

NATUREWATCH

THE PRESERVES AROUND US

by Jim and Lynne Weber

One of the main reasons Austin is such a wonderful place to live is because it is interlaced with a patchwork of preserves, which together comprise the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) System. In 1992, voters in the City of Austin passed Proposition 10, approving \$22M in bonds for the sole purpose of acquiring and improving lands to protect air and water quality, conserve endangered species, and provide open space for passive public use. Jointly owned and managed by the City of Austin, Travis County, the Lower Colorado River Authority, the Nature Conservancy, the Travis Audubon Society, and private landowners, the BCP's ultimate goal is to set aside 30,428 acres that contribute to the quality of all life here in Austin.

A multi-agency conservation effort that operates under a regional permit issued under the Endangered Species Act by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the BCP consists of several tracts of land in western Travis County. It is important to note that a 'preserve' is different than a 'park', and is set aside for the purpose of maintaining a natural state rather than developed for recreational use. The BCP protects prime habitat for the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler, a bird species that is found only to breed within Central Texas' specialized mix of native, mature Ashe Juniper (often incorrectly called 'cedar') and stands of Live, Spanish, and Shin oak trees. This type of mixed oak-juniper woodland grows mainly on our moist steep-sided canyons and slopes, providing the warbler with the food, water, and nest-building material it needs to breed.

In addition to the Golden-cheeked Warbler, 7 other endangered species make the preserve system their home, including the Black-capped Vireo, Tooth Cave Ground Beetle, Tooth Cave Pseudoscorpion, Tooth Cave Spider, Kretschmarr Cave Mold Beetle, Bone Cave Harvestman, and Bee Creek Cave Harvestman. These last 6 species are called karst invertebrates, arthropods that spend their entire existence underground in karst formations. These karst



The endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler.

features, such as caves, sinkholes, cracks, and crevices, were formed by the dissolution of calcium carbonate in limestone bedrock by mildly acidic groundwater. Over 70 other rare plant and animal species also exist on the preserves, making this region one of the most biologically diverse areas in the country. As such, Central Texas is happily home to more habitat conservation plans than any other region in the United States.

These wild and beautiful areas require management plans in order for them to remain pristine habitats. This includes establishment of secure boundaries and rules for access control, maintenance of appropriate trails, species monitoring, habitat enhancement, and – last but not least – public education and outreach to promote good neighbor relations. As Austin residents, we can do our part to become stewards of these unique habitats. While in the preserve system, we can stay on marked trails, travel only on foot, and “take only photographs, leave only footprints.” In our neighborhoods, especially those that border preserve tracts, we can landscape with native plants, remove invasive plants, eliminate pesticide use, be responsible pet owners, practice water conservation, and always respect preserve boundaries.

Most importantly, we can all minimize further negative impacts on the fragile habitat that surrounds our neighborhoods by caring for the preserves through volunteering. Some of the activities you can become involved with in the preserve system include long-term habitat restoration, gathering and planting native seeds, removing

(Continued on Page 2)

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| EMERGENCY | 911 |
| Fire..... | 911 |
| Ambulance..... | 911 |
| Police Department | 512-975-5000 |
| Sheriff – Non-Emergency..... | 512-974-0845 |
| Animal Services Office..... | 311 |

SCHOOLS

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Austin ISD | 512-533-6000 |
| Casis Elementary School | 512-414-2062 |
| O. Henry Middle School..... | 512-414-3229 |
| Austin High School..... | 512-414-2505 |

UTILITIES

| | |
|--|----------------|
| City of Austin..... | 512-494-9400 |
| Texas Gas Service | |
| Custom Service | 1-800-700-2443 |
| Emergencies..... | 512-370-8609 |
| Call Before You Dig | 512-472-2822 |
| Grande Communications..... | 512-220-4600 |
| AT&T | |
| New Service | 1-800-464-7928 |
| Repair | 1-800-246-8464 |
| Billing..... | 1-800-858-7928 |
| Time Warner Cable | |
| Customer Service..... | 512-485-5555 |
| Repairs..... | 512-485-5080 |
| Austin/Travis County Hazardous Waste | 512-974-4343 |

OTHER NUMBERS

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Austin City Hall..... | 512-974-7849 |
| Austin City Manager..... | 512-974-2200 |
| Austin Police Dept (Non Emergency)..... | 512-974-5000 |
| Austin Fire Dept (Non Emergency)..... | 512-974-0130 |
| Austin Parks and Recreation Dept..... | 512-974-6700 |
| Austin Resources Recovery | 512-494-9400 |
| Austin Transportation Dept..... | 512-974-1150 |
| Municipal Court | 512-974-4800 |
| Post Office..... | 512-2478-7043 |
| City of Austin..... | www.AustinTexas.gov |

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(Continued from Cover)

non-native invasive plants, leading guided hikes, and learning about and sharing your knowledge of the native plants and animals that make this such a special place to live. For more information, visit the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve website at <http://www.austintexas.gov/bcp>.



The endangered Black-capped Vireo.

Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them.

If you enjoy reading these articles, check out our two books, **Nature Watch Austin & Nature Watch Big Bend**, both published by Texas A&M University Press, and our blog at naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com.

Neighborhood Compassion Watch!

Compassion is action.

Let's each of us make it our mission to bring positive change and solutions to our own lives, our communities, and our world. Let's sustain our hope for a better world through personal action.

Start a compassion jar or box in your home. Challenge yourself and your family members to seek out and discover compassion in your home, neighborhood, school, and workplace (acts of kindness, service, respect, love, acceptance, generosity, hope, peace, gratitude, forgiveness, and caretaking of the Earth). Pay close attention and discover these acts in yourself and others. Recognize these acts by dropping a note or a marble or pebble into the jar or box. See how full it gets. Find a time to share with each other what you discover.

Share your stories here and we'll publish them www.peelinc.com/residentsArticleSubmit.php. Also, share via social media with the hashtag #compassionup.

HITTING THE SLOPES THIS SKI SEASON?

Keep in mind these tips to prevent injuries on the slopes.

Written by Kelly Cunningham, MD Sports Medicine specialist Founder. Austin OrthoBiologics.



As a former US Olympic Men's Ski Team physician and orthopedist, every year during the winter months I treat many ski & snowboard injuries. As traveling doctor for the team, I accompanied the athletes throughout the US, Canada and Europe on the World Cup tour and was responsible for the triage, stabilization, and treatment of these world-class skiers.

One of the most frequent questions I get this time of year from my patients who ski is "How can I avoid hurting myself on the ski slopes?" So what do I

tell recreational skiers about staying healthy while on the slopes?

First and foremost, adjust to the altitude in your first few days. While there are medications that will improve your blood oxygen, they require a prescription and can have side effects. Perhaps the easiest to take along are low-dose aspirin or ginkgo biloba, as both are safe (unless allergic) and easy to take. Low-level exercise and lots of water (especially during the first night) are also key, as is abstinence from alcohol during the first 24 hours at altitude.

Modern skis, boots, and bindings are universally safe now, unlike in decades past. Multi-release bindings help you come out of your skis safely in a fall and with less stress on your knees, the most commonly injured joint in a skier. Make sure they are set correctly.

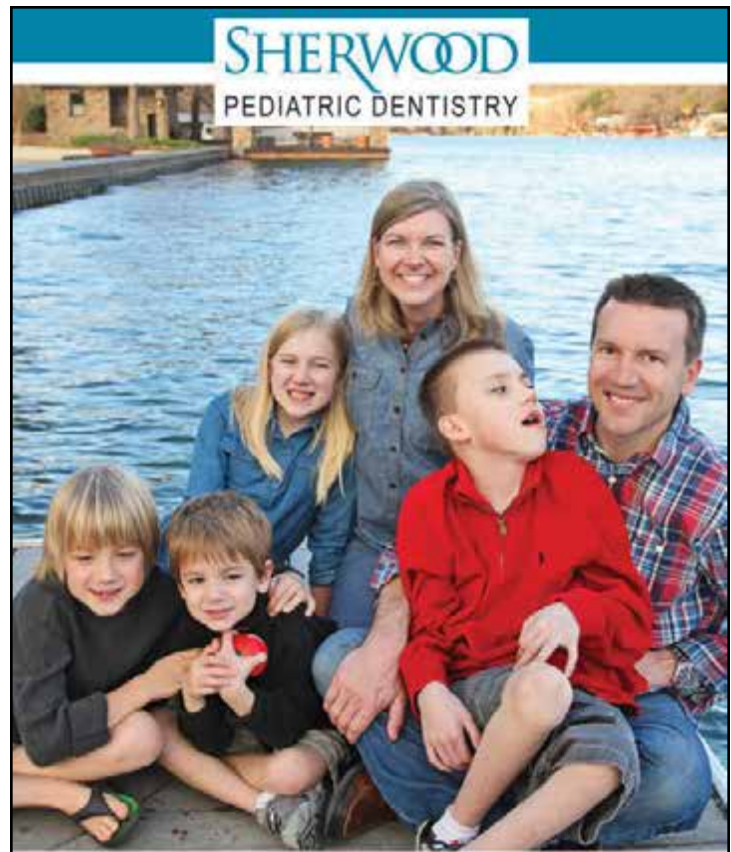
Speaking of knees, in most solid, intermediate skiers, unlike beginners (learning to stop) and racers (ACL injury from shear forces), serious knee injuries are actually quite rare.

The best way to protect yourself from ski injury is:

- get in good "ski-shape"
- ski within your limits
- stay relaxed but focused
- watch out for that last, fatigued run of the afternoon
- if you fall, fall forward and throw your hands in front of you

And always, always, wear a helmet!

Austin resident Kelly Cunningham, MD is board certified by the American College of Orthopedic Surgeons, and an active member of the Arthroscopy Association of North America and the International Cartilage Repair Society.



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TARRYTOWN REAL ESTATE MARKET REPORT UPDATE

2016
Summary
by **Trey McWhorter**

The following table provides a summary of 2016 performance (through December 15th) for the Tarrytown real estate market, compared to prior years for the same time period.

Observations:

- Number of transactions in MLS picked up a bit in Q4 and closed the gap with 2015, down around 5% year on year.
- Median List and Sold prices are down roughly 10% vs. the same time in 2015, while price / sq ft increased, though at more modest rates. Median sold price / sq ft is up 2.5% vs. 2015.
- Median days on market increased to 40 days vs. 27 days in 2015, and a low of 16 days in 2013.
- Median home size in 2016 so far is 2,486 sq ft, down from ~2,700 sq ft in 2015. Therefore it is not surprising to see median sold prices down some from last year, while \$ / sq ft continues to rise.

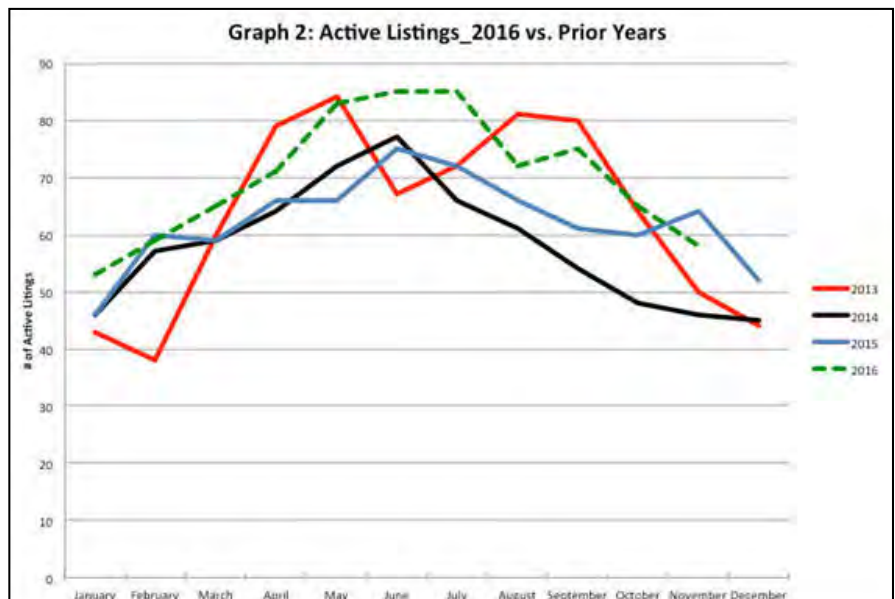
| Single Family Homes YTD in Tarrytown | | 2016 | 2015 | 2014 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| SOLD | Single Family Homes Sold | 114 | 120 | 129 |
| List Price | Avg List Price | \$1,187,410 | \$1,181,716 | \$1,085,633 |
| | Median List Price | \$992,500 | \$1,092,500 | \$850,000 |
| Sold Price | Average Net Sold Price | \$1,145,266 | \$1,130,883 | \$1,047,218 |
| | Median Net Sold Price | \$948,250 | \$1,053,000 | \$830,000 |
| "List Price \$ / Sq Ft" | Average List Price / Sq Ft | \$432.39 | \$412.69 | \$379.80 |
| | Median List Price / Sq Ft | \$418.44 | \$404.74 | \$361.46 |
| "Sold Price \$ / Sq Ft" | Average Net Sold Price / Sq Ft | \$417.46 | \$396.68 | \$369.36 |
| | Median Net Sold Price / Sq Ft | \$406.44 | \$394.28 | \$361.61 |
| Days on Market | Average Days on Market | 64 | 63 | 50 |
| | Median Days on Market | 40 | 27 | 21 |

A couple of other observations:

1. Out of curiosity about the impact of the election, I looked at the number of homes that went under contract from November 9th to December 15th, and compared that with the same time in 2016. In 2015 there were 12 homes that went under contract in MLS, and in 2016 there were 14.
2. I also looked at the number of active listings in MLS for Tarrytown compared to previous years. 2016, especially during the summer months, has generally been higher than the last couple of years.

If you are interested in more of this kind of information, or would like to see something in this article in the future, please feel free to contact me.

Note: All data comes from the Austin Board of Realtors' MLS report, reflecting activity through December 15, 2016.





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Dr. Waters is a 1996 graduate from UT Dental School in San Antonio, a 1997 graduate of Advanced Dentistry from the University from Nebraska Medical Center and the 2001 Valedictorian from the St. Louis University Orthodontic Program being the recipient of the 2001 J.P. Marshall Award for Clinical Excellence. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Biology, Doctorate in Dental Surgery, a post-Doctorate certificate in Advanced Dentistry, post-Doctorate certificate in Orthodontics & Dentofacial Orthopedics and a Master's Degree in Orthodontics. Dr. Waters is a Diplomate of the American Board of Orthodontics and member of the College of Diplomates of the ABO.

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TENNIS TIPS

By USPTA/PTR Master Professional
Polo Tennis and Fitness Club

How to execute The Forehand Lob



In previous newsletters, I offered tips on how to hit the forehand groundstroke, the two-handed backhand, the one-handed backhand, the forehand volley, the two-handed backhand volley, the serve, the forehand half-volley, the one-handed backhand volley, the overhead “smash”, the forehand service return, the backhand service return, the forehand high volley approach shot, the two-handed high volley approach shot and the one-handed high volley approach shot.

In this issue, I will offer instructions on how to execute the Forehand Lob. This shot is used when a player is forced to retrieve a ball that is hit deep and the opponent is either charging to the net or staying far back. The player hitting the lob is looking for “air time” to regain balance and court space. This ball should be hit high enough so the players at the net cannot reach and “slam” the ball down, or force the opponent at the base line to retrieve back. In the illustrations, “Suzie” Foster, Member of the Polo Tennis and Fitness Club, shows the proper technique to execute this stroke.

Step 1: The Back Swing: When Suzie is forced deep into the court and realizes that she must hit a defensive lob, she pivots to the right and gets her racket back early. Notice that the head of the racket is

low and her left arm is up in front to keep her balance. Her eyes are focused on the path of the ball and her weight is in her right foot.

Step 2: The Point of Contact: Suzie is now ready to hit the ball. Her eyes are now on the point of contact and the face of the racket is tilted at a 45-degree angle to create height and depth on her lob. Her goal is to keep her head still and not start looking up to her opponent or to the other side of the court.

Step 3: The Follow Through: The success of a deep lob is the follow through. Suzie’s wrist is still “laid back” and her shoulder is lifting the racket above her head. Her right arm is still in front of her to allow maximum balance.

Step 4: The Shuffle Back: Once Suzie finishes the stroke, her goal is to either move forward toward the net to hit an overhead, or to shuffle back to the middle of the court to drive the next ball back to the opponent.

Look in the next Newsletter for: How to execute
“The Two-Handed Backhand Lob”

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Fungus Gnats

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

Fungus gnats often become a problem in homes due to an overwatering problem. Since this time of year can bring poinsettias or other plants into the home, fungus gnats are a pest to watch for.

Fungus gnat adults are small, black, long-legged flies with long antennae. Most adults are about 1/16 an inch but some can get up to 1/2 an inch. They are weak fliers and generally remain near potted plants, growing media, foliage or leaf litter.

Larvae, or immatures, have a black head capsule and long whitish body without legs. They feed on organic matter such as mulch, compost, grass clippings, plant roots and fungi. When conditions are very moist, fungus gnat larvae can become abundant and may leave slime trails on media that looks similar to trails left by snails or slugs.

While these gnats are a nuisance they are fairly easy to manage. Indoors, it is a good idea to use yellow sticky cards as a monitoring tool. Potato pieces may also be used as a monitoring tool for fungus gnats. To do this, imbed a peeled potato cube into media and inspect the underside of the potato and the media directly below it twice a week for fungus gnat larvae.

To manage fungus gnat populations, work on reducing excessively

moist conditions. Avoid overwatering and make sure that there is good drainage. The surface of container soil should be allowed to dry before watering again.

If using compost, make sure that items have been fully composted. Compost piles should be turned regularly and kept away from doors or windows. Inspect all doors, windows, vents and screens for a good seal to reduce the number of gnats that may enter a structure.

Bacillus thuringiensis var. *israelensis* or the nematode *Steinernema feltiae* can be applied in containers to control larvae. Either spray on the media or apply as a soil drench. Biologicals work best when they are applied early in an infestation. If a population is already large, they may not provide the control desired.

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

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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.



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Women's Wellness Seminar Addresses Latest Health Issues Striking Women

Concordia University Texas & Cru Austin Host Second Annual 'Living Fit' Seminar on January 14, 2017

How much sleep do I really need? How does stress impact my body? What are the keys to living a longer, healthier life and how do I break life-long habits that have prevented me from getting there?

These questions will be answered at Concordia University Texas and Cru Austin's second annual women's wellness seminar, 'Living Fit' on Saturday, January 14th, 2017. Internationally recognized physician, researcher and author, with Dr. Patsy Sulak, and Dr. Chris Thurman, an Austin psychologist, popular seminar speaker and best-selling author will address these important health issues.

Dr. Sulak will discuss real wellness issues affecting women and Dr. Thurman will speak about the topic, 'Why Change is So Hard'.

"There's a lot of conflicting information, especially online, about important women's health issues," explained Dr. Sulak. "I'm honored to speak to the women of Central Texas again to help sort out fact from fiction on many of these conditions."

The seminar was strategically planned around the new year, a time when many people create resolutions to live a healthier lifestyle.

Dr. Thurman's talk about 'Why Change is So Hard', will address why the habits we form can be our biggest obstacles when it comes to making important life changes.

Dr. Sulak is an OB/Gyn, researcher, speaker, and medical school professor at Texas A & M College of Medicine. In addition to her busy clinical practice, teaching and research, she speaks throughout the country to businesses, organizations, schools and healthcare institutions on numerous health issues with a focus on disease prevention.

Dr. Thurman is a best-selling author of many books including *The Lies We Believe*, *The Trusts We Must Believe*, and *The Lies Couples Believe*.

The half day seminar will take place at Concordia University Texas on Saturday, January 14th, 2017 from 8am to 12pm. Tickets are \$25 before January 1, 2017 and \$40 beginning January 1. To register for the seminar, click [here](#).

About Cru Austin

Cru is the name of Campus Crusade for Christ in the United States. Cru is an interdenominational Christian evangelism and discipleship ministry committed to giving people everywhere the opportunity to know and experience God's love and plan for their lives. Cru offers spiritual guidance, resources and programs tailored for people from all cultures in every walk of life. For more information about Cru Austin, please visit AustinCru.com

About Concordia University Texas

Concordia University Texas is an award-winning institution of higher education, offering undergraduate and graduate degrees, delivered both onsite and online. The main campus is located in Northwest Austin, with courses additionally delivered at satellite locations in Dallas/Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Houston. A privately held, accredited, liberal arts university, Concordia is under the auspices of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. It is a member of the highly respected Concordia University System in which more than 36,000 students are enrolled nationwide. For more information, please visit Concordia.edu.



The advertisement is a horizontal banner. On the left, there is a photograph of a family of five (two adults and three children) smiling. To the right of the photo, the text is organized into sections. The top section, in white text on a dark blue background, lists services: 'Free Estimates on New A/C Systems', 'Fast 7-Day A/C Repairs', 'Energy Audits • Weatherization', and 'Duct Repair & Replacement'. Below this, in white text on a lighter blue background, are more services: 'Home & Handyman Repairs', 'Remodels & Additions', 'Senior Accessibility Upgrades', 'Painting / Staining', 'Drywall & Popcorn Removal', and 'Decks & Fences / Install & Repairs'. At the bottom left, a quote in white text on a dark blue background reads: '"We have been keeping Austin comfortable for over 35 years." - The Yamin Family'. On the right side of the banner, there is a logo for 'A+ ENERGY MANAGEMENT' with a stylized 'A+' in a circle. Below the logo, the text 'AIR CONDITIONING & HOME SOLUTIONS' is written. Further down, the phone number '512.450.1980' and website 'www.AplusAC.com' are listed. A large, bold offer states '\$20 off ANY A/C Repair or Handyman Service!'. Below this offer, smaller text says 'Cannot be combined with other offers. Check our website for additional coupons & discounts.' In the bottom right corner, there is a cartoon illustration of a smiling man wearing a blue cap and a yellow shirt.

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TREE CAVITIES

I took some time to go over the articles of the past couple of years. I have covered many topics that I commonly deal with during consults with clients regarding their trees. This month and next month I will cover three related concerns that I address at just about every appointment: tree cavities/hollows, and next month -fungi that grow on trees and rot that they cause. I hope the next three articles will effectively demonstrate the relationship between them.

It is very common for trees to be hollow to some degree – especially if they are of considerable size and age. In most cases, it is a result of one primary, precipitating event – lightning. Other precipitating events can be wind sheering of large branches, improper pruning of large branches and unhealed deer rubs on trees when they were young.

Regardless of the cause, the present question is: Now that there is a cavity - What is to be done? Some “home remedies” I’ve come across in my years of caring for trees are quite interesting – from filling them with rocks (maybe as much of a way to get rid of the rocks from view as a tree remedy), concrete, filling them with expanding foam, and mechanically removing everything inside the tree possible.

First, it is critical to not do any of the first three in any circumstance! There are many reasons for this, but the principle one is that what will result is more moisture will remain inside the tree for longer, facilitating rot. Rot is by far the worst debilitator of tree health and structural integrity. As with most cases, Mother nature knows best – air flow is the best way for moisture to dissipate. Removing non-structurally assisting material in the cavity (i.e. organic litter: rotting wood, leaves, sticks, squirrel stashes, etc.) will help by eliminating those objects which will sponge and hold moisture in the hollow longer. Do not try to pry out hard heartwood though by any means. In those cases where a proportional and moderate-sized drill hole can assist with air flow and future water drainage from a cavity, as well as also function as a port for evacuation of organic litter by water-flushing of the cavity (least intrusive, damaging means of cleaning decades of litter out at once I’ve found and employ regularly), in some cases a drilling injury is warranted. To keep out animals from the cavity – a chicken wire mesh with stout fence staples holding it in place will work quite effectively.

The goal of cavity “repair” is to allow the tree a better environment to slow the rot – thereby enabling the tree’s response of wound wood and callus growth, as well as changing the density and location of its new growth in order to compensate for the changes in wind pressure resistance resulting from its cavity.

Questions or comments this article or previous articles have generated, may be directed to me at:
kevin@arborcareandconsulting.com

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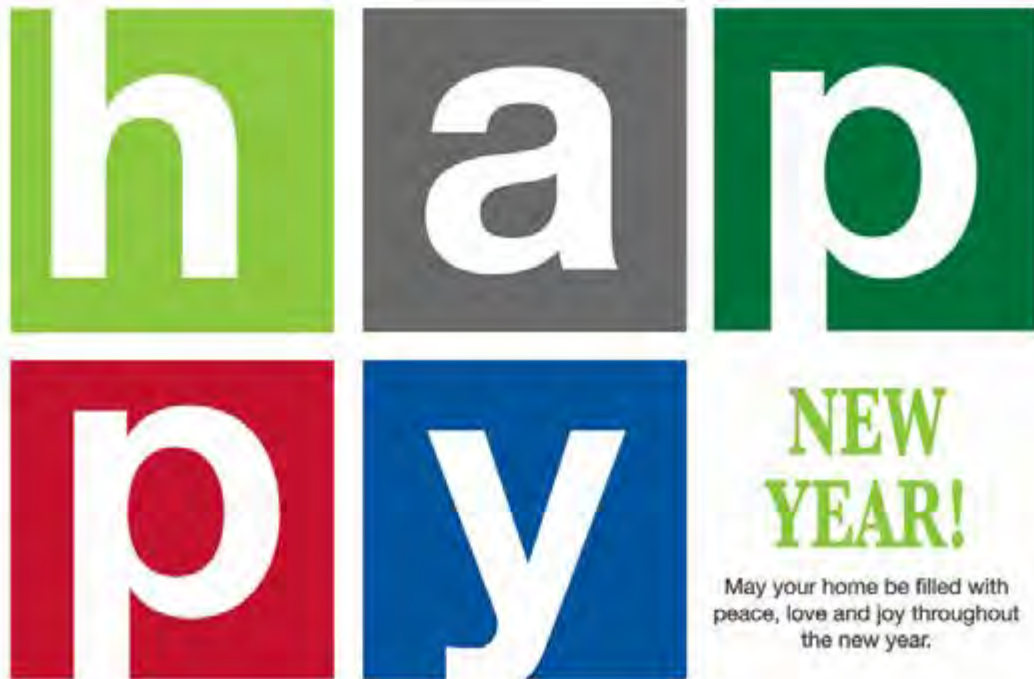


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