

NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY 2016

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2

A Message from the NWACA President

Chris Hajdu

Crime has always been an important topic in our neighborhood. All statistics show that we live in a very safe neighborhood; however, it is important that we continue to work to make our area even safer. A few things we can do to make our neighborhood safer include the following:

• Proper use of the city's 9-1-1 and 3-1-1 systems to report suspicious behavior

• Setting up and maintaining Neighborhood Watches

• Making our homes and vehicles less of a target

Recently a fellow resident had some people knock on her door. When she didn't answer, they went into her back yard, most likely looking for a way in. When this occurred, the neighbor called 311 and was promptly told to dial 911. Remember to use 911 for emergency situations like this, and 311 for non-emergency situations. If you are in doubt, call 911 and they will direct you to 311 if it's not urgent.

Also, related to the issue of crime prevention, please see our article in this newsletter from APD regarding Burglary Prevention Tips regarding Garage Doors.

Moving on to Austin Oaks... By the time this letter is published, the charrette will be completed. We had record turnout at our January 12th Neighborhood Vision and Values workshop. We are excited about the interest shown in the two neighborhood values workshops and hope this interest carried through the charrette process. For the latest information on the Austin Oaks project and what occurred during the design charrette, please visit: http:// nwaca.org/austin-oaks-charrette/

Just as we seem to be nearing the light at the end of the tunnel for the Mopac Express project, the 183 North Mobility project is getting underway. This project, which just announced a tripling of their previous cost estimates, is going to dominate our local transportation news for a long time after the Mopac Express project is done. This project will connect up with the Mopac Express project and provide continuous express access from 620/183 to downtown. Stay tuned to the NWACA Facebook page and this newsletter for more information on an upcoming District 10 Town Hall related to the Mopac Express and 183 North projects. For more information on the 183N project, visit: http://www.183north.com/

Additionally, this month, we have started a new column where we showcase local businesses in the NWACA area. This month, we showcase a long-term business, PostNet. We hope you enjoy learning more about this local business and continue to support them.



What is NWACA?

The Northwest Austin Civic Association (NWACA) serves the area bounded by Spicewood Springs Road, RM 2222, Mopac, and Loop 360. Formed in 1970, NWACA helps to foster communication and discussion regarding broad concerns of the whole neighborhood, such as crime prevention, traffic safety, wildfire prevention,

elections, and zoning matters.

NWACA's 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. See www.nwaca.org for information on how you can get involved (click on the Get Involved section).

"NEIGHBORS SERVING NEIGHBORS. THE NWACA LEGACY"

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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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).

ADVERTISING INFO

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 Calendar
- 4 School News
- 4 Business Spotlight
- 5 Crime & Safety Tip
- 5 ABoR Grant
- 6 Beware of Oak Wilt
- 7 National Fire Danger
- 8 Poop Pollutes
- 10 Don't Feed the Deer
- 11 Leaf Cutting Ants
- 11 Special Thanks



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NWACA AND NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS

FEB. I, 5PM *Temple Beth Shalom, 7300 Hart Lane* NWACA Parks Committee

FEB. 2, 8 AM

Kneaded Pleasures Communications Committee

FEB. 3, 8:30 AM *Kneaded Pleasures* Crime and Safety Committee

FEB. 4, 8 AM *Kneaded Pleasures* Membership and Sponsorship Committee

> **FEB. 7, 2 PM** *Kneaded Pleasures* NWACA Parks Committee

FEB. 10, 6:30 – 8:30 PM Mangia Pizza NWACA Monthly Board Meeting

FEB. 21, 2 PM *Kneaded Pleasures* NWACA Tree and Environment Committee meeting

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

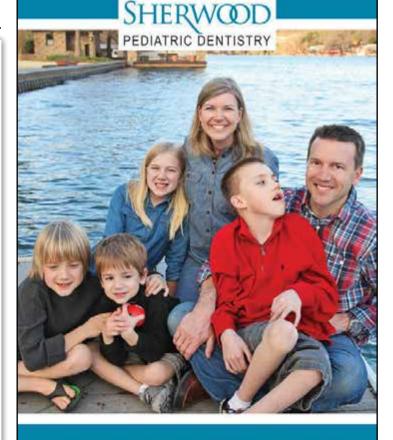


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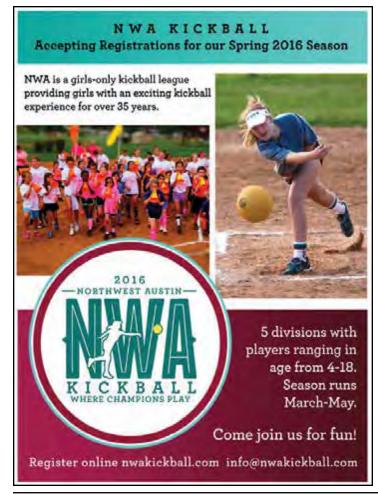
By: Lauren Ward



The Austin school district this month launches its School Bus Stop-Arm Safety Camera program to use video cameras to catch drivers illegally passing school buses and fine them \$300. As you may know,

state law requires drivers traveling in either direction to stop when approaching a stopped school bus that has flashing lights or its stop arm extended. However, not all drivers follow this rule.

As of January, about 300 buses, or 60 percent of the Austin district's fleet, are now mounted with cameras that monitor when drivers illegally pass school buses stopped to let children on or off. Those that pass illegally will get warnings for the first month of enforcement. Fines start in February. The company that paid for the camera installation will keep about 60 percent of the ticket revenue, and the district will keep the rest.



NWACA BusinessSpotlight: PostNet

By: Caroline Alexander



[This is the first in a series about businesses in the NWACA area – some which have been here for years, some that are brand new. We hope you'll enjoy learning a bit more about them.]

David Petty and his father decided to start a business together in the late 1990s. After extensive research, the two decided to purchase a PostNet franchise to provide business services for the Austin area. They opened their first location on Mesa Drive in 2001, and

opened a second location on Far West two years later.

PostNet is a franchise that provides marketing support, graphic design, digital printing, and shipping and logistic services. They are passionate about helping the community by offering a full range of business services.

"One of the things that a lot of people may not realize about PostNet is that we are a full service printer," explains David. "We print business cards, flyers, brochures, posters, banners, signs, and much more."

The Pettys won franchisee of the year in 2010 and continue to be one of the top five PostNet franchises worldwide. David attributes this success to his location in Northwest Hills.

"This would not have been possible without the residents and businesses of Northwest Hills," says David. "Since the first day we opened, everyone has been very supportive of PostNet. We have enjoyed working with everyone – the homeowners, the schools, and the many businesses in the area. Northwest Hills is a truly amazing neighborhood."

You can visit David and his staff at 3571 Far West Blvd. (Next to CVS) Open M-F, 7:30am – 7:00pm, Sat. 9am-5pm.



4 NWACA News - February 2016

Crime and Safety Tip

CLOSE THE GARAGE DOOR!

The Austin Police Department Burglary Unit has recently seen a rise in burglaries due to garage doors being left open.

BURGLARY PREVENTION TIPS: GARAGES

1. Don't leave your remote in the car. Thieves know right where to look for your garage door opener remote—clipped to the visor in your car. To avoid giving them easy access to your garage, take the remote with you when you leave the car.

2. Install deadbolt locks and solid doors. Install a solid door and a good-quality dead bolt and reinforce the doorjamb and hinges to resist a brute-force attack.

3. Install motion detector lights. Install light fixtures that have a built-in motion detector to discourage burglars from forcing entry.

4. Cover windows to stop prying eyes. To prevent burglars from "casing the joint," cover glass so they can't "window shop." Use curtains, shades or blinds. Or apply a translucent film to the glass that obscures vision but still lets in light.

5. Disable the overhead door when away. When you go away on vacation, unplug the garage door opener. If you don't have an opener, padlock the latch or disable the door by putting a bolt through one of the holes in the garage door track. This will prevent someone from coming in through the overhead door while you're away.

6. Keep your garage door closed. Leaving the garage door open is practically an invitation to burglars, not to mention that you're really presenting a storefront window display of your possessions to anyone driving by.

For more information, contact the Burglary Unit at 512-974-6941 or visit http://austintexas.gov/department/burglary-unit

ABoR Grant for Charrette Expenses

By: Joyce Statz

As we put together the budget for the Austin Oaks charrette, neighborhoods were asked to help fund the reimbursable travel and materials expenses of our charrette facilitator and design consultants. We submitted a grant proposal to a national organization which helps communities do forward-looking planning. Here is a statement about the resulting grant.



"The Austin Board of REALTORS" is pleased to support the Austin Oaks Charrette through a \$15,000 grant secured from the National Association

of REALTORS[®]. The grant supports smart growth planning initiatives, which, among other things, encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions and promote communities that are distinctive, attractive, and possess a strong sense of place.

The Charrette for the Austin Oaks PUD offers a precedent-setting opportunity to move toward a more collaborative land use decision making process oriented around creating a vision that both reflects community goals and recognizes the trade-offs inhered in land use planning decisions. A Charrette provides an excellent opportunity to move beyond traditional zoning politics in Austin and arrive at a design that will be an asset to the community."





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NWACA News - February 2016 5

Be Aware of Oak Wilt

By: Joanie Arrott

Hopefully, most of you were able to complete all the necessary landscaping and tree work in January in order to take advantage of the city's recent brush pickup event for our neighborhood. For those of you that have remaining work to be completed, please take note that we're entering the time of year when our healthy oak trees are at greatest risk for exposure to oak wilt disease.

Oak wilt is a virulent, infectious disease that can easily take hold and spread throughout a community of trees. Currently, it is one of the most destructive tree diseases in the US. Once a tree is infected with the fungus, death is assured. Awareness of this disease and prevention of its attack and spread are our best allies in this on-going battle to protect the beautiful urban forest of trees in our neighborhood.

There are some important details to know about oak wilt disease. While all oak tree species are susceptible to the disease, there are certain ones that are most at risk. These include varieties of live oaks, white oaks, and red oaks.

The disease can be spread by beetles moving between infected trees and uninfected trees with fresh wounds. It can also move between infected and uninfected trees through their interconnected system of roots, especially with regard to live oaks. There is also potential for spreading between diseased red oak firewood to nearby trees while the firewood is being stored. There is no concern about transmission when burning infected firewood, however. What are some steps you can take to help protect our beautiful village of trees? Get educated about what trees you have in your area and how to properly take care of them. Learn the basics about oak wilt, how to identify if your oak trees are sick, and who to contact for help. If you contract out with a landscaping or tree trimming company, scrutinize their operation while maintaining your vegetation to ensure proper practices are being followed.

Any work or pruning involving oak trees should not occur from February 1st to June 30th. The best periods for work and pruning include the coldest days of winter (which may be difficult to identify depending on the weather) or the hot days of the middle or late summer. That being said, proper measures should be followed when pruning or working with oaks that cause any fresh wounds, no matter what time of year the work is being completed. This includes painting the wounds to protect against beetle contact.

Be sure to reach out to your new neighbors and pass along this important information, especially if they have oak trees in their yard. If you notice landscaping or tree companies working during the "do not prune" time period, visit with the homeowner to ensure proper steps are being taken to prevent the infection and spread of this deadly disease. We cannot assume that folks are aware of this problem, especially those that recently moved to the neighborhood.

(Continued on Page 7)



(Continued from Page 6)

Every year we post signs throughout the NWACA area to remind folks when oaks should not be pruned (February through June). For neighbors who encounter Oak Wilt, NWACA helps fund the work of homeowners who mitigate infected trees and prevent the spread of oak wilt to nearby trees. If you or any of your neighbors have questions or concerns about possible diseased trees or contractors working in your area, please contact us at nwacainfo@gmail.com

More information about oak wilt can be found here: http://texasoakwilt.org/ http://nwaca.org/category/library/tree-health/ Information about searching for a certified arborist can be found here: http://www.isa-arbor.com/findanarborist/arboristsearch.aspx City of Austin Community Tree Program staff can also help. They can be contacted here: http://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-arborist



National Fire Danger Rating System

By: Joyce Statz

If you've been really observant in the last six months or so, you'll have noticed a new sign that's posted at each of our Austin fire stations. Station 21 on Anderson Lane has the sign on its exterior wall, facing the roadway; Station 31 on RM 2222 has it on a sign next to the roadway. Each of them shows the current wildfire danger rating for the area in and around the City of Austin, using ratings of the National Fire Danger Rating System.

The rating is based on these factors: wildfire fuel, weather, and local risks. The system was devised to help those who use and manage forests and green spaces, along with those who manage emergency response to those lands, so they could schedule appropriate work, tourist activities (such as campfires), and emergency response staffing levels, given the level of danger from wildfire. The rating reflects the potential for fire, not the presence of a wildfire.

There are four weather stations in the City of Austin that feed data into the Texas Forest Service (TFS). TFS determines the rating and passes it on to the Austin Fire Department's Wildfire

(Continued on Page 8)



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Division. They in turn inform each station when there's a need to change the rating on their chart. In the future, we're also likely to see this rating appear in TV weather reports, on a Facebook page, and (when needed) on highway alert signs.



The five levels used are defined this way by the USDA Forest Service:

• Low – wildfire fuels do not ignite easily from small embers, but a more intense heat source, such as lightning or an intentional act, may start fires in duff or dry rotten wood. Fires in open, dry grasslands may burn easily a few

hours after a rain, but most wood fires will spread slowly, creeping or smoldering. Control of fires is generally easy.

• Moderate - fires can start from most accidental causes, but the number of fire starts is usually pretty low. If a fire does start in an open, dry grassland, it will burn and spread quickly on windy days. Most wood fires will spread slowly to moderately. Average fire intensity will be moderate except in heavy concentrations of fuel, which may burn hot. Fires are still not likely to become serious and are often easy to control.

• High - fires can start easily from most causes and small fuels (such as grasses and needles) will ignite readily. Unattended campfires and brush fires are likely to escape. Fires will spread easily, with some areas of high-intensity burning on slopes or concentrated fuels. Fires can become serious and difficult to control unless they are put out while they are still small.

• Very High – fires will start easily from most causes. The fires will spread rapidly and have a quick increase in intensity, right after ignition. Small fires can quickly become large fires and exhibit extreme fire intensity, such as long-distance spotting and fire whirls. These fires can be difficult to control and will often become much larger and longer-lasting fires.

• Extreme - fires of all types start quickly and burn intensely. All fires are potentially serious and can spread very quickly with intense burning. Small fires become big fires much faster than at the "very high" level. Spot fires are probable, with long-distance spotting likely. These fires are very difficult to fight and may become very dangerous and often last for several days.

Thanks to Captain Josh Portie from the Wildfire Division of AFD for his careful reviewof the article.

Poop Pollutes - Leave No Pile Behind

By: City of Austin Sources

Do you leave your dog's waste around the neighborhood because you think you're providing free fertilizer? Perhaps you don't scoop the poop because you think it's disgusting!

Pet waste left on the ground creates a health risk for pets and people. Like human waste, animal waste can contain harmful bacteria, viruses, and parasites, some of which can live in the soil for months after the pile is gone. Pet waste also washes into our creeks and river, making the water unsafe for recreation and accelerating the growth of nuisance algae in the water.

One pile might not seem like a lot, but it adds up! More than 250,000 dogs live in Austin, so approximately 150,000 pounds of dog waste is produced in our city every day!

PLEASE SCOOP THE POOP ... EVERY STINKIN' TIME:

Bring It! Keep scooper bags on-hand for home use and carry bags when you walk your dog.

(Continued on Page 10)



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60 Day Sales Summary

SOLD									
ADDRESS	#BED	#FL BTH	#HF BTH	#LIV	#GAR	YB	ACRES	SQ. FT.	LIST PRICE
4711 Spicewood Springs #186	1	1	0	1	0	1985	.067	875	\$179,900
6910 Hart #609	3	2	0	1	0	1973	.067	1,212	\$218,000
6512 E Hill	3	2	1	1	0	1972	.038	1,946	\$289,000
3712 Williamsburg	2	2	0	2	2	1984	.079	1,845	\$299,000
6106 Twin Ledge	2	2	0	2	2	1980	.077	1,662	\$360,000
5702 Westslope	4	2	0	1	2	1977	.281	2,131	\$499,900
6403 Lakewood	3	2	0	3	2	1978	.389	2,676	\$519,000
5905 Paseo Del Toro	4	2	1	2	2	1980	.188	2,127	\$539,900
7206 Lamplight	4	2	0	2	2	1969	.218	2,150	\$560,000
4200 North Hills	4	2	0	1	2	1965	.239	2,398	\$635,000
4207 Endcliffe	5	3	1	2	2	1969	.331	2,683	\$699,000
7643 Parkview	4	3	0	2	2	1973	.312	2,600	\$750,000
5102 Backtrail	4	3	1	2	3	1983	.378	3,639	\$799,000
6406 Dry Cliff	4	3	1	2	2	2008	2.042	3,674	\$1,199,000
6101 Mesa	5	5	1	3	2	1999	2.624	4,456	\$1,395,000
5905 Lookout Mtn	5	4	1	3	2	2013	.474	4,423	\$1,395,000





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(Continued from Page 8)

Scoop It! Use the baggie like a glove, scoop the poop, invert and seal the bag.

Toss It! Place the bag in your (or in a public) trash can.



The photo here shows what happens to the bag, if it's just left on the street – actual photo from NWACA area!

The law requires picking up the poop: Austin City Code 3-4-6 DEFECATION BY A DOG OR CAT:

"An owner or handler shall promptly remove and sanitarily dispose of feces left on public or private property by a dog or cat being handled by the person, other than property owned by the owner or handler of the dog or cat." Potential Fine: Up to \$500.



Please Don't Feed the Deer

By: Joyce Statz

On December 26th, we encountered this pile of corn while on a neighborhood walk, undoubtedly what someone considered to be a good deed for the holidays. However, as research has shown, this is like giving candy to a deer – not good nutrition, and not good for their digestive systems. It's also something that draws other animals, rodents of various types and feral hogs – which we really don't want to have anywhere near our neighborhood!

If you see someone leaving feed like this (or any other), let them know that it's really not doing the animals any favors, and it's bring risks to the neighbors.





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LEAF CUTTING ANTS

By: Wizzie Brown

Leaf cutting ants are reddish-brown with three pairs of spines on the thorax and one pair of spines on the back of the head. Workers come in various sizes, but can be up to half an inch long. Mounds can become large and are sometimes mistaken for fire ant mounds. Leaf cutter ant mounds have a central opening and often a crater shape at the top.

Leaf cutting ants typically forage when the temperatures are cooler, such as at night or in the morning. They can sometimes cause complete defoliation of plants or small trees overnight. These ants remove leaves and buds from plants in the landscape. The ants do not eat the plant pieces, but take the pieces back to their colony and feed them to a fungus garden. They tend a particular species of fungus and weed out any other fungus from the garden.

Colonies may exist for years and can exceed over two million ants. It is not unusual for a single colony to cover an acre of land. Colonies are usually found in well drained, sandy or loamy soils.

Plants can be temporarily protected by using spray adhesives around the base of the plant. The adhesive would need to be refreshed often when dirt or debris accumulates. Temporary protection can also be provided with contact insecticidal spray or dusts labeled for "ants." If mounds are located in an area, the bait product labeled for leaf cutter ants, Amdro Ant Block, can be broadcast with a hand-held spreader around the mound area. If no mounds are seen, then residual sprays and dusts labeled for "ants" can be used along foraging trails and around openings.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com



Special Thanks to Members

By: Membership Committee

NWACA thanks members who generously contributed to the Oak Wilt Fund, the 4th of July Parade Fund, and the Park Fund, between December 15, 2015 and January 14, 2016.

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.

- Margie Burciaga
- Bob Gerrie
- David and Renate Hughar
- Bill and Cynthia Locke
- Trawin and Melissa Malor
- Sidney and Jesse South



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