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IMPORTANT NUMBERS

EMERGENCY NUMBERS	
EMERGENCY91	1
Fire	1
Ambulance 91	
Police Department512-327-1199	
Sheriff – Non-Emergency512-974-084	
Fire Department Administration	
Travis County Animal Control512-972-6060	0
SCHOOLS	
Eanes ISD	0
Westlke High School512-732-928	
Ninth Grade Center512-732-9260	
West Ridge Middle School512-732-924	0
Hill Country Middle School512-732-9220	0
Valley View Elementary512-732-914	0
Forest Trail Elementary512-732-916	
Eanes Elementary512-732-910	
Cedar Creek Elementary512-732-9120	
Bridge Point Elementary512-732-9200	
Barton Creek Elementary512-732-9100	0
UTILITIES	
Water District 10	n
Wastewater	
Crossroads Utility Service 24 Hour Number512-246-1400	0
New Accounts	
Austin Energy512-322-9100	
Texas Gas Service	
Custom Service1-800-700-244	3
Emergencies512-370-8609	
Call Before You Dig512-472-2822	2
AT&T	
New Service1-800-464-792	
Repair1-800-246-846-	
Billing1-800-858-792	8
Time Warner Cable	_
Customer Service	
Repairs	
Austin/Travis County Hazardous Waste512-974-434	3
OTHER NUMBERS	
City Administration512-327-362	8
Municipal Court512-327-186	
Property Tax	3
Appraisal District512-834-931	
Chamber of Commerce	
City of West Lake Hills www.westlakehills.org	g
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ARTICLE INFO

The West Lake Hills Echo is mailed monthly to all West Lake Hills residents. Residents, community groups, churches, etc. are welcome to include information about their organizations in the newsletter. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, recipes, special celebrations, and birthday announcements are also welcome.

To submit an article for the West Lake Hills Echo please email it to <u>westlakehills@peelinc.com</u>. The deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the issue.

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PURVEYOR OF FINE APPAREL

To Sell or Not to Sell? Signs It's Time to List Your Home

By Vickie Tanner, Realtor at Coldwell Banker United Realtors

If you're like me, thoughts of putting your home on the market and moving up, down, or out of dodge, periodically cross your mind. These days, there's extra incentive given the inventory shortage in Austin.

Single-family home sales jumped within the city of Austin but declined across the Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in October, according to the October 2016 Central Texas Housing Market Report released in November, 2016 by the Austin Board of REALTORS*.

Aaron Farmer, 2016 President of the Austin Board of REALTORS¬° said, "Home sales typically slow down in the fall, so it's encouraging to see a surge of sales within Austin's city limits last month. Much of this growth is being driven by new home sales in the city, which are up nearly 38 percent year to date. Homes within Austin's city limits continue to be in strong demand, despite having a significantly higher price point than housing stock in surrounding areas."

Still, choosing to sell is a big decision—a decision that requires the careful weighing of a variety of factors, both lifestyle and financial. To help sort things out, I have included excerpts below from an article by Maria Patterson - RISMedia Executive Editor about five telling signs that it may be time to list:

- 1. You've outgrown your space. This is one of the number-one reasons one thinks about moving to a bigger home. Frustrated trying to find sleep spaces for overnight guests or by an overcrowded closet? Are your kids outgrowing shared bedrooms? Need more space for a relative moving in? Or is there a new virtual work opportunity that requires a home office? These are the life events that necessitate a bigger or different home. Of course, if you need to move up, finances becomes a major consideration in the decision process.
- 2. Your neighborhood is booming. While home sales and values are improving at a healthy yet gradual rate on a national level, here in Westlake, we find ourselves smack-dab in the middle of a hot market. Pay attention to those "Recently Sold" postcards in your mailbox and neighbors with For Sale signs in their yards. If

homes are selling above listing price and you've been on the fence about selling for a while, now might be a wise time to take the leap, especially as interest rates are beginning to creep upwards.

- 3. You're letting things go. Remember when you enjoyed home improvement projects and landscaping chores? When you spent hours happily painting, planting and hammering? Well, if those are distant memories, your grass is knee-high, and the porch railing's rotting, it may be a sign that you're ready to move onto a more maintenance-free way of life in a home that offers simpler, less work-intensive options.. Also, realize that the more you let things go around the house, the more money you'll have to invest to get it ready for market. Or worse, the more you'll have to drop the price to get it sold. Getting a pre-sale inspection can help you prioritize if and which repairs you need to or want to tackle, which can be one of the challenging steps of the deciding to sell process.
- 4. Your equity is back. Many of us didn't consider selling for years when equity evaporated during the housing crash. But don't stay stuck in that mindset. The fact is, increasing numbers of homeowners are returning to positive equity. So do some research have your home reappraised or simply ask a realtor for a market analysis. If your equity is back, selling may be an attractive option.
- 5. Your life has changed. An important life change can trump all other reasons to sell your home. Growing or shrinking families, a new job with a long commute, retirement, divorce, etc., are cause to seriously consider moving on to a home that makes more sense for life as you now know it. Ultimately, a happy home is one that's in sync with your current phase of life. Make sure you find the right fit.

If selling looks like an option for you, then the next challenge, deciding where to buy, looms large. Unless you make the buying decision first, deciding where you want to move can be one of the biggest stumbling blocks to selling. This is especially true when you live in a great location like Westlake, which is also a low inventory

(Continued on Page 6)



Vickie Tanner

REALTOR Coldwell Banker United Realtors 9442 N Capital of TX Hwy, 2-150 Austin, TX 78759



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The Echo

(Continued from Page 4)

market, and you need to be ready to move when you list. Whether you want to move to a neighborhood with lower taxes and less traffic, closer to relatives, or somewhere with more options for a your current phase of life, a realtor can help.

Here are some ways realtors, like myself, can help with both selling and buying stumbling blocks:

- 1. Making a move is often the best motivator for decluttering and organizing stuff. Bottomline, by eliminating the packing, moving, storing, and unpacking of everything you really don't use or need to keep, will save you time, effort, and money. Even if you aren't planning an immediate move, or actually don't have any plans to move at all taking steps to declutter and organize your stuff is often just good for the soul! The good news is that there is help to get you started on what often seems to be an overwhelming task:
- For the low hanging fruit, Goodwill and Salvation Army will pick up on demand;
- If you want to tackle this on your own, the best advice is to "just do it" by starting with one closet and one room, then progressing thru the house, garage, and attic;
- If you need help to get started, I can recommend professional organizers who can assist with more challenging opportunities at sale and/or move-in:

- If you have valuables and collections that need to be evaluated, you can get references to a company of trained and knowledgeable staff that can sort, catalogue, photograph, and write descriptions for each item, then upload them to their website for sale.
- 2. If you decide to inspect, repair, and/or upgrade for a sale, I can provide a list of trusted vendors recommended by clients. In addition, your Westlake Chamber Business Directory and Nextdoor website can provide vendor choices that are respected in your area.
- 3. Realtors, like myself, can provide a market analysis of similar homes listed and sold in your area. Based on how your house compares to those sold and what your timeframe for selling needs to be, you will have the data you need to price your home to sell.
- 4. Marketing homes is now a social media activity, as the majority of buyers use the Internet for home searches. I can make your house accessible on over 700 websites reaching 16 million potential buyers worldwide. And people are moving here from all over the nation and world because of our Austin job market.

Deciding to sell/buy is not an easy decision. However, realtors and home marketing specialists, such as myself are here to help.



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 ginko 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.



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 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 ½ 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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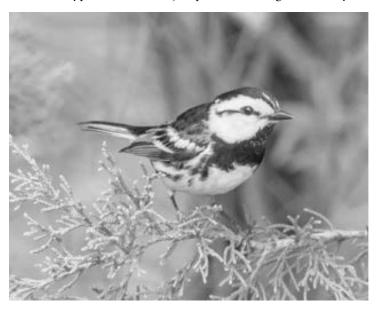
The Echo

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 Goldencheeked 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



The endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler.

our moist steep-sided canyons and slopes, providing the warbler with the food, water, and nest-building material it needs to breed.



The endangered Black-capped Vireo.

In addition to the Goldencheeked Warbler, 7 other endangered species make the preserve system their home, including the Blackcapped 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 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 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: www.austintexas.gov/bcp.

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.

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