.tx.us, greg.guernsey@ci.austin.tx.us

City Council members and link to group email form: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/council/groupemail.htm>

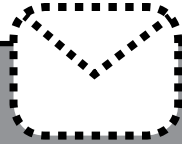
The following public hearings are currently scheduled but are subject to postponement:

1. Zoning and Platting Commission - Tuesday, March 1, 2011
2. City Council - Thursday, March 10, 2011 or Thursday, March 24, 2011 - TBD

For up-to-date information on hearing dates, visit www.2222cona.org or call Carol Torgimson at 338-4722.

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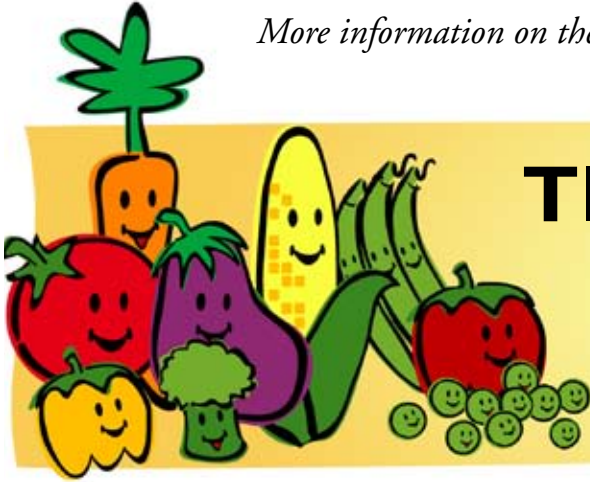
www.colinshope.org

Email: alissa.magrum@colinshope.org



WWW.COLINSHOPE.ORG

More information on the EWG, as well as the full list of fruits and vegetables ranked, can be found at <http://www.ewg.org>.



TIPS FOR MASTERING THE FARMERS' MARKET

By Melanie Dragger, M.Com.

Many people are taking steps to improve their health and the environment by eating organically grown and raised foods. While some people are selecting organic items at their local grocery store, farmers' markets are becoming increasingly popular. Over the past year, according to the Department of Agriculture, the number of farmers' markets in the U.S. increased by 858, or 16 percent, from 5,274 in 2009 to 6,132 in 2010. When the USDA first began tracking farmers' markets in 1994, there were only 1,755 markets.

Outside of growing your own produce and raising your own livestock, shopping at a farmers' market is the best way to obtain fresh, local, and seasonal fruits, vegetables, and herbs, as well as farm-fresh eggs, meat, poultry, and dairy products. Many farmers' markets also offer artisan breads, honey, and seasonal jams, jellies, and preserves.

Below are tips to help you master your local farmers' market:

1. Do Your Research – Before heading to the market, research what produce is in season in your area. Since all products sold at a farmer's market may not be organic, and some organic products sold may not be certified, familiarize yourself with the organic certification process and product labeling. Information on the USDA's National Organic Program can be found at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>.
2. Bring Your Own Containers – While some

vendors have bags and boxes available for customers, bringing your own containers is the best way to ensure you will be able to transport and protect your purchases properly. Additionally, recycling containers helps the environment by reducing the number of natural resources used to produce new ones.

3. Bring Cash – Swing by your bank or ATM before hitting the farmers' market. Most vendors do not accept checks or credit cards. Bring small bills, since it may be difficult for some vendors to make change.
4. Go Early or Go Late – The best items usually go first, so try to get to the market early. However, before making a purchase, take a quick trip down the aisles, since prices can vary greatly among vendors. If you can't make it to the market when it first opens, go at the end of the market day to catch deals from vendors trying to unload their remaining products.
5. Speak with Vendors – Shopping at a farmers' market allows you an opportunity to speak directly with growers and farmers. Not familiar with Swiss chard? Looking for a new way to prepare eggplant? Most vendors love to share their knowledge, including discussing their production methods, providing storage and transportation advice, and sharing recipes and cooking tips.

Buying organic products at your local farmers' market offers numerous benefits, including boosting the local economy, reducing the amount

of toxic chemicals that enter your body and the environment, and decreasing the amount of fossil fuels used to transport products to consumers. However, organic products can be more expensive than conventionally grown and raised products, and some organic products may be difficult to find in some areas. If going 100% organic is not feasible, use the following list as a guide. According to the 2010 report of the Environmental Working Group, a non-profit organization specializing in research and advocacy related to public health and the environment, these 12 fruits and vegetables consistently contained the highest amount of pesticides when conventionally grown, and should be consumed in organic form when possible:

1. Celery
2. Peaches
3. Strawberries
4. Apples
5. Blueberries (domestic)
6. Nectarines
7. Sweet Bell Peppers
8. Spinach
9. Cherries
10. Kale/Collard Greens
11. Potatoes
12. Grapes (imported)

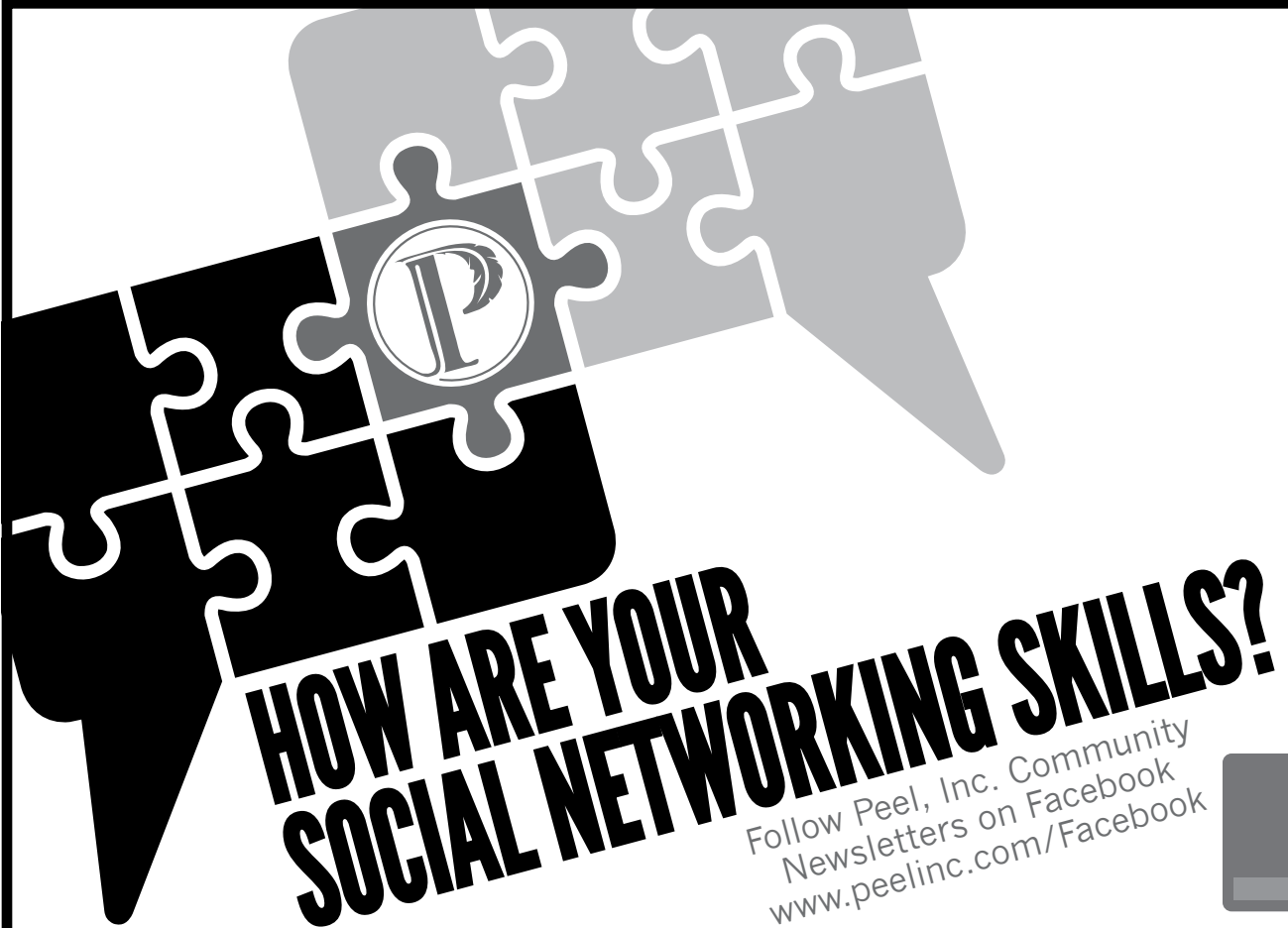
The EWG's annual ranking of produce pesticide contamination is based on its analysis of tests conducted by the USDA and the federal Food and Drug Administration. More information on the EWG, as well as the full list of fruits and vegetables ranked, can be found at <http://www.ewg.org>.



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