



New to the Neighborhood?

If this is the first time you're seeing our newsletter, welcome to the NWACA neighborhood! This map shows our boundaries – Mopac, RM 2222, Loop 360, and Spicewood Springs Road. There are about 4100 other households who are your neighbors and are happy you're here!

This newsletter is one way to keep up with what's happening here, but there's a lot more available, too. Check out the quick link For New Neighbors on our web site at www.nwaca.org Then, please join us as a dues-paying member; there's a form you can use at the end of the newsletter, or you can join online.

President's Message

It's hard to believe that we are already one month into 2017. Where does the time go? We are currently gearing up and getting ready for another great year of events in our neighborhood. With the New Year, comes our annual neighborhood survey. We were originally hoping to hold the survey in January, but had postponed it until after the completion of construction on Far West and Mesa. At this point, the construction is still ongoing (and we are not going to wait for it to finish) so we are going ahead with the survey in February. Please be on the lookout for the survey and take the time to fill it in. Some items we will be surveying for this year will include your thoughts on traffic work done at local intersections and potential changes to the 4th of July parade route.

Speaking of surveys, thanks to all who participated in our Austin Oaks PUD survey in December/January. By the time you read this, we will have published the results of that survey on the NWACA website.

On the topic of AISD, many of you may have heard that T.A. Brown Elementary (an AISD school not far from Northwest Hills) was closed down in 2016 due to structural issues and all 360 students were moved to other schools. Many AISD schools have issues with their facilities, as this is due to a combination of funding issues and aging infrastructure (the T.A. Brown building was 59 years old). One source of funding issues has been recapture payments to the State of Texas under the "Robin Hood" law. Because Austin is a high property value area, AISD sends a large portion of the taxes you pay to the state to be distributed. In 2017, AISD is projected to send \$406.1 million out of the district and by 2019, half of every tax dollar collected by AISD will leave our area. Tax money leaving our district has affected the ability to pay to fix infrastructure issues.

Although there are proposals before this session of the Texas Legislature that seek to address issues with the current funding system, we cannot expect or assume any changes will be made and need to plan accordingly. Last year, AISD formed FABPAC (Facilities and Bond Planning Advisory Committee) to assess the current state of all AISD schools and to suggest plans to address issues with AISD facilities. In fact, it was during a routine facility assessment of T.A. Brown that the conditions resulting in its eventual closure were discovered. NWACA will be holding a FABPAC town hall in February in order to help educate our neighbors about the FABPAC process. Please stay tuned to the normal NWACA channels to find out about the date of the Town

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IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Austin Citywide Information Center.....512-974-2000 or 311
Emergency, Police..... 911
Non-emergency (coyote sightings, compliance issues) 311
To check status, go to: <http://www.austintexas.gov/departments/myaustincodestatus>
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District 10 Councilmember, Sheri Gallo.....512-978-2110
Contact to enroll in the District 10 weekly newsletter:
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.....www.district10austin.com

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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

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

NWACA Events Calendar

FEB 1

Throughout NWACA

Oak Wilt Season Starts

Do Not Prune Oaks Until After June 30

FEB 1, 8:30AM

Kneaded Pleasures

Crime and Safety Committee

FEB 2, 8:30AM

Kneaded Pleasures

Sponsorship Committee

FEB 5, 2PM

Kneaded Pleasures

Parks Committee

FEB 7, 8AM

Kneaded Pleasures

Communications Committee

FEB 8, 6:30-8:30PM

Mangia Pizza

NWACA Board Meeting

FEB 19, 2PM

Kneaded Pleasures

Tree and Environment Committee

FEB 28, 5PM

Temple Beth Shalom. 7300 Hart Lane

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committee

MAR 1, 8:30 AM

Kneaded Pleasures

Crime and Safety Committee

MAR 2, 8 AM

Kneaded Pleasures

Sponsorship Committee

MAR 5, 2 PM

Kneaded Pleasures

Parks Committee

MAR 7, 8 AM

Kneaded Pleasures

Communications Committee

MAR 8, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

Mangia Pizza

NWACA Board Meeting

MAR 28, 5PM

Temple Beth Shalom. 7300 Hart Lane

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committee

(Continued from Cover)

Hall meeting in February. This meeting will be informational and will be a great way to get your questions answered about the current state of our AISD schools and plans to improve those facilities in the future.

It's very wet outside as I write this article, but we all know that dry weather can be right around the corner (this is Texas weather after all...) Please, please check out our article on Wildfire this month, and pay special attention to the information on the effect of our terrain on wildfire. Some of the greatest features in our neighborhood are the beautiful canyons that many of us enjoy. The downside of these features is that they provide fuel and a terrain conducive to increasing wildfire movement. If you haven't yet had your home wildfire risk evaluation, please go to the NWACA web site and sign up – use the "Get Involved" tab on the home page.

I want to take this opportunity, to remind everyone that NWACA is a volunteer organization, and as such needs a steady stream of individuals ready and willing to roll up their sleeves to help out. We are always happy to have any and all volunteers help out with committees, events and even more. If you or anyone you know of would be interested in helping out in any capacity whatsoever (board member, committee volunteer, business sponsor) please let us know by emailing us at nwacainfo@gmail.com. We'd love to have your help in any way you can.

Oak Wilt Concerns

I don't know about you, but I'm still writing 2016 everywhere. Maybe it's the allergy medicine or it's too early into the New Year, but I'm having a difficult time remembering much these days. Consider this an important reminder for all of us that we officially entered the prime season for oak wilt disease as of February 1st. This is the time of year when our oak trees are at greatest risk for exposure to this virulent, infectious disease that can easily take hold and spread throughout a community of trees.

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 insect contact and properly cleaning all tools.

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. 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

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NWACA News

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allies in this on-going battle to protect the beautiful urban forest of trees in our neighborhood. When your trees appear sick, reach out for help to ensure measures can be taken to prevent spread of infectious diseases if necessary.

Every year we receive reports of oak trimming happening in our neighborhood during oak wilt season. Whether intentional or not, this activity increases our risk of promoting and spreading this disease throughout our neighborhood and region. If you contract out with a landscaping or tree trimming company, you cannot assume that they are aware of oak wilt disease or much less, that they will refrain from pruning oaks during this time. Reach out to your contractor now to discuss their planned work to ensure proper practices are being followed while maintaining your vegetation, including avoiding any pruning of oaks. If you see contractors working on trees in the area, please let us know. Email your questions or concerns at nwacainfo@gmail.com

You should see "Prevent Oak Wilt" signs placed in yards throughout the neighborhood as a reminder we've entered oak wilt season. The sign campaign is managed by the NWACA Tree and Environmental Stewardship Committee to support efforts in the battle against this disease which has infected several parts of our neighborhood for decades. We cannot just assume that reminder signs on street corners will be much help to our new neighbors that recently moved here. Do your part, and share this information with others.

More information about oak wilt can be found here:

<http://texasoakwilt.org/>

Information about searching for a certified arborist can be found here:

www.isa-arbor.com/findanarborist/arboristsearch.aspx

City of Austin Community Tree Program staff can also help.

They can be contacted here:

www.austintexas.gov/department/city-arborist

1866 Esperanza School and Spicewood Springs

Richard Denney

In Mary Starr Barkley's History of Travis County and Austin she notes that schools and churches were the centers of communities during the years of the Texas Republic and early statehood. For our neighborhood that school was Esperanza School, a one room log cabin. That log cabin still exists, and is located in Zilker Park, but its original location was near Spicewood Springs. The Texas Historical Commission historical marker in front of the cabin reads [1]:

Esperanza School Building. One of earliest one-room rural schoolhouses in Travis County, this cabin was built on property of Richard McKenzie in 1866. It was known as Esperanza School and served children from neighboring farms in the period before public education. In 1893 when a larger Esperanza School was built at another site this original log structure was put to other uses. (Original site of this cabin was in the NW quadrant of the intersection of Spicewood Springs Rd. and Mopac Blvd.)

The "chain of title" for the property where the school was located goes back to the Mexican title from the State of Coahuila and Texas

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to one Thomas Jefferson Chambers, dated 1835. But by 1866, the year the original log cabin was built, the property belonged to a Richard McKenzie. The building was most likely constructed by the McKenzie family and neighbors from materials at hand as a school



building for their children. The architecture was typical log cabin type construction; a one-room structure.

Over the years, the old school building changed owners, locations, and purposes. The heirs of McKenzie sold the land and old school building to John Krebs in 1901. Krebs may have used the former school as a smoke house. Sometime before 1940 Krebs moved the old log cabin from its original location at the "top of the hill" overlooking Spicewood Springs – along today's Starline Drive -- to near the intersection of the Spicewood Springs Road and "Balcones Trail" (today's MoPac Service Road). Changing owners several more times, the old building was relocated to yet another spot on Balcones Trail where it served as a dress shop, and again to Wabash Street, just south of West 34th, where it was used again for teaching.

The old school building moved one last time from its location on Wabash Avenue when it was donated to the City of Austin and relocated to Zilker Park's Botanical Garden as an example of an early Travis County pioneer building. The school's historical marker was approved by the Texas Historical Commission in 1974.

So why not saddle your horse and ride down to Zilker Park and take a look at a bit of our neighborhood's past. Peek inside the old one-room Esperanza School log cabin, and when you do, consider this: an article in the Austin Weekly Statesman in 1888 reporting attendance status on various county schools put "District No. 7 - Spicewood Springs" at 48 children; picture if you will, 48 kids and a teacher packed into this one room cabin. Now THAT is school overcrowding!

[1] Quotations and information provided here are from the historic marker application submitted to the Texas Historical Commission.

Cap Metro's Problem: The Proposed Solution

Ruven Brooks

Connections 2025, Cap Metro's new service plan, makes major changes in the bus routes in Austin to increase frequency and improve connectivity. They need changes because, as explained in an earlier article, they are losing ridership rapidly. Details of the plan are at <http://connections2025.org/>; the main features are:

- Four core (backbone) routes running 24 hours a day, every 10 minutes (or more often): the current 801 and 803 services along Burnet and Lamar, a new east/west route along 7th St., and a new north/south express route on the far east side.
- 12 bus routes which run at frequencies of 15 minutes, including a new east/west route on 38th St.

In the NWACA area, two new services will be added.

- The 323 route along Anderson will be extended across MOPAC on Spicewood Springs and then will run up Wood Hollow, through Austin Oaks, to North Hills Drive, and loop back along Hart and Greystone. It will run every 15 minutes during commute times, every 30 minutes during the week and on weekends. To get downtown, people will ride this bus to Burnet to take the 803 service, which will run 24 hours a day, every 10 minutes in peak periods. For those who can get to where the 323 stops, it will provide more frequent service running to downtown and points in between than what is currently available.

- The 37 route will run on Koenig (2222) across MOPAC at 30 minute intervals and will take riders to meet both the 803 and 801 services to downtown and south Austin and north to the Domain.

Making all of these improvements will be quite expensive. Doubling the frequency of a bus route means doubling the number of buses and drivers which run on the route. Only 7% of Cap Metro's budget comes from fares; the rest comes from sales taxes and other payments, so the fares from these routes won't bring in enough money. How is Cap Metro going to fund these changes?

To afford the new buses, Cap Metro must consolidate or discontinue bus routes which have low ridership and low potential for increasing ridership. Buses from these routes can be used to support improvements elsewhere. In some cases, the less used routes overlap heavily with other routes and can be eliminated without impacting service. In other cases,

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a low frequency north/south route will be replaced by an east/west route connecting to one of the high frequency north/south routes.

The 19 route is one of those being discontinued. Most of the route will be replaced with other services, such as the 323 extension. The section of the 19 route which runs along Steck and Mesa will not be replaced with another fixed route bus. Why not? In the past, ridership along this segment has been extremely low. An average of only 5.4 people per hour board in this segment; the average for local buses across Cap Metro is 25, almost five times greater. Since Cap Metro service is subsidized by sale tax revenue, the lower the ridership in a segment, the higher the subsidy. For the Steck/Mesa segment, the subsidy per ride is \$21.64, versus an average of \$4.23.

But what about the 100 or so people who ride this bus on a daily basis? Cap Metro is introducing Innovation Zones in which they will experiment with other ways to provide public transit, such as expanded use of CapMetro's MetroRideShare vanpool program, micro transit and rideshare companies, carshare companies, flexroute transit, and destination shuttles. The Steck/Mesa segment is included in one of the Innovation Zones, and service on the route 19 bus won't be discontinued until the experiment with an alternative starts, sometime after 2017.

The NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committee will be working with Cap Metro on the Innovation Zone experiment in our area and keeping the neighborhood informed.

City Needs Your Help to Keep More Textiles Out of Our Landfills

Terry Cole

The City of Austin completed a survey a few years ago. It identified 3000 tons of textiles (clothing, bedding, etc.) going to the landfill annually. It's one of the largest sources not already addressed by recovery programs. Many citizens of Austin may not realize that once you place a garbage bag in a landfill-bound container, it is never opened, sorted, or diverted. It's up to us at the curb to reduce landfill. The city recently revealed their program designed to help us all do better. I attended a meeting with city staff from Austin Resource Recovery and many local textile recycling organizations to learn more.

We have two options to keep textiles out of our landfill:

- Take to local resale shops and charities
- Use a green bag that Austin Resource Recovery is providing to most of its customers.

It may seem that these two options are equal, but I learned

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that there are a lot of important differences. The city staff at the meeting strongly encouraged us to take items to resale shops and local charities. They recommend that we use green bags at the curb as a last resort, since it is important to Austin's city goals to eliminate textiles from our landfill. The city plans to compile lists of for-profit and charitable organizations and make these available

Clothing given to friends, taken to local resale shops, and given to local charity organizations finds a second useful life here in Austin. Thrifting is a strong way of life for many in Austin, and we have many shops to choose from, including those that operate as consignment shops. Selling or donating your things and then purchasing new-to-you treasures is a great choice for diverting textiles from the landfill.

Goodwill and the Salvation Army, as well as many other local organizations, have invested heavily in neighborhood drop-offs throughout our city as well as in large-scale sorting centers in Austin. They are already handling a very high tonnage and have recently added capacity at sorting centers. The organizations and churches serving the homeless and needy in Austin are always desperate for serviceable shoes, belts, pants, towels, coats, and other textiles. While not every item will be worn or resold, these organizations are responsible recyclers, working diligently with fiber recyclers and secondary markets for textiles to find a home for textiles and divert it from any landfill.

The green plastic bags provided by the city's contractor which can be placed at the curb, are picked up by a for-profit Houston company using a separate fleet of vehicles. Bags are trucked to Houston for sorting. The contractor sells the best items for profit and plans to ship the rest overseas to secondary markets. Local charities have no access to any items placed in green bags. The city receives a small revenue of \$20/ton for the textiles that go to Houston, and it plans to use any income for additional marketing to increase textile recovery. I learned that containerized textiles are sometimes diverted to landfills due to insufficient demand but that the contractor is required to report to the city if this is the case.

Why reuse and recycle clothing, linens, and other textiles locally?

- There are many drop-off locations throughout the city operated privately.

- You choose if it's for-profit or charitable.
- You have a higher local Austin impact.
- You provide jobs to people who staff local operations.
- You can support important community programs of your choice.
- You reduce landfill utilization, environmental impact and disposal costs.

Many locations, along with what they take, are included in this guidance on the NWACA web site: <http://tinyurl.com/AustinRecycles>



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Northwest Hills United Methodist Church Celebrates 50 Years

Mary Frances Markley

Fifty years ago, Northwest Hills United Methodist Church was a small congregation on the edge of town. The landscape included only Murchison Junior High; Mo Pac wasn't yet built. On February 26, 2017, NWHUMC will celebrate "50 years of sharing God's love" at 7050 Village Center Drive.

On February 19, 1966, the Austin district Methodist mission board bought 3-1/2 acres for the church site in an abandoned limestone quarry off Balcones Drive. The congregation was formally founded on February 26, 1967, with a charter membership of 104 people. Church members met at the Highland Park School until 1971 when the first sanctuary, on Hart Lane, was completed.

Missions to share God's love have always been the driving force at NWHUMC. The church offered Boy Scout Troop 3 a home in 1971 when it elected to move from a UT campus-area church to this vibrant, growing Northwest Hills neighborhood. To date, the troop has developed 264 Eagle Scouts. A robust Cub pack is sponsored here, as well.

An after-school care program evolved into My Friend's House, a certified child development program that operates on the campus five days a week. In addition, the church offers an after-school program on Wednesdays for the students at Murchison middle school across the street. This program includes tutoring services along with fellowship and pizza!

The Methodist men assist in sponsoring Comfort House, a safe

sanctuary for children in east Austin. They meet each Wednesday morning at 7:00 for breakfast and fellowship as they plan ways to help others.

The United Methodist Women group is a part of a global organization dedicated to know God and to participate in local and global mission. Monthly meetings are devoted to educational and inspirational programs and studies. Several missions are regularly supported, including the Montopolis Community Center.

We also spend time sharing God's love with our community in other ways. This past Christmas, we resurrected our Living Nativity scene which was first performed in 1988. We included a petting zoo and served hot chocolate and apple cider to all our neighbors. We also host annual Community Thanksgiving dinners and Gingerbread house-decorating parties. This year we added a Trunk or Treat experience in our parking lot to ensure our community children had a safe place to fill their bags with candy. We sponsor carnivals, picnics, Pokemon games, and so much more throughout the year.

NWHUMC invites you to join us as we celebrate our 50 years of sharing God's love and 20 years of worship in our current sanctuary. We are having a single service on February 26, 2017 at 10:30 a.m. at 7050 Village Center Drive. Everyone is welcome and we especially encourage any former members to participate in a homecoming as we salute our past and look forward to God's plan for our future.

Business Spotlight: Just For Pets

Janice Green



Dogs and cats in Northwest Hills are fortunate creatures. They have their very own mom and daughter holistic pet supply store on Far West.

Brittani Bash (Daughter) began working and managing Just for Pets in 2011. In 2015 Katherine Holtry (Mom) expanded her online dog boutique business to brick & mortar by acquiring Just for Pets. Katherine is a professional media personality featured in Austin,

Dallas, and other markets. Brittani's bio recently expanded to include a new baby!

Katherine and Brittani have a long history of opening their home and hearts to dogs and cats who are homeless or helpless. The story of their unusual rescue of a cat in Mexico was featured in the Dallas Morning News: While vacationing in Mexico they came across a homeless, mentally disabled kitten (Lucky) and identified a local person to foster the cat until they could arrange a private flight to the US for the kitty!

Their dogs Penelope (Peeps) and Molly are the store's official and enthusiastic greeters for both two-legged and four-legged customers. Peeps, working alongside Brittani for six years, was featured in print ads for STAINMASTER® PetProtect® carpet. Molly reflects Katherine's nurturing talents by her successful transition from a rescued cut-eared "bait" dog to the store's Canine Executive Officer (CEO).

If your pet needs include healthy foods (sans corn, wheat, soy or by-products), homemade treats, safe toys, gifts, kennels, grooming supplies, harnesses – even clothes – you'll find the merchandise you are looking for at Just for Pets. The owners buy food from the USA, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia because of strict food regulations not provided by most countries. Just For Pets offers free holistic dietary consultations for pets with hip and joint problems, diabetes, and cancer, and also educates pet parents about proper diets and supplements. There are discounts for folks who foster or who have newly adopted cats and dogs.

Grooming services are provided on site by Jordan Clements who has developed quite a following during her nine-year stint with Just For Pets. Prices are based on the specific dog breed and condition of the pet. One day I visited the store and watched her clients' obvious enthusiasm when they walked through the shop's door for an appointment for a fur-do or paw-pedi.

Just for Pets collects and distributes a rescue food bank for local animal rescue groups and collects donations for guide dogs. Just for Pets operates Austin Pet Finder, an online non-profit lost and found organization and website which brings together pets and their owners. This mother-daughter team is devoted to education – whether it be specific training needs, or do's and don'ts for successful parenting and partnering your canine and feline family members. Katherine and Brittani's expansion plans in the near future include the store's grooming services, the website's delivery service, meet-and-match rescue events, and dog training opportunities.

Hours and special events at Just For Pets can be found at:

www.justforpetsaustin.com



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Why would Buyers **LOVE** to purchase your home in Northwest Hills?

Here are a few good reasons...

- * Friendly, family oriented neighborhood touted as one of the city's most coveted locations
- * Easy Access to MoPac, 360, 2222 & 183 amid rolling hills and green space
- * Retail, dining & entertainment possibilities abound nearby & within a short drive of downtown
- * Great schools with exemplary ratings located within the boundaries of the neighborhood
- * Diverse population of families, singles, empty nesters, retirees & commuter students
- * Proximity to Lake Austin - ideal for boating and recreation
- * The area encompasses all of Bull Creek District Park & Bull Creek Greenbelt

We would **LOVE** to help you get your home ready for the market, attract multiple Buyers and obtain top dollar for you! Contact us when you are ready to sell.

You'll **LOVE** the results



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We market your property better and smarter!



Tamara is a Member of the International Sterling Society (top 17% of all Coldwell Banker agents worldwide)



Dawn is a Member of the International President's Circle (top 6% of all Coldwell Banker agents worldwide)

Tamara Moritz and Dawn Bohls Lanier

* ATX Real Estate Names You Can Trust * Longtime Austinites With Deep Roots
* Seasoned Agents Backed By International, Powerhouse Brokerage

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