

STOMPING OUT STICKER BURRS

Ridge Oak Triangle:

It was a great turnout as about 40 people gathered at the Ridge Oak Triangle on Jan 5th to help with the sticker burr problem. The neighborhood has been fighting burrs in this large green space for years. The burrs make the space almost unusable. Our current strategy involves collecting as many burrs as possible by wearing socks over shoes and then walking the area. All these feet, big and little, means lots of socks covered with burrs. Once the socks filled up we would swap them out. It was lots of socializing with the adults and exercise for the kids. The plan is to do this event on a regular basis – both for sticker burr removal and to make this space a neighborhood gathering area.

Ridge Oak Reservoir:

All the dogs that visit the Ridge Oak Reservoir give a big bark of thanks to those who came out to the help with the Sticker Burr Stomp on Jan 5th. The reservoir located at 4400 Ridge Oak Drive has beautiful views and a big open field – a field that had too many sticker burrs for our 4 legged friends. People gathered here to wear socks over their shoes to pick up as many burrs as they can. It is very easy to help out. If you visit the area bring old socks and wear them over your shoes. Just toss them in the garbage can as you leave. The dogs thank you!

Each sticker burr is a seed pod so fewer burrs means fewer plants and burrs this spring.

Thanks everyone,

-- Nadene and Juliee of the HPWBANA
Beautification Committee

National Junior Honor Society helps out at the Ridge Oak Triangle!

Many thanks go out to On Fri, Jan 17, the group came out to this large green space for some sticker burr stomping. With a bag of socks to wear over their shoes and lots of enthusiasm they stomped away collecting thousands of burrs. The timing was perfect as the burrs are dry and ready to cling to socks. Fewer burrs mean fewer sticker burr plants this spring. And with fewer burrs the green space may be usable again. That is the goal.

-- Beautification Committee



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The HPWBANA Board meets on the third Monday of each month except December. Please go to HPWBANA.org for our current meeting location or contact president@HPWBANA.org.

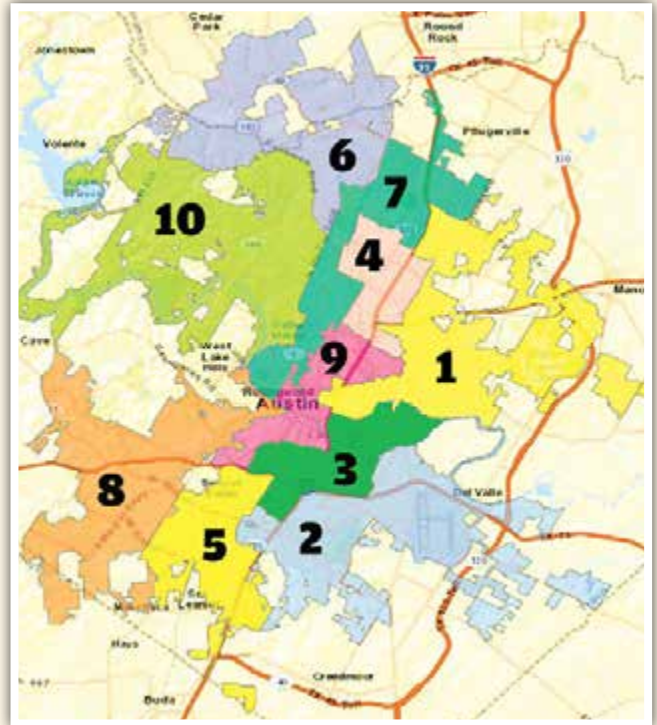
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HPWBA Part of District 10 after Austin moves to 10-1 Redistricting Plan

Dawn Lewis



*Final Redistricting Map for COA.
HPWBA included in District 10-1.*

As you know, Austin has moved to a new system of how we will elect our city council--we have moved from an at-large system to a single member system. There was a special effort to include four minority opportunity districts, as required by the Voting Rights Act.

The process was arduous, and the HPWBANA board worked to try to ensure that our neighborhood would be included in a district with members that shared our concerns and issues. In addition, we had many neighbors in HPWBA who supported our efforts on behalf of our neighborhood. The Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC) drew the ten districts in November and the Highland Park Balcones West Neighborhood was included in District 10. This includes Tarrytown, Brykerwoods, Northwest Hills, part of Rosedale, and Great Hills.

To view the map, please go to http://www.austinredistricting.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Austin_Final-Plan.pdf

If you are interested in running for office to represent our district, candidates can begin fundraising in May for their campaigns.

2013 - A YEAR IN REVIEW

By Jennifer Smith, Realtor®

My family and I LOVE living in this neighborhood—our yard, the schools, proximity to downtown, block parties, the quarry, trails and so much more! We know there are lots of other great neighborhoods, and yet it is still clear to us that HPWBANA is the best. Yes, THE BEST!

We live in a vibrant neighborhood that is in DEMAND, and below is a quick snapshot of how 2013 compared to 2012 in real estate. You will see fewer homes were sold, and yet our values increased and days on the market decreased--the law of supply and demand! If you are thinking of selling it is a fantastic time. There is definite demand, and homes are often selling before they even hit MLS.

HPWBANA REAL ESTATE 2013 YEAR-END SNAPSHOT

	2012	2013	% Change
Number of Sales	86	68	-20%
Avg Days on the Market	56	42	-25%
Avg Sales Price	\$540,993	\$564,374	+4%
Median Sales Price	\$472,500	\$514,500	+7%
Avg Sold Price per Sq Ft	\$234.73	\$251.60	+7%
List Price/Sale Price %	97%	98%	+1%

For a more in-depth look at what happened in 2013 and what that means for your home's value, please contact me today. I would love the opportunity to talk with you!



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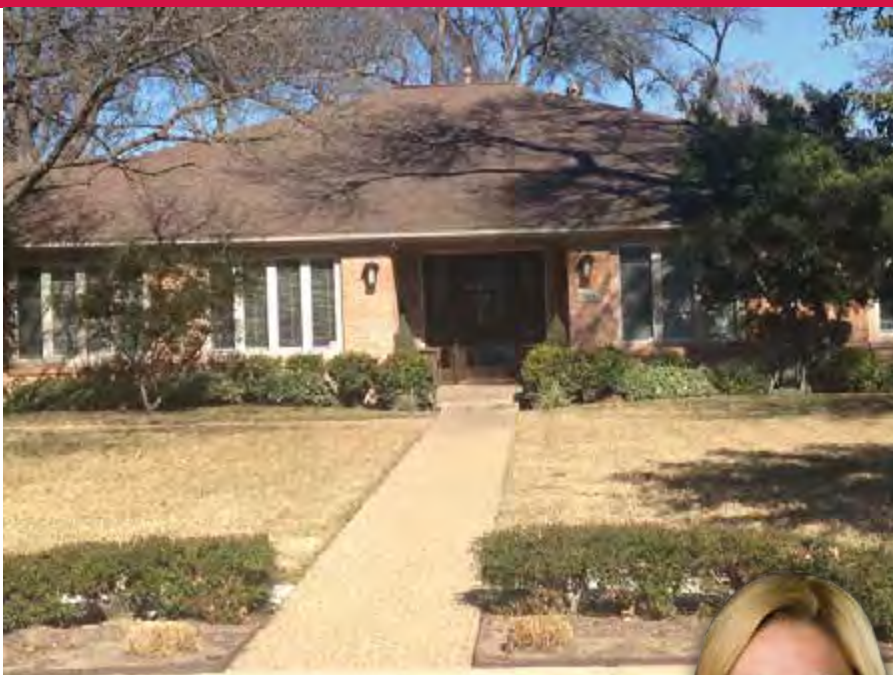
FEBRUARY'S YARD OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to Maggie and Joe Longley of 3104 Highland Terrace West!

Despite the blustery days, they have not a leaf in their yard! "Well we owe it to Mike Glidewell of Glidewell Landscaping, Construction and Irrigation," Maggie says. "Mike is the guy. He does a fantastic job every Tuesday Morning, and my yard would not look this great without him!"

"Looking for help with your yard? Stop by and meet Mike," Maggie says. "Or call him at 512.585.2317 and ask for 'The Maggie'!"

Thank you for sharing Maggie, and congratulations to you, Mike—oh and Joe!



Call me today!

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5-Year Real Estate Trends in the HPWBANA Neighborhoods

By Rebecca Wolfe Spratlin

Metric	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of Homes Sold	57	71	62	97	86
Average Original List Price	\$695,205	\$681,814	\$683,416	\$690,228	\$796,248
Average Last List Price	\$634,282	\$653,892	\$656,076	\$671,124	\$772,586
Average Sold Price	\$580,252	\$617,229	\$627,189	\$648,748	\$741,419
Average Sold Price Per Square Foot	\$219	\$227	\$226	\$243	\$265
Average Days on the Market	150	107	66	62	61
Median Original List Price	\$585,000	\$590,000	\$599,495	\$579,000	\$671,900
Median Last List Price	\$560,000	\$579,500	\$598,000	\$548,000	\$666,950
Median Sold Price	\$530,000	\$535,000	\$572,935	\$517,500	\$655,316
Median Sold Price Per Square Foot	\$216	\$222	\$220	\$241	\$255
Median Days on the Market	115	66	45	21	20
Average Sold Price/Average Original List Price	87%	91%	93%	94%	94%
Average Sold Price/Average Last List Price	95%	94%	96%	97%	97%
Number of Sold Homes with Pools	9	16	12	16	18
Buyers' Closing Costs & Repairs Paid by Sellers/Average Sold Price	0.48%	0.33%	0.65%	0.36%	0.24%
Price Range	\$190K - \$2.5M	\$180K - \$4.2M	\$212K - \$3.5M	\$151.1K - \$7.0M	\$215K - \$3.7M

5-Year Real Estate Trends in HPWBANA

In reviewing the past performance of real estate, it is very important to look at the numbers in the context of performance over time as a basis of comparison. There is a lot of media information about the performance of real estate in Texas and in Austin, but it is most useful when looked at in a smaller geographic area. After all, real estate is local. For that reason, I have pulled together the above metrics for only those neighborhoods included in the Highland Park West and Balcones Area Neighborhood Association. This is our immediate neighborhood.

The most important trend is the growth in cost per square foot. The Average Cost per Square Foot has increased by 21% during the past five years, and the Median (mid-point) Cost per Square Foot has increased by 18%. While there is no doubt that much of this growth has been due to appreciation of our homes' values, at least part of it is due to the capital investments home owners and investors/flippers have made in updating and up-grading area homes. During the past five years, there were 24 homes purchased and re-sold at much higher prices within 12 month periods, suggesting investor/flipping activity as well as tear-downs and new construction. There were around a dozen other homes that were bought

and sold at much higher prices during this five-year period, suggesting that home owners made capital improvements and benefited from their investments upon resale of their homes.

Signs of the buyers' market transitioning into a sellers' market are evidenced not only by the increased price per square foot, but also in the significant reduction in Average and Median Days on the market, as well as the reduction of the amount of money that sellers have been paying for their buyers' closing costs and repairs on their homes. The Average Days on the Market have declined by 59% to only 61 days, while the Median Days on the Market declined by 82% to 20 days. The percent of the sales price that sellers are spending on Buyers' Closing Cost and Repairs is only a quarter of one percent, down by 50% during the past five years. In this competitive market, buyers have been willing to pay more for homes and ask for fewer concessions on closing costs and repairs.

Our neighborhood continues to be a vibrant real estate market with many investors and home owners willing to make capital improvements. The incredibly positive trends of the past five years and the recent conversion to a Sellers' Market are expected to continue throughout 2014 and beyond.

GOOGLE FIBER COULD BRING 100X FASTER INTERNET TO HPWBANA



2014 will bring the highly anticipated roll out of Google Fiber's ultra-high-speed internet service to select Austin neighborhoods. The service, which provides an alternative to Cable TV and Internet subscriptions, boasts of download speeds 100 times faster than those provided by typical broadband options. At that speed, a high definition movie that might take over an hour to download can now be had in less than a minute.

Whether Highland Park residents will be able to subscribe to Google Fiber has not yet been determined. Google will be running an online site that asks residents to indicate their collective interest in having the service installed in their area. Neighborhoods that meet Google's sign-up goals will be prioritized for the service, and according to the Google Fiber Blog, will be able to gain access "within a few weeks." To receive updates on neighborhood sign-ups, residents can visit: <https://fiber.google.com/cities/austin/>

Prices for the services have yet to be disclosed, though presumably Google is looking to be competitive with available alternatives. Austin is just the second city in the United States, after Kansas City, to get access to Google Fiber, where a combined TV and Internet package goes for \$120 per month.

Google Fiber is already stirring responses from some traditional broadband TV and Internet providers. AT&T has already announced its "GigaPower Internet" service, which to start provides speeds of roughly 40 times typical broadband service.

The Google Fiber project involves installing thousands of miles of fiber-optic cables back and forth across Austin communities. To implement the service in the Highland Park area, Google would install one or more telecom cabinets in the area. Each cabinet houses equipment capable of serving a few hundred residents, which would transform Highland Park into what Google describes as a "Fiberhood." Google technicians would then need to connect individual homes that choose to subscribe to the service.

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Highland Park West Balcones Area

It's My Park Day

MARCH 1ST

It's My Park Day and the HPWBANA beautification committee invite you and your family to come out to Perry Park on March 1st for the annual "It's My Park Day" event. Activities will include mulching the trees, clearing brush, and continuing with the Nature Trail Restoration project. It's My Park Day is a great opportunity to meet members of our Beautification Committee as well as other caring neighbors like you! Be sure to check the website or Yahoo Group for details.

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Highland Park Elementary Parent Kinder Tour

Come and tour Highland Park, meet a Kindergarten teacher, and see what HP Elementary is all about! Parent Tour is on Wednesday, February, 26th from 11:30-12:30. Please meet in the library. Please RSVP to Courtney Yeager at cryeager2@yahoo.com Parents only please. There will be an event in March and May for your children to check out Highland Park.

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ESTATE PLANNING

BASICS FOR EVERY FAMILY

Submitted by Laura K. Kennedy

Everyone is busy. The breakneck pace of modern life leaves little time for reflection. In addition to taking care of yourself, parents are focusing on the ever-changing needs of children while often simultaneously caring for aging parents. It is hard to think about the big picture when we need to cook dinner and walk the dog (even though someone shorter than you insisted that they would take care of the latter).

What if something happened to you? If a debilitating illness prevents you from taking care of your family? Organizing your affairs both in the event of incapacity and death is a gift to your loved ones. It will mean that they do not have to guess about your wishes. It also means that you, instead of Texas law, determine the guardians of your children, who will take care of you if necessary and to whom your property passes.

Whether you need to update your current estate plan or create one for the first time, every parent needs to consider the following:

1. Guardians for children. What happens to your children if you die? If you become incapacitated and cannot care for them? Choosing a guardian for a minor or incapacitated child is one of the most important decisions you can make. And wouldn't you rather name a guardian as opposed to leaving it to a court? Revisit your decision every couple years to see if you are still comfortable with the person you named guardian or to change the appointment.

2. Beneficiary designations. Review the beneficiary designations on your retirement accounts and life insurance policies to make sure the beneficiaries are correct and coordinate with your estate plan. A divorce or death may have changed things since you last filled out your designation form. Further, check your bank and brokerage accounts. If there is a

survivorship designation, that account will not pass under your will. This kind of asset is referred to as a non-probate asset. For example, a "joint with right of survivorship" bank account will be controlled by the designation on file with your bank.

3. Trusts. Should you leave your estate outright to your spouse or children or in a trust? Trusts are not just for the wealthy. A properly prepared trust can provide a certain level of creditor protection and asset protection in divorce. Further, a special needs trust should be considered if your child could be disqualified from government benefits because of his or her inheritance.

4. Powers of Attorney. You understand the benefits of an estate plan but think, "Aren't I too young for a will?" A complete estate plan includes more than just a will. What if you are in a debilitating accident? Who takes care of your finances and your medical decisions? You can tackle these issues in a durable power of attorney and medical power of attorney. Moreover, a health care directive gives you the opportunity to outline your wishes in case of terminal illness.

5. Taxes. I have yet to meet a person who enjoys writing a check to the taxman. If you have a taxable estate above \$5.34 million (including life insurance, retirement accounts and certain other assets that pass outside of your will), your estate will be subject to the federal estate tax in 2014. A tax-planned will and other specialized techniques can minimize the estate tax and preserve your wealth.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to estate planning. It will take some time and thoughtful discussion. However, there is no substitute for the peace of mind that will come with an estate plan that reflects your wishes and takes care of loved ones when you cannot.



Highland Park West Balcones Area



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