



A Message from the NWACA President

Joyce Statz

Summer went really fast; for the relatively few really hot summer days, a blessing! But, we're not so happy to see the end of the vacationing times. As we see the kids going back to school, let's all be extra aware and careful – there are lots of bikes and walkers near the school zones. September also means football and soccer. The fields along Far West are used for both of these popular sports all weekend long. Please be mindful of the children on weekends, too!

In this issue you'll find several items for your calendar: a Parks Work Day in September; annual NWACA Garage Sales and National Night Out in October (but September is your planning month); and elections in November (more information about a forum for those in the October issue). You'll also find a security system crime alert, guidance on insuring valuables against fire, how to handle coyotes and raccoons and fire ants, and some pointers to resources on remodeling your home.

In case you plan to attend the upcoming hearings on the Austin Oaks PUD, note that the date for the Environmental Commission hearing has moved to September 2nd. The Zoning and Platting Commission hearing is September 15th. Both are open hearings with public comments at 6 PM at City Hall. Further detail will be on the City's web site, as well as in the weekly NWACA Notes email that goes out on Thursdays. (If you're not yet on the email list, sign up on the home page at www.nwaca.org.) In addition, there is a Community Meeting being hosted by the Balcones Civic Association on September 8, from 7 to 8:30 PM. At this meeting, the City's Planning and Zoning Department will describe their findings and recommendations regarding the PUD and answer questions of the audience. All neighborhood residents are welcome to attend.

We have many opportunities to get involved in your neighborhood:

- Helping with events like the Neighborhood Garage Sales
- Helping run the annual BOPA (Batteries, Oil, Paint, Antifreeze) recycling drop-off
 - Leading the Friends of Bull Creek Park, where you organize and lead (with Parks Committee help) at least 2 volunteer work days each year. Possibilities for that park are endless. The historic stage is going to be repaired soon – maybe we can have an orchestra or band play there like they used to do.
- Several communication activities, as described in the article in this issue.

Come and play a part in keeping this a vibrant community!

We apologize for a factual error in last month's newsletter. We told you about new shade structures at Murchison Pool, but the City schedule changed after we went to press. We hope you can see them when you get this newsletter. Since we provide copy by the 15th of the prior month, sometimes our "facts" are only "plans!"

In general, the material in this newsletter is information about events and issues in the neighborhood provided by Board and Committee members of NWACA. We are pleased to also publish articles submitted by any neighbor, like the one we ran last month about the "freeloading fox." On occasion, there may be comment that we label as "editorial," where someone is giving their opinion on a matter regarding the neighborhood. Such comments do not necessarily reflect the views of the NWACA Board or its membership.

Enjoy the issue!

What is NWACA?



The Northwest Austin Civic Association (NWACA) serves about 4150 homes in the area bounded by Spicewood Springs Road on the north, RM 2222 on the south, Mopac on the east, and Loop 360 on the west. NWACA was formed in 1970, responding to a request from the City Planning Department for a group to act as a voice for the neighborhood. Unlike homeowner's associations, a civic association does not enforce deed

restrictions or monitor landscaping at individual homes, but it helps to foster communication and discussion regarding broad concerns of whole neighborhood, such as crime prevention, traffic safety, wildfire prevention, elections, and zoning matters.

NWACA has a focused mission: to preserve, promote, and enhance the exceptional and unique character of the neighborhood. That mission is carried out through a wide range of activities and services performed by an elected volunteer board and a dozen committees of volunteers. NWACA is always looking for additional volunteers to give generously of their time and talents to help their neighborhood. Our website has a wealth of information on how you can get involved (click on the Get Involved section).

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Austin Citywide Information Center.....512-974-2000 or 311
Emergency, Police..... 911
Non-emergency (coyote sightings, compliance issues) 311
APD District Representative, Officer Gary Griffin 512-974-8392

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Each of the Board members can be reached at: nwacainfo@gmail.com

The NWACA Board meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, except December. Please visit our calendar at www.nwaca.org to see the specific time and location. If you wish to speak at a Board meeting, please send email a week before the meeting, so that we can get you on the agenda.

NWACA is bordered on the north by Spicewood Springs Road, on the west by Loop 360, on the south by RM 2222, and on the east by Mopac (Loop 1).

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ADVERTISING INFO

Please support the advertisers that make the NWACA News possible. If you are interested in advertising, please contact our sales office at 512-263-9181 or advertising@peelinc.com. The advertising deadline is the 8th of the month prior to the issue.

ARTICLE INFO

The NWACA News is mailed monthly to all NWACA-area residents. Input for newsletter articles is welcome at any time. Please submit your ideas and suggestions to us at nwacainfo@gmail.com or send it to our U.S. mail address: NWACA, P.O. Box 26654, Austin, TX 78755. The deadline for input is the 10th of the month, so that we can get it to the printer by the 15th of the month.



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NWACA AND NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 2, 8 AM

Kneaded Pleasures

NWACA Communications Committee

SEPTEMBER 3, 8 AM

Kneaded Pleasures

Membership and Sponsorship Committee

SEPTEMBER 6, 2 PM

Kneaded Pleasures

NWACA Parks Committee

SEPTEMBER 8, 7-8:30 PM

TBA

Community Meeting on Austin Oaks PUD – hosted by
Balcones Civic Association

SEPTEMBER 9, 6:30-8:30 PM

Mangia Pizza

NWACA Monthly Board Meeting

SEPTEMBER 14, 5:00 PM

Mangia Pizza

NWACA Zoning Committee

SEPTEMBER 26, 9-NOON

Allen Park and Bull Creek District Park

Work day in conjunction with National Public Lands Day

OCTOBER 3, 8 AM-NOON

NWACA

NWACA Neighborhood Garage Sales

OCTOBER 3, 10 AM-3:30 PM

Mueller Airport Lake

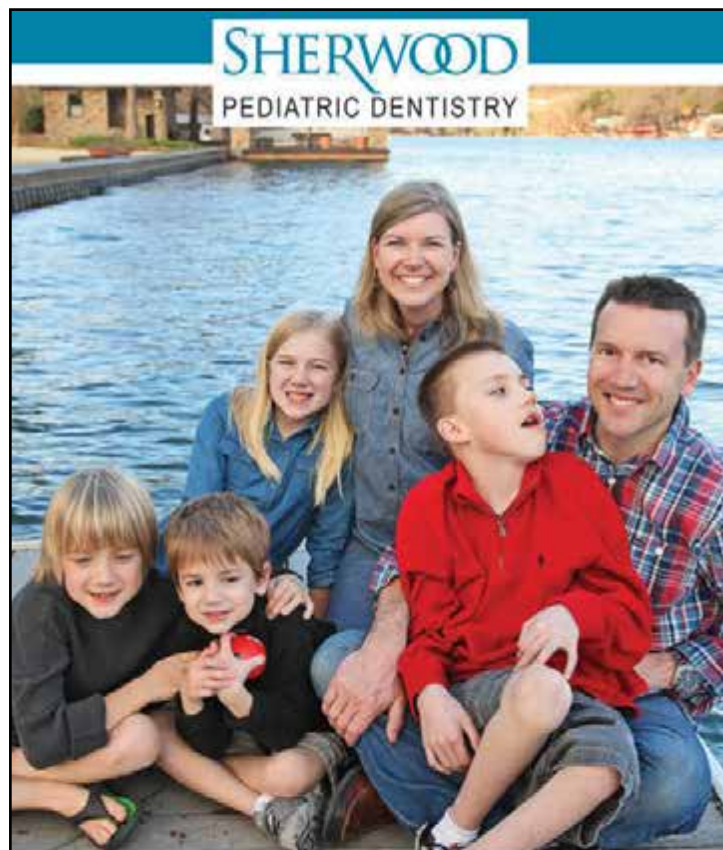
National Night Out Kickoff for the City of Austin

OCTOBER 6, 7- 9 PM

On your block

National Night Out in Texas – celebrated with neighbors

Note: For each of these events, please check our web site for the latest information, since meetings may be rescheduled because of other conflicts.



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Security Systems Being Compromised

Crime and Safety Committee

There is a new scam making its way around Austin. A NWACA neighbor reported that on August 6th a man came to their house claiming to have an appointment to reprogram their home security pad. Since there was no such appointment, the neighbor did not provide access to their house. The man worked his way down the street using the same approach. The neighbor filed a police report on the incident, and APD informed him that this was now happening in several areas in Austin. If the individual is granted access, they program a guest code into the security system allowing them entry at a future time. They are using the signs in front of homes to identify those with security systems and thus potential targets. APD's instructions are to call 911 immediately if you have this experience.

Exercise Your Communications Skills!

NWACA Communications Committee

We know there's a lot of talent in our neighborhood, and we'd like to give you the opportunity to use that talent! Here are things on which we'd like help:

- Occasional graphics design for events and promotions on Facebook, in email, on posters, on t-shirts, and for the web site
- Gathering information and formatting the weekly email update
- Maintaining the NWACA web site – several pages still “under construction”
- Writing a monthly newsletter column, such as “Landscape of the Month” or “Schools News”



Neighborhood Garage Sales Coming October 3

Carol Dochen

NWACA will provide free publicity for its Sixth Annual NWACA Neighborhood Garage Sales for any neighbor within the NWACA boundaries. We welcome everyone to hold a sale!

This year's sales will be on Saturday, October 3, from 8 AM until noon. Each participating family holds the sale in their own garage or front yard, or perhaps joins a neighbor to hold the sale. All proceeds stay with you doing the sales – none goes to NWACA.

NWACA WILL PROMOTE THE EVENT IN MANY WAYS:

- Provide you with directional signs indicating where you are having the sale (first 50 homes signing up)
- Post signs throughout the neighborhood during the 3 days prior to the sale
- Provide a list and a map of locations of individual sales on our web site
- Advertise in the Austin American Statesman (print and online) and on Craigslist.

If you wish to participate, please sign up starting September 1st and no later than September 30th on our web site www.nwaca.org using the Get Involved Tab to get to the Garage Sale Signup form.

Being a home with a sale on October 3 allows you to take advantage of the free NWACA publicity and leverage the traffic coming into the neighborhood to visit your neighbors' sales.

This event and the others throughout the year are possible because neighbors join NWACA as members. If you haven't yet paid your \$25 annual dues, you can do that through the web site or by U.S. mail.

NOW HIRING

Advertising Sales Representative

Description: The position includes marketing our community newsletters to local and area businesses. It is a flexible position that allows you to work from home and set your own hours.

Roles: Stimulate new advertising accounts in our community newsletters. Maintain current accounts assigned to you by Sales Manager. Service your accounts by assisting them from ad design to final proof approval.

Skills: Excellent communication through email and phone, with high level presentation and relationship-building skills. Strong prospecting and business development skills are a must. Previous sales experience preferred but not required.

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Join in National Night Out

Crime and Safety Committee

National Night Out 2015 in Texas is Tuesday, October 6th, with neighborhood parties from 7 PM to 9 PM. National Night Out (NNO) is a great opportunity for neighbors to get to know one another and to strengthen neighborhood relationships with first responders: police officers, fire department, and EMS.

We encourage you to participate this year by having a front-yard party with your neighbors. Organizing a NNO party is easy – just invite your closest neighbors or your entire block to gather in your front yard. In the past, neighbors have hosted ice cream parties, cookouts, dessert gatherings, and other front-yard events.

When you register your party with the Austin Police Department, you can request a visit from a public safety agency. To register, visit this web site: <https://www.austintexas.gov/nno>. Follow the link provided there to complete the application online by the end of day September 11 or print the form and mail it to:

Austin Police Department, Office of Community Liaison, Attn: Rosie Salinas, P. O. Box 689001, Austin, Texas 78768-9001

You can also get crime prevention and fire safety information to distribute at your party, as well as small goodies contributed by National Night Out sponsors. You can get your materials on Saturday, October 3, at the NNO Kickoff Party and Barbecue Cook-Off at the Mueller Airport Lake, 4550 Mueller Blvd, from 10:00 AM to 3:30 PM. There will be food, music, games, and packets of handouts for those who have registered their parties.



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Exercise your Muscles for our Parks!

Caroline Alexander

This month we have two opportunities for you to show your love for our parks:

Allen Park

Saturday, September 26 – 9 AM to noon – We'll gather at Allen Park to do general cleanup and maintenance of the play areas and trails. Meet at the base of Allen Park at 6413 Westside Drive, where we'll have team leads ready to help you find things to do. Kids and adults – all welcome. Please register at this link: www.austinparks.org

Bull Creek District Park

Saturday, September 26 – 9 AM to noon – Though we did some cleanup in July, there's a lot left to do! The long summer days have brought lots of picnickers and there is lots of trash to pick up. Come join us at the park at 6701 Lakewood Drive. To get there, head south on Loop 360 from the Arboretum until you come to Lakewood Drive. Turn left onto Lakewood Drive and go a few blocks. On the left will be a paved parking lot with some restrooms. We will meet in the parking lot and disperse from there. Please register at this link: www.austinparks.org

Neighbor Editorial: Sign Relief Needed

Bennett and Brenda Brooke

Once upon a time there was a beautiful neighborhood in Austin called Northwest Hills. It was a friendly neighborhood with beautiful yards full of green lawns, beautiful flowers, and beautiful large oak trees. Then Austin began to grow, and grow. The political climate grew with it.

Within a few years neighbors in beautiful Northwest Hills started placing signs in their yards. The number of political signs grew and grew until those beautiful yards were dotted with signs instead of beautiful flowers. Before long, beautiful Northwest Hills began to look like a circus ground instead of a beautiful Austin neighborhood.

Most of the signs said the same thing over and over. After the neighbors had seen so many signs, they disregarded the signs and became bored with them. How many times does one have to see a sign? Enough is enough. If you are one of our Northwest Hills neighbors with a sign(s) in your yard to support a pool, to slow down, or to not support the PUD, consider removing it. We've seen those signs for months. We all know about the PUD and pool now. The few people who speed won't slow down because of a sign in your yard. We have speed limit signs, but drivers will slow down only if our police with radar stop them. The signs only detract from the beauty of Northwest Hills.

If you post a sign in your yard, please put it up for a limited period of time, like 3 or 4 days, unless it's a real estate sign advertising your home for sale!



Sold. Just another starter home in Northwest Hills.

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Fire Ant Treatments

Wizzie Brown

There are numerous ways to manage fire ants, but they are often broken into two categories- broadcast treatments and individual mound treatments. Individual mound treatments are used to treat one mound at a time, can be labor intensive, and may result in more pesticide being spread into the environment. Broadcast treatments will spread product (granular or bait) over a large area.

Individual mound treatments include pouring boiling water onto the mound, using insecticide mound drenches, spreading insecticide granules onto the mound and watering them in, sprinkling insecticidal dusts on top of the mound or using bait-formulated insecticides around the perimeter of the mound. There are also many "home remedies," but be advised that many of these do not kill fire ants. Many home remedies make the fire ants move to a new location (often 1-2 feet away), but do not kill the ants.

Bait-formulated insecticides most often consist of a defatted corn cob grit coated with soybean oil; the soybean oil is where the active ingredient (what kills the pest) is dissolved. Worker ants collect bait as a food source and take it back to the colony to share with other

ants, including the queen. Depending on the active ingredient, the bait may cause the queen to die or be unable to produce viable eggs, which gradually kills off the colony. When using baits, results are often slower to observe when compared to individual mound treatments, but can provide 80-90% suppression for 12-18 months. A bonus to broadcasting baits is that the amount of active ingredient is generally very small, which places less chemical into the environment.

With any pesticide treatment, read and follow all label instructions. Make sure to water in the pesticide if the label instructs to do so. Failure to water in chemicals when recommended by the label does an inadequate job of killing the ants. Baits should not be watered in or used before a rainfall event; baits will not be picked up by ants if they get wet.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600.

Check out the blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

YOUR NEW NEIGHBORHOOD BAR & GRILL

Welcome to Delaney's Icehouse! We wanted you to have a laid-back, comfortable place to grab lunch or dinner, a drink after work and catch the latest game. Join us for Happy Hour Monday-Friday for some great food and drink specials. Cheers!



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Special Thanks to Members

Membership Committee

NWACA thanks our members who have so generously contributed to the Oak Wilt Fund, the 4th of July Parade Fund, or the Park Fund, between July 15, 2015 and August 16, 2015.

Donations to the Oak Wilt Fund provide financial assistance to property owners dealing with oak wilt. Donations to the 4th of July Parade Fund help NWACA to host the best 4th of July parade in Austin! The Park Fund helps us revitalize parks in NWACA with projects such as cleanup days.

- Cathyllynn and Charles Brown
- Joyce and Wesley Campbell
- Cheryl and Richard Hazeltine
- Patti Tauber and Kevin Koh
- Christy and Bill Orr
- Roslyn and Chris Phillips
- Phyllis and Wayne Prescott

New County Courthouse and State Constitutional Amendments in November

John Sepehri

This November, Travis County voters have a significant bond vote proposed by the Commissioners Court: whether to authorize the construction of a new civil and family courthouse complex for almost \$300 million.

The current courthouse has achieved historic landmark status, but many argue it can no longer fulfill its judicial functions. Proponents argue the need for new facilities is desperate, that they will function for both civil and family legal matters, and that the proposal is a cost-effective, efficient, thoroughly evaluated one that will also include financial "offsets."

On the other side, opponents gasp at the price tag, and point to the bond and tax weariness of Travis County voters. According to one estimate, for the owners of a \$325,000 home, the annual property tax hit would be \$42. Opponents generally do not deny the need for new facilities but assert that other illustrative projects, particularly one in Florida's Broward County, are more cost efficient. An estimate by Bill Oakey, a former accountant and affordability advocate in Austin, is that the project could be constructed for nearly \$100 million less than what is being proposed.

In addition to the local courthouse bond proposition, voters will have seven proposed state constitutional amendments to consider:

Proposition 1 - Changes the homestead exemption amount for school district property taxes from \$15,000 to \$25,000

Proposition 2 - Exempts property from taxation for surviving spouses of totally disabled veterans

Proposition 3 - Repeals the requirement that certain executive officials reside in the state capital, Austin, while in office

Proposition 4 - Allows professional sports team charitable foundations to conduct charitable raffles

Proposition 5 - Authorizes counties with 7,500 people or fewer to perform private road construction and maintenance

Proposition 6 - Provides for a right to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife

Proposition 7 - Allocates a portion of sales and use tax revenue to the state highway fund through 2032



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More on Protecting Your Valuables from Urban Wildfires

Al Simmons

Last month's Wildfire article addressed using home insurance policies to cover your valuables so that their value would be documented and your investment protected through your insurance company and/or the use of fire-rated safes. Much of the contents in your home is considered your "valuables;" i.e. unusual, expensive designer furniture; silver/gold/crystal dining ware; silverware utensils; furs; gold, silver and jeweled jewelry pieces; expensive watches and time-pieces; sculpture, paintings and other pieces of artwork; etc.

Many, if not all, insurance companies have homeowner policies that primarily cover the improvements to the property, i.e. the structures, and usually cover some of the less-expensive contents like standard furniture. Most insurance companies have attachment or supplemental policies for valuables as described above. Insurance companies normally want to know the worth of these items if they are to provide coverage for loss or damage of the listed items, i.e. proof of purchase price and/or an official appraisal, depending on the items involved. These appraisals or proofs of purchase form the basis for reimbursement in the event of loss or from destruction via a fire. It is suggested that you establish an understanding with your insurance representative on what you are expecting to have covered by your policy; be sure that the representative has the values for determining the replacement costs of the items and a basis for determining the cost of insurance coverage.

A side issue is using a manufactured fire-rated safe for storing your valuables or literally building a "fire proof/rated room" in the house for keeping your valuables. It is very possible in today's home building market to construct a 4-hour-rated room that is equipped with a fire-suppression system as a part of the home construction. The requirements for such ratings are spelled out in detail as a part of the City of Austin Building Codes; Architects and Contractors are well aware of these criteria. Use of such fire-rated safes and/or fire-rated rooms should result in a significant reduction in your insurance rates for valuables within the home that are kept safe in such a way. If you want to learn more about fire-rated rooms, send us email at nwacainfo@gmail.com and we'll have someone explain what's involved.

Dealing with Raccoons

Stefan Hunt, Texas Wildlife Services

Question from NWACA: What advice do you have for keeping raccoons off our roofs? Many neighbors have these critters trying to invade the attic, and sometimes they succeed!

Raccoons are probably one of the most adaptable animals around. They survive and thrive very well in urban situations, and typically prefer to live around houses rather than in rural areas. The reason is that we provide many opportunities for food and shelter.

One of the biggest issues with raccoons is damage to roofs and attics. They cause losses in the thousands of dollars by tearing up the roof, vents, or eaves of houses while trying to access the attic. Most of the time this damage occurs in the springtime when the adults are looking for places to have their litter of young.

When accessing the roof areas of homes, raccoons prefer the easiest method of travel. For them, it is trees. Any tree branches above or near the roof need to be trimmed at least 4-5 feet away. Raccoons can jump and cover very large gaps, so trim the trees as far back as possible. They can also climb up on the corners of the house as well as gutter spouts, but there are not many effective exclusion methods for these parts of the house.

It is wise to screen off any vents or grating that if removed by the raccoon, would give them easy access to the attic. Usually, if it is a difficult task to access the attic, they move on. If you see raccoons on your roof repeatedly, they have probably already found some type of shelter there. As with most urban wildlife, harassment goes a long way. If they are continually harassed with water hoses and noises, raccoons tend to not stick around very long.

Austin/Travis County provides technical assistance only over the phone for raccoons through Texas Wildlife Services. Feel free to contact us with any questions at 512-854-9613. If you require someone to trap and remove a problem raccoon, you would need to go through a pest control company.

Your Community at Your Fingertips

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Sago Palms and Pets Don't mix them!

Neighbor Advice

A neighbor reminds us that the roots, seeds, and foliage of sago palms are highly poisonous to dogs and cats. If you have an outdoor pet, you may want to remove any sago palms thoroughly from your yard. Here's a link with more guidance: <http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/poison/sago-palm/>






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56 Texas children have already lost their lives to drowning in 2015

DROWNING IS PREVENTABLE

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You can also read your newsletter on the Peel, Inc. iPhone and iPad app. Search the AppStore for 'Peel, Inc.' Download the App, then subscribe to this newsletter on the App.

CITY OF AUSTIN "SCOOP THE POOP" SIGNS AVAILABLE

Some of our neighbors have expressed an interest in yard signs that remind dog-walkers to pick up after their dogs. The City of Austin has provided us small free yard signs that can be used to remind our friends to 'scoop the poop' as they walk their dogs. We have a batch of those signs for distribution to anyone who'd like one. If you would like one, please let us know at nwacainfo@gmail.com or send us a message via U.S. mail.



WHY JOIN NWACA?

The Northwest Austin Civic Association is your neighborhood association! NWACA represents YOU on issues like:

- Crime (how to prevent car and home break-ins, interacting with APD on issues)
- Transportation (raising awareness about excessive vehicle speeds, congestion, etc.).
- Zoning concerns
- Wildfire Prevention (helping homeowners harden their homes against wildfire)

NWACA plans the annual 4th of July Parade (43rd Annual in 2015!), organizes election and issues forums, sponsors an annual neighborhood garage sale, publishes this newsletter and much, much more!

NWACA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Send annual dues of \$25 with this form to:
NWACA, P.O. Box 26654, Austin, TX 78755

Homeowner Name(s): _____

Street Address: _____

_____ Zip _____

Email #1 (kept private; print): _____

Email #2 (kept private; print): _____

Phone (with area code): _____

Date: _____

ANNUAL DUES: \$25

(Optional) 4th of July Parade Contribution:

\$10____ \$20____ Other ____

(Optional) Oak Wilt Fund Contribution:

\$10____ \$20____ Other ____

(Optional) Parks Fund Contribution:

\$10____ \$20____ Other ____

You can also pay via PayPal by following this link on our web site: [Join NWACA](#). If you've already paid your dues for this year, please pass this on to a neighbor who is not yet a member.

Volunteers are always needed on our committees.

Please mark those on which you'd like to actively participate.

- Civic Engagement
- Communications
- Crime and Safety/Neighborhood Watch
- Events/ 4th of July
- History
- Membership
- Parks
- Sponsorship
- Transportation
- Tree and Environment
- Wildfire Prevention



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