



HPWBANA

HIGHLAND PARK WEST BALCONES
AREA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

THE HPWBANA NEWS

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February 2015

www.hpwbana.org

MEET YOUR NEW DISTRICT 10 CITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

BY LAURA JONES

After a run-off election late last year, Sheri Gallo became the first representative of District 10 in the new 10-1 Austin City Council. Ms. Gallo was kind enough to answer a few questions so that we can get to know her better.

Q: What inspired you to run for City Council to represent District 10 in the first place?

A: Over the past several decades, it has been apparent that many of the geographic areas of Austin have not been adequately represented on the Austin City Council, and I feel that our new 10-1 plan is the answer to that issue. As a 5th generation Austinite living, working and raising my family in District 10 for over 50 years, I want to be a part in helping to make this historic change in city government be successful and work best for the citizens of Austin.

My family has a long history of involvement in the Austin community and my parents taught me through their actions that "public service is the rent you pay to live in a community". My dad, Edgar Perry, served as Mayor Pro Tem on the Austin City Council over 50 years ago and with my election to the City Council we made history as the first Father and Daughter to ever serve on the Austin City Council! I grew up on Ridge Oak Drive and attended Highland Park, Lamar, Murchison (the first year it was opened!) and graduated from McCallum. My great-grandfather developed the Highland Park neighborhood and donated the land of Perry Park to the school district. I have so many wonderful memories of growing up in the Highland Park/Balcones neighborhood, and it is an honor to represent this part of Austin on the Council.



District 10 City Council Representative Sheri Gallo

Q: What will your first priority be in the new City Council?

A: My first priority will be to improve the ability for citizens in District 10 to be able to communicate with me, my office and the City Council as a whole.

The first step is to create an information flow between my office and District 10 citizens.

- We are in the process of creating a District 10 website which will have information on it for the District 10 residents (neighborhood association contact information and meeting schedules, council agenda, District 10 calendar of activities, etc.).

- We are establishing District 10 task forces to address areas of concern within District 10 (public safety, parks, libraries, traffic, etc.). Please let my office know if you would like to participate in any of these task forces which will meet on a regular basis in the District.

- I am attending as many Neighborhood Association meetings as possible. Your association will be the major source of communication with my office as we work together to make our neighborhoods the best place to live, work and raise our families!

- My pledge during campaigning was to have my appointments to Boards and Commissions be chosen from District 10 residents. Please let me know if you have any interest in serving your community by being appointed to a Board or Commission.

The next step is to change the way the Council agenda is handled and make the City Council meetings work better for the citizens. I have already been working with our other new Council Members to

(Continued on Page 2)

Highland Park West Balcones Area

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Austin Citywide Information Center . 974-2000 or 311
Emergency Police 911
Non-emergency Police (coyote sighting, etc.) 311
Social Services (during work hours) 211
Wildlife Rescue 24 Hour Hot Line 210-698-1709
APD REP. - Officer Darrell Grayson 512-974-5242

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

HWPBANA is bordered on the north by 2222, on the south by 35th St., on the west by Mt. Bonnell Rd., and on the east by MoPac and by Bull Creek Rd. between Hancock Dr. and 45th St. Mail your membership dues to HPWBANA, P.O. Box 26101, Austin, Texas 78755

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(Meet Your New... Continued from Cover)

take immediate steps to improve council procedures:

- Manage the Council agenda to avoid late night meetings and foster greater public participation (rotate council agenda items to other days, hold Council meetings more frequently).
- Enhance opportunity for meaningful public engagement earlier, before decisions are final (move public hearings earlier in the process to Council Committees).
- Dramatically enhance access to and completeness of minutes, back-up, tracking follow-up action on resolutions, and other records.
- Take immediate steps to initiate longer term improvements for public engagement (create a Public Engagement Task Force)

Q: What do you think are the most important issues facing the Highland Park West/Balcones Area currently?

A: 1. Land use and the development of infill tracts of land will be important issues for all of District 10. Working together, we can make sure that the development which occurs on tracts such as Bull Creek, State School, Muny, and Northwest Hills Austin Oaks is an enhancement to the existing neighborhoods and addresses, as part of the process, associated issues of increased traffic and enrollment pressure on neighborhood schools.

2. Traffic gridlock on major roads and increased "cut-through" traffic through our neighborhoods.

3. Affordability. I promise to carefully watch how our city government spends your tax money, and actively address ways to control our increasing property taxes and utility bills.

Q: How can our HPWBANA neighbors best ensure that their concerns are represented? What are some of the best ways for them to get involved with the issues they care about?

A: Please contact my office with any concerns and suggestions. We would also love to have you visit our office and meet our staff. I am honored to represent you and look forward to meeting each and every one of you!

Our phone number is 512 978-2110, fax is 512 978-2121

Email is District10@austintexas.gov

Mailing address: Sheri Gallo, Austin City Council District 10, 301 West 2nd, Austin, TX 78701.



FEBRUARY 2015

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A YEAR IN REVIEW BY JENNIFER

It is hard to believe my family just celebrated 13 years living in this great neighborhood. I've said it before and it bears repeating – HPWBANA is the best place to live in Austin, Texas. Yes, THE BEST!

Below is a quick snapshot of how 2014 compared to 2013 in real estate. You will see fewer homes were sold, and yet our values increased! In 2014 our vibrant neighborhood was in demand and we anticipate that trend will continue in 2015. In fact, we have buyers looking to purchase RIGHT NOW! So, if you are thinking of selling CALL ME.

For a more in-depth look at what happened in 2014 and what that means for your home's value, please contact me today. I would love the opportunity to talk with you!

HPWBANA REAL ESTATE 2014 YEAR-END SNAPSHOT

	2013	2014	% Change
Avg Days on the Market	42	48	+12%
Avg Sales Price	\$561,376	\$624,459	+11%
Median Sales Price	\$510,000	\$575,000	+13%
Avg Sold Price per Sq Ft	\$251.00	\$267.28	+7%
List Price/Sale Price %	98%	97%	-1%

FEBRUARY EVENTS

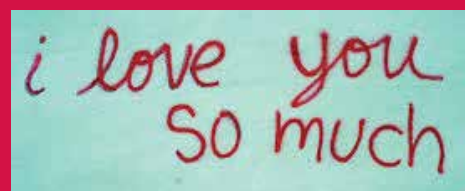
1st – Sunday-Fundays - Neill-Cochran House (free 1st Sundays)
8th – Elvis Lives – The Long Center
19th-22nd – Blue Man Group – The Long Center
21st – Birding & Nature Hike – Nalle Bunny Run Wildlife Preserve
27th-April 25th – The Three Little Pigs – Zach Scott



JENNIFER SMITH
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Since February is considered the "love month," we are launching **I LOVE Highland Park West Balcones Area because...**



Simply email us why you love HPWBA and we'll publish your thoughts on our monthly page. Join the fun, tell us why you love HPWBA!

Email Jennifer@smartservicesold.com

We believe so strongly in Gary Keller's Wall Street Journal Bestseller, **THE ONE THING**, that we will continue our book give away to the next 10 people who email us a book request at Jennifer@smartservicesold.com.

Tip from THE ONE THING: Time block!

FUN FACT

"[Texas] added 441,200 positions in 2014 – that's about a third of all jobs added in the U.S."
Source: Austin Business Journal

Follow my bi-weekly video blog at
smartservicesold.blogspot.com.



Tipsy Waxwings

By Peter English

FEBRUARY NATURE NOTES

Yes, the Cedar Waxwings are actually drunk.

Cedar Waxwings are here for the winter and travel around Austin devouring berries. You have probably seen them - they have yellowish bellies, brownish head and back, and a little black mask - and fly in groups from 5 to 200. They have a thin, weak whistle that they make all day long whether flying or perched so many birders locate and identify them by the noise they make.

The berries that the Cedar Waxwings eat are all on the trees and bushes all fall and through the winter, and so they get exposed to all the cold and hot weather that comes to Austin. Berries initially have starch, and this is converted to sugar either as the berries ripen or after a freeze. Either way, little sugar-filled containers are perfect for fermentation if some bacteria or yeast get inside. These microbes then convert the sugar to ethyl alcohol — the same alcohol found in beer or wine and produced using the same process. It happens much faster when the outside temperature is warm after the freeze, so Austin's climate is perfect for fermentation.

The Cedar Waxwings are one of few bird species that can survive for months exclusively on berries and often eat only berries during the winter. So they are getting a fair amount of that alcohol in their systems if the berries are fermenting. Just as we shouldn't drink and drive, waxwings shouldn't eat and fly. Most often the waxwing's oversized liver can detoxify the alcohol before things get out of hand, but I have seen 3-4 rolling around on the grass in my front yard under the holly tree where they had been eating. I have also seen waxwings fly right into a solid brick wall at full speed. There is lots

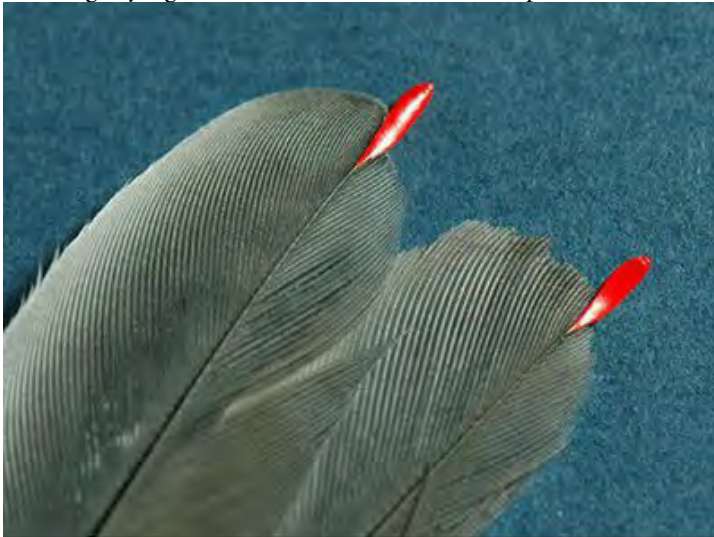


of speculation that the younger birds tend to get drunk more often than older birds, but there is no clear evidence.

How would you know a younger waxwing from an older one? Just as the name implies, waxwings have weird bright red waxy tips to some of their wing feathers (the ones closer to the body known as "secondaries"). You can see these waxy tips on the back of the bird where those wing feathers end up as a bird folds its wings. Young birds do not have the waxy red tips to those feathers. The waxy tips start to grow in two-year-old birds with just one or two tips, and each year they grow more and more tips. Interestingly, when Cedar Waxwings go back north they choose to mate with birds their same age, or at least with the same number of waxy red tips.

In our part of Austin, I tend to see Cedar Waxwings from mid-January through the end of March, or whenever the berries run out. When a big flock pounces on a set of bushes the view can be really impressive, with hundreds of birds flying to the bush, plucking a berry while it hovers in front of the bush, then flying back to its perch in a nearby tree. It is amazing that they can avoid each other.

As a side note, if a Cedar Waxwing runs into your window or the side of your house, check its mouth for blood. If there is blood coming out of its mouth it has most likely torn its crop and is very likely to die. The crop is a part of the throat that birds use to store food for later. If a waxwing with a full crop flies full speed into a hard surface the crop ruptures and it either bleeds to death or starves to death. Either way, there is not much that you can do to help it. Turns out that flying drunk with a throat full of berries is pretty dangerous!



Red waxy tips on the Cedar Waxwing feathers.

Perry Park Receives Funding from Austin Parks Foundation!

by Friends of Perry Park

Many, many thanks go out to Austin Parks Foundation for their continued support of all the community efforts with our local Perry Park. The Friends of Perry Park are thrilled with the news of being awarded an Austin Parks Foundation Austin City Limits Grant! This grant funding will be used for two specific projects:

Perry Art Park – The APF ACL grant will fund the art park trail component of the project. This trail will wind across the big open field along Balcones Dr leading to the placement of the first sculpture. The trail will be concrete to minimize maintenance and will provide a safer path for people to use rather than the current sidewalk that is placed right next to the very busy street. There is a large community matching component for this part of the grant and the Friends of Perry Park have been fundraising for several months.

Tennis Court – The APF ACL grant will also help fund resurfacing of the two Perry tennis courts. The last time the courts were resurfaced was back in 2000 so this is a much needed project. Our community will need to provide a \$2,000 cash match for this project. Our local tennis community is behind this project and they have some fun fundraising events planned. Many thanks go out to Dave Woods for driving this project. One added benefit of the project is that quick start lines will be added so young children can learn and play tennis, thereby encouraging tennis court use for the future.

Information on both projects can be found on the Friends of Perry Park website, <http://friendsofperrypark.org/> Each project has a dedicated link for donations, which are collected by Austin Parks Foundation.

Many thanks go out to all the volunteers and supporters of Perry Park.

Perry Park Spring Egg Hunt: Save the Date

The annual Perry Park Egg Hunt is scheduled for Saturday, April 4. Mark your calendar and watch the list serve and newsletter for more information!

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Highland Park West Balcones Area

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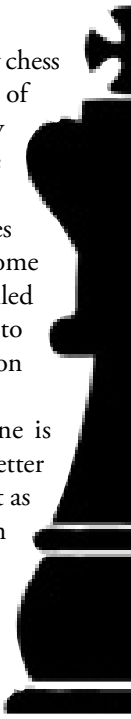
by Stephen Zoraster

A neighbor and I meet most Sunday morning to play chess at Russell's Bakery. This is the bakery at the corner of Balcones and Hancock. We meet at 11 am and usually play 2 games, but sometimes more. Occasionally we are joined by one or two other people who like the game.

But, playing with the same people repeatedly makes it hard to learn more about the game. We would welcome new players. Neither my neighbor nor I could be called great players. No ranked chess player has anything to fear from us. So, a new player at Russell's has no reason to fear embarrassment.

So, who is welcome? Anyone is welcome. Anyone is welcome at any skill level or age. If a new player is better than we are, we will learn more about the game. If not as good, than he or she will have an opportunity to learn more about the game.

If you are interested, send me an e-mail at szoraster@szoraster.com. Just to make sure that you don't happen to show up at Russell's on a Sunday we are not playing.



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	9		6			5		

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The goal is to fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9. Each digit may appear only once in each row, each column, and each 3x3 box.



Movie in the Park

May 9th, 2015
Movies Begin at Dusk!

HPWBANA is looking for neighbors or area businesses to sponsor this event! To find out more about sponsorships, contact Chereen Fisher at 512 507-9065 or chereenfisher@gmail.com

We also need volunteers to help organize the event. If you are interested in helping make this event a good one, please contact Becca Tripathi at coditripathi@yahoo.com.

Watch the neighborhood list serve to vote on movie selection!



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5-Year Trends for Homes in the Highland Park West, Balcones Park and Area Neighborhoods

By Rebecca Wolfe Spratlin

Each January we pause and take a careful look at the real estate trends in our neighborhood. Looking back over the past five years paints a very clear picture.

The most important metrics are the average and median sold prices per square foot. With the exception of a small dip in 2011, the Average Sold Price Per Square Foot has steadily increased by 25% from 2010 through 2014. The Median Sold Price Per Square Foot increased by 22% during that same time period. The Average Sold Price as a percent of the Average Original List Price has increased from 91% to 96% during the past five years even though the Average Sold Price increased by 13%. This means that homes are selling much closer to asking price and

reflects the fact that we have been experiencing a sellers' market in recent years.

It is also significant that the Average Days on the market went from 107 days on the market to 72 days, a 33% reduction in time on the market. This is especially noteworthy since higher priced homes generally take longer to sell.

Overall, the trends show that home values in our neighborhood continue to appreciate and that homeowners and builders continue to invest in renovations and new construction in the area. The demand for homes in our neighborhood continues to grow along with the expansion of the Austin job market and population growth.

Metric	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of Homes Sold	71	62	97	86	73
Average Original List Price	\$681,814	\$683,416	\$690,228	\$796,248	\$728,721
Average Last List Price	\$653,892	\$656,076	\$671,124	\$772,586	\$728,721
Average Sold Price	\$617,229	\$627,189	\$648,748	\$741,419	\$697,269
Average Sold Price Per Square Foot	\$227	\$226	\$243	\$265	\$284
Average Days on the Market	107	66	62	61	72
Median Original List Price	\$590,000	\$599,495	\$579,000	\$671,900	\$648,000
Median Last List Price	\$579,500	\$598,000	\$548,000	\$666,950	\$650,000
Median Sold Price	\$535,000	\$572,935	\$517,500	\$655,316	\$647,000
Median Sold Price Per Square Foot	\$222	\$220	\$241	\$255	\$271
Median Days on the Market	66	45	21	20	20
Average Sold Price/Average Original List Price	91%	93%	94%	94%	96%
Average Sold Price/Average Last List Price	94%	96%	97%	97%	96%
Number of Sold Homes with Pools	16	12	16	18	11
Buyers' Closing Costs & Repairs Paid by Sellers/Average Sold Price	0.33%	0.65%	0.36%	0.24%	0.32%
Sold Price Range	\$180K - \$4.2M	\$212K - \$3.5M	\$151.1K - \$7.0M	\$215K - \$3.7M	\$290K - \$2.15M

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Rebecca Spratlin's Current Listings



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- Family Fitness in the Park
- Spring Egg Hunt
- July 4th Parade
- Crime and Safety meetings with APD representatives
- Neighborhood development issues and beautification
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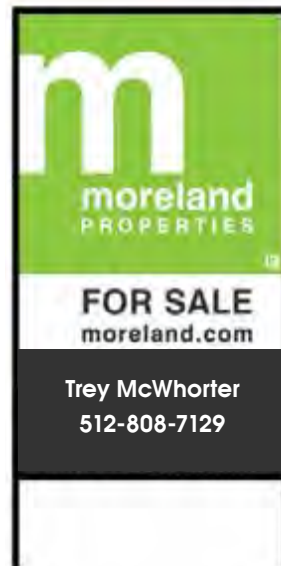
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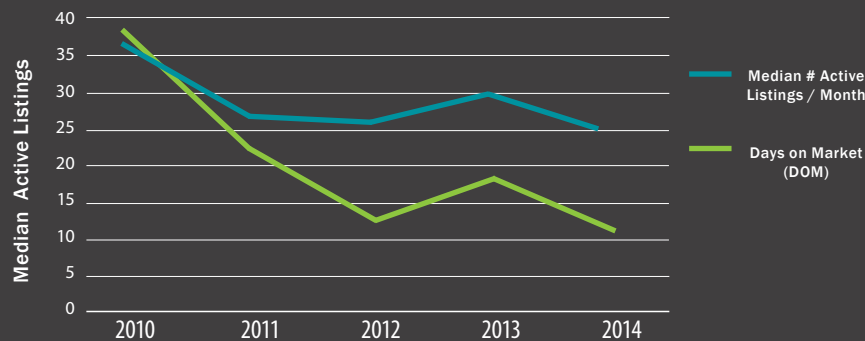
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