

# **NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION**

### **APRIL 2016**

### **VOLUME 7, ISSUE 4**

# a Message from the NWACA PRESIDENT

### Chris Hajdu

We live in a wonderful neighborhood, as I'm sure you will all agree. One of the things that makes this neighborhood great is the sense of dedication that drives many members of our neighborhood to help out with various activities within the neighborhood. The NWACA Board and our various committee members are all volunteers. But, even with all these volunteers, we still rely on a lot of additional help throughout the year. Please consider helping your neighborhood by volunteering. Here are just a few of the current volunteer opportunities:

- Tree and Environment Committee needs help with handling Oak Wilt signs and assisting with our upcoming electronics recycling event
- Parks Committee needs help planning and hosting some "friends of the park" activities
- Communications Committee needs help with social media
- Crime and Safety Committee needs neighborhood watch captains
- Events Committee will be needing volunteers to help with the July 4th parade

If you are interested in helping out, please email nwacainfo@ gmail.com and also watch for upcoming volunteer requests on our Facebook page and in the weekly NWACA Notes email.

We've had quite a lot of turnover in our neighborhood in recent years, so not everyone may be aware of the dangers of Oak Wilt. In

the relatively recent past, the NWACA area had a serious outbreak of this tree-borne fungus, and several neighbors lost trees and many also had to spend thousands of dollars for remediation efforts. While those past efforts were effective, we still witness Oak Wilt outbreaks even today. The NWACA board recently approved a reimbursement from our Oak Wilt fund to support a local resident in their effort to eradicate Oak Wilt from their property. One of the ways Oak Wilt spreads is through tree trimming during the time period from February through June. During this time, the tree wounds that occur attract sap beetles, which can easily spread the Oak Wilt fungus from one tree to another. In the past few weeks there have been at least two incidents of oak tree trimming within NWACA boundaries. Both parties were informed, but only after the pruning had already occurred. Please be vigilant and help spread the word to refrain from trimming from February through June. For more information on this, please see our Oak Wilt article in this issue and if you witness tree trimming during February through June, please report it to nwacainfo@gmail.com.

We also want to make sure we see as many neighbors as possible at our NWACA Annual Meeting. Mark your calendars for May 5, 7-9 PM at the JCC. We will be welcoming several guest speakers including Sheri Gallo, Mopac Man (Steve Pustelnyk), and the city arborist.



## 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**

### 2016 NWACA Board of Directors

Chris Hajdu, President Cuatro Groos, Vice-President Shannon Meroney, Secretary Joyce Statz, Treasurer Caroline Alexander Kirk Ashy Stacey Brewer Debra Danziger Jen Despins Vicki DeWeese Carol Jones Rebecca Leightman Ernie Saulmon John Sepehri Robert Thomas David Whitworth Stavton Wright



### 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**

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 <u>advertising@peelinc.com</u>. The advertising deadline is the 8th of the month prior to the issue.

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## NWACA AND NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS

**APRIL 3, 2 PM** *Kneaded Pleasures* NWACA Parks Committee

**APRIL 5, 8 AM** *Kneaded Pleasures* Communications Committee

**APRIL 6, 8:30 AM** *Kneaded Pleasures* Crime and Safety Committee

**APRIL 7, 8 AM** *Kneaded Pleasures* Sponsorship Committee

**APRIL 9, 9-11 AM** *Locations all over Austin* Clean Sweep Austin – sponsored by Keep Austin

Beautiful; more info at http://www.keepaustinbeautiful. org/cleansweep

> **APRIL 12, 8 AM** *Kneaded Pleasures* Communications Committee

**APRIL 13, 6:30 – 8:30 PM** *Mangia Pizza* NWACA Monthly Board Meeting

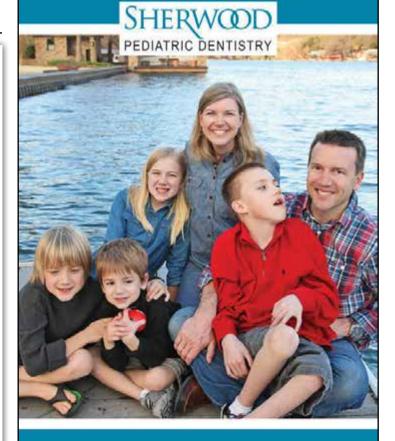
**APRIL 17, 2 PM** *Kneaded Pleasures* Tree and Environment Committee

**APRIL 26, 5PM** *Temple Beth Shalom, 7300 Hart Lane* NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committee

LATE APRIL OR EARLY MAY – DATE TBD, 8-10 AM

Doss Parking Lot Used Electronics Collection for Recycling – for NWACA members only (you can join at the event)

(Continued on Page 4)



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(Continued from Page 3)

**MAY 1,2 PM** *Kneaded Pleasures* NWACA Parks Committee

MAY 3,8 AM Kneaded Pleasures Communications Committee

**MAY 4, 8:30 AM** *Kneaded Pleasures* Crime and Safety Committee

**MAY 5,8 AM** *Kneaded Pleasures* Sponsorship Committee

### MAY 5, 7-9 PM

Dell Jewish Community Campus Annual NWACA Neighborhood Meeting

### MAY 7, 9 AM - 3 PM

JJ Pickle Research Campus City-wide Wildfire Survival Symposium – National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day

> MAY 11, 6:30 – 8:30 PM Mangia Pizza NWACA Monthly Board Meeting

### MAY 14,8 AM - 1:30 PM

ACC Highland near the House of Torment building ARMA Spring Shred Day – free shredding of household papers; for details see: http://www.austinarma.com/shredday/

### MAY 24, 5PM

*Temple Beth Shalom, 7300 Hart Lane* NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committee

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

Master License: M-39722

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### Safer Streets for School Kids and More

Lauren Ward



It took 8 days for the City of Austin to take action after an 11-year old boy was hit while in the crosswalk at Mesa and Far West in mid-February. The city had planned to paint a dedicated bike lane on one side of the street and a parking lane on the other on the South side of Mesa. As many of you know, NWACA and neighborhood groups opposed the plan, saying it would make the driving lanes

too narrow and unsafe and would reduce parking in the area. In its compromise, the city will retain on-street parking on both sides of Mesa Drive between Far West Boulevard and Cat Mountain Drive for local residents, widen the bike lane from 6 feet to 9 feet, and narrow the driving lane from 14 to 11 feet, which should lead to drivers slowing down in the area. The intersections have been marked by green and white arrows (see photo).

The City is in the process of conducting traffic and engineering feasibility studies on a variety of traffic improvements in the NWACA area from the "quarter cent fund," and a number of improvements are proposed. They include a pedestrian hybrid beacon at Northledge and Far West to assist in the safety of students crossing to Doss, as well as one at West Rim and Greystone. This specialized crossing will be similar to the beacons located on Burnet Road south of Anderson (see photo). If the plans meet the feasibility studies, many of the improvements - including the beacons - could be installed before the start of the next school year.



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7215 Valburn Drive



6221 Edwards Mountain Cove 6310 Ledge Mountain Drive



7704 Stoneywood Drive



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7204 Sungate Drive

5701 Westslope Drive #21



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7218 Valburn Drive



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### **Austin Oaks Update**

Joyce Statz and Shannon Meroney

Last month's NWACA newsletter included a summary of the Austin Oaks Charrette that was done at the end of January. Since then, the site owner has continued to work with the design team from the charrette to refine the plans built there, so that they have the detail needed for submission to the City of Austin as part of the Austin Oaks zoning case. They are working on more detailed drawings, but also making sure that the plans are completely in compliance with the City's watershed and drainage requirements, that all of the proposed changes (such as the additional street that is in the plan) are physically feasible, and reviewing carefully the placement of buildings and parking structures to preserve as many trees as possible.

Since the current zoning case has expired, City staff asked for an indefinite postponement of the case at the March 15th meeting of the Zoning and Platting (ZAP) Commission, and that postponement was granted. This is to allow more time for the review process to take place. An indefinite postponement of a zoning case can last no longer than 180 days, and will require city staff to re-notify the public before the ZAP Commission can hold a public hearing on the case.

Once a refined concept plan is presented to the community (estimated by the owner to be in April), the plan will then be submitted to the City. City staff in various departments (Environmental, Parks, Transportation and Planning and Zoning) will begin the process of evaluating and commenting on the application and the proposed design. Staff will work with both the owner and the neighborhoods to address project concerns.

Once staff has determined the final recommendations from their various departments, the application will be further evaluated by the Environmental Commission, Zoning and Platting Commission (ZAP) and finally the City Council. Neighbors will have the opportunity to speak at each of these three public meetings prior to votes being cast.

At its February meeting, the NWACA Board passed a resolution in support of the charrette process and its outcome. You can see that resolution at this link: http://tinyurl.com/jxvamtu



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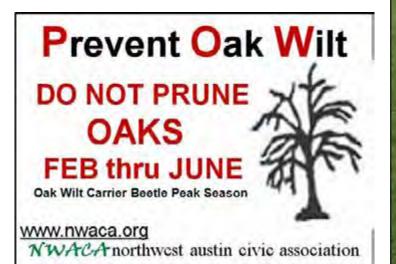
### GOT GOTTESMAN TES RESIDENTIAL MAN REAL ESTATE

# Why All the Oak Wilt Signs?

#### Joanie Arrott

I have to admit I once wondered why all the trouble of posting and moving signs around the neighborhood for five months every year to prevent homeowners from pruning their oaks. That was before I met with people in the NWACA area that lost beautiful oak trees, most 15 years old or more, or were currently treating their large oaks because they had contracted oak wilt. Some folks had trees that were just a driveway apart from yards with diseased oaks, and they knew the threat of contracting the disease through the root system was the greatest risk. I can't imagine losing the shade, the wildlife, or the beauty that comes with those large canopies.

Earlier this month, there were tree trimming companies observed pruning oaks in the neighborhood. By the time some concerned neighbors stopped by the houses to speak to the contractors, they had already left or their supervisors had left the jobsite. It had been determined some of the homeowners were brand new to the area, and oak wilt was an unknown subject to them. Reminder signs on street corners won't help our new neighbors. This is an opportunity for us to put on our welcoming committee hats and let them know about our oak wilt program. Not only do we have great schools, great families, and beautiful homes, but we have a large urban forest that needs our help in protecting it. If you see contractors working on trees in the area, email your concerns at nwacainfo@gmail.com.





### JOIN US FOR GOLF AND A GREAT CAUSE!

DATE: Wednesday, April 27th 11:00 am Registration - 1:00 pm Start LOCATION: Flintrock Falls Country Club FORMAT: 4-person scramble COST: \$165 per golfer\* \*Includes lunch, dinner and lots of swag

> Register online at: www.colinshope.org

Questions about the event? Contact Kim Flasch or Wendi Baldwin (512) 750-8161 or (512) 657-3067 info@colinshope.org



## **TOO MUCH WATER OR NOT ENOUGH?**

#### Joanie Arrott

Austin Water Utility recently published results from their public input solicitation about proposed one-day-per-week watering restrictions becoming permanent. A presentation on survey results can be found here: http://www.austintexas.gov/onedayperweek. This information is being used to develop the final recommendations for city council action in May. Until then, Austin Water customers remain under the current one-day-per-week watering schedule.

Watering trees and plants is an important step in properly managing yards, gardens, or open green space. Of the tremendous amounts of water applied to lawns and gardens, much of it is never absorbed by the plants and put to use. Some water is lost to runoff by being applied too rapidly and some evaporates from exposed, unmulched soil, but the greatest waste of water is applying too much too often.

Irrigation equipment and schedules can be adjusted to effectively meet the needs of all types of vegetation while complying with water restrictions. This includes drip systems, automatic sprinklers, and soaker hoses. Austin Water recommends drip irrigation products for shrubs and flower beds. Soaker hoses are also allowed for vegetable gardens and trees. Drip irrigation and soaker hoses can be turned on as often as needed. Sprinklers should also be adjusted for deeper watering on the one-day-per-week schedule. That is, rather than run for 20 minutes in each zone, do 10 minutes each and repeat, so that water doesn't run off.

Deeper, less frequent watering will grow plants with healthier and more extensive roots that stand up better to drought stress. Proper landscape maintenance should also include: appropriate plant selection, planning and design, soil preparation, turf grasses when necessary, efficient irrigation, consistent use of mulch, and appropriate maintenance. Residents and businesses can also take advantage of several conservation incentive programs offered by Austin Water including mulch, compost, and WaterWise landscape rebates.

During the public input process, I spoke with several folks at the City and Austin Water to discuss their reasons for making one-dayper-week watering permanent. First, the Austin Water Resource Planning Task Force recommended the city take measures to reduce demand during all stages of the highland Lakes, not just during drought stages. They also recommended taking advantage of the current cultural shift in how water is used around the city, both residential and commercial watering. The group suggested Austin consider adopting long-term goals similar to California's 20 by 2020 plan, which requires cities to reduce their water demand by 20% of 2008 levels by 2020. The full report issued in July 2014 is here: http://tinyurl.com/zcba4d9

Austin Water and City staff are using historical climate data and related research in an attempt to predict future weather patterns. Some climate models predict more frequent and severe droughts in Texas during the coming century. In 2009, the UT Environmental Science Institute co-presented a study using tree rings to reconstruct the history of Texas droughts for the past five centuries. The study also noted that since the 1500s, droughts lasting a decade or more have occurred in Texas at least once per century. The study can be read here: http://tinyurl.com/jysfcq8 City staff also reference a drought period documented in 1952 when our area experienced an almost record-rainfall year that was following by years of drought. They are concerned that returning to Stage 1 water restrictions will send the wrong message that water availability concerns are over when some data shows we are due for more drought conditions in the near future.

## **Can your Home Be Saved In a Wildfire?**

#### Joyce Statz

Most of the NWACA area is on or very near a greenbelt, and when the rains are over, there's lots of wildfire fuel nearby. If lightning, a careless driver, or some nearby house fire was to start a wildfire, what are the chances your home would survive?

Many people think that the fire department could save their home. But is it practical? With 1100 firefighters in Austin, all trained in handling wildfires, is there enough equipment and personnel to protect more than 4000 NWACA homes? Probably not realistic, right?

Recently, residents on a wildland-urban interface in Colorado were surveyed to see how likely they think it is tht the fire department would save their homes. People answered on a scale of 1 (not likely) to 5 (very likely). About a quarter answered "not likely," a quarter were in the middle, and about half thought it was "likely" or "very likely." Results varied a bit across different communities, based on context. (To see more about the survey, see this link: http://tinyurl. com/saving-homes-from-wildfire )

The survey showed that many were realistic about their expectations – not all homes can be saved. Fire behavior can be too intense for people to be in the area, and if the home doesn't have proper wildfire mitigation, the fire department can't take the time and risk to protect the house. These are among the reasons the NWACA Wildfire Prevention Committee strongly urges each homeowner to have a wildfire risk assessment and take the follow-up actions discussed during the assessment to harden their home. If you haven't yet done so, please sign up for your assessment by going to www.nwaca.org and completing the Firewise Request form under the Get Involved tab.

SOLD									
ADDRESS	# STORIES	# BED	# BTH	# G/P	# P00L	YB	ACRES	SQ.FT.	LIST PRICE
3839 Dry Creek #145	1	1	1/0	0/1	YES	1981	.056	543	\$126,700
6910 Hart #605	2	3	2/0	0/2	NO	1973	.067	1,212	\$200,000
6619 Valleyside	2	4	3/0	2/0	NO	1972	.042	2,014	\$320,000
5901 Paseo Del Toro #A	1	2	2/0	1/0	NO	1981	.225	1,041	\$329,000
3911 Greystone	1	4	3/0	2/4	NO	1967	.220	2,247	\$585,000
4208 Bamford	2	4	3/0	2/0	NO	1969	.231	2,583	\$595,000
6104 Highland Hills	2	5	3/0	1/0	NO	1966	.252	3,415	\$599,000
6512 Ladera Norte	2	4	3/0	2/0	YES	1985	.343	2,955	\$795,000
5003 North Rim	2	4	3/1	2/0	NO	1988	.360	3,677	\$980,000
6000 Lonesome Valley	2	5	4/1	2/3	YES	1992	.336	4,245	\$1,150,000





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### **Help Keep our Wildlife Wild!**

NWACA advises residents to NOT feed wildlife. Many well-intentioned individuals do so out of concern for the wildlife they are feeding. However, intentional and unintentional feeding of wildlife attracts predators to the wildlife being fed. Additionally, an association with humans and food contributes directly to habituated behaviors of animals like coyotes and feral hogs, which then become aggressive in pursuit of a food or prey attractant. Please eliminate food attractants from your yards for the safe enjoyment of our streets, parks and playgrounds for neighbors and pets.

## 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 (43nd Annual in 2015!), organizes election and issues forums, sponsors an annual neighborhood garage sale, publishes this newsletter and much, much more!



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Date:
Volunteers are always needed on our committees. Please mark those on which you'd like to actively participate.
<ul> <li>Civic Engagement</li> <li>Communications</li> <li>Crime and Safety/Neighborhood Watch</li> <li>Events/ 4th of July</li> <li>History</li> <li>Membership</li> <li>Parks</li> <li>Sponsorship</li> <li>Transportation</li> <li>Tree and Environment</li> <li>Wildfire Prevention</li> </ul>



NWACA thanks members who generously contributed to the Oak Wilt Fund, the 4th of July Parade Fund, and the Park Fund, between January 15, 2016 and February 12, 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.

Cynthia Everist JoAnn Jentz Harvey Jones Sharon and Jeff Kerr Marjorie Mulanax and Craig Fulthorpe Beth and Kevin O'Farrell Ernie and Bobbi Saulmon David and Susan Sheppard Gene and Evelyn Syrinek Ray Thompson Ravi and Zarina Venkatrao Dave and Beth Yanke

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