



HPWBANA

HIGHLAND PARK WEST BALCONES
AREA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

THE HPWBANA NEWS

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www.hpwbana.org

LETTUCE RECYCLE!

by Dena Houston

WHAT'S IN YOUR TRASH CAN???



Recently, I hosted a weekend-long family gathering that included many meals served for at least nine family members. At the end of the weekend, I looked in my kitchen garbage can and it was almost empty. There was a cellophane bag from some pasta, the plastic wrap from some ground meat, and three chip bags. That was it! Everything else went into my blue recycling bin, my green curbside compost bin, or to the Recycle & Reuse Drop-off Center.

We are fortunate in Austin to have so many recycling options. However, if we don't use these options and put everything into our trash cart, everything that should have been recycled goes to the landfill.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE???

It's easy not to think about landfills since there are none within miles of our neighborhood. However, Austin and Travis County use two landfills that are an important part of our waste management system. While they have improved and been made safer for our environment, as much as 50% of landfill space is taken up by paper, much of which could have been recycled. If all that paper had been recycled, more energy and resources (like trees and water) could have been saved. Also, as the material in landfills decomposes, it creates methane, a very powerful greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. Landfills are the third-largest source of methane emissions in the U.S.

Source: Recycle Bank <https://livegreen.recyclebank.com/because-you-asked-why-are-landfills-bad>

In addition to the environmental benefits of recycling, let's explore how recycling and reuse can personally save everyone money.

SAVE MONEY ON YOUR TRASH CARTS!

We each pay a monthly fee for our trash cart. Here are the fees for each size cart:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| • 24-gallon - \$17.90 | • 64-gallon - \$24.30 |
| • 32-gallon - \$19.15 | • 96-gallon - \$42.85 |

There is no charge to change to a smaller trash cart. Going from a 96-gallon cart to a 24-gallon cart would save you **\$299.40 per year!**

Extra bags of trash that do not fit in your trash cart must be tagged with an Extra Trash Sticker. Stickers can be purchased at most local grocery stores for \$4.00 + tax each. Each extra bag without a sticker will be charged \$9.60 + tax by the City. **Reducing trash will allow Austinites to avoid buying stickers for extra bags.**

PLASTIC BAG BAN NO LONGER ENFORCED

I am amazed by how many plastic bags are used in grocery shopping trips in other communities. I was so proud of Austin's ban on single use plastic bags. Now that ban can no longer be enforced – HOW SAD! We can only hope that Austinites continue using their reusable bags. The following is a summary of Austin's Resource Recovery (ARR) position on the situation:

While it is disappointing that Austin is losing a tool to help protect the environment, we are confident that Austinites will continue to do their best to minimize plastic bag waste.

ARR conducted a survey of eight large retailers in Austin and found that none of them were planning to start using single-use plastic bags at this time. Many businesses were still considering their next steps after the rule change.

Over the next several months, ARR will continue a dialogue with retailers, invite their feedback, and gather data on the barriers and other factors driving business decisions on reintroducing plastic bags. Additionally, ARR will continue educating the community about the benefits of reusable bags and how Austinites can support Austin's Zero Waste goal every time they shop.

PLASTIC BAG DISPOSAL

Recycle all plastic bags at the plastic bag bins found at most grocery stores. **DO NOT PUT THEM INTO YOUR BLUE RECYCLING BIN.** Every recycling day, I see recycling bins overflowing with plastic bags of stuff. This is such a problem for our recycling companies. They have to throw these bags away when they come into the sorting center. This

(Continued on Page 4)

Highland Park West Balcones Area

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Austin Citywide Information Center. 974-2000 or 311
Emergency Police.....911
Non-emergency Police (coyote sighting, etc.)311
Social Services (during work hours).....211
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APD REP. - Officer Darrell Grayson 512-974-5242

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The HPWBANA Board meets on the first Monday of each month except December. Please go to HPWBANA.org for our current meeting location or contact president@HPWBANA.org.

HWPBANA is bordered on the north by 2222, on the south by 35th St., on the west by Mt. Bonnell Rd., and on the east by MoPac and by Bull Creek Rd. between Hancock Dr. and 45th St. Mail your membership dues to HPWBANA, P.O. Box 26101, Austin, Texas 78755

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(Continued from Cover)

ends up costing us (the rate payers) because the City has to pay for these bags of trash to be hauled from the recycling center to the landfill.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM OUR READERS:

WHERE DO I TAKE MY USED BATTERIES? Almost all Austin libraries take used batteries. You can find a complete list of locations that accept used batteries at <http://austintexas.gov/page/battery-drop-locations>. The libraries do not take car batteries or power tool batteries. Home Depot and Lowes take only rechargeable batteries.

IMPORTANT LIGHT BULB RECYCLING UPDATE!

Incandescent light bulbs must go into your trash cart. There is no market at this time to recycle these bulbs. LED, fluorescent, and CFL bulbs are accepted at the Recycle & Reuse Drop-Off Center. Home Depot will accept only CFL bulbs.

TRAVEL RECYCLING IDEAS FROM ONE OF OUR READERS:

When traveling, take a couple of refillable water bottles. Also, small sealable containers for restaurant leftovers are great for saving food for another meal. Note that these types of containers are often not available in restaurants in Europe. An absorbent cloth can be used as a napkin, a placemat, or to clean up spills – this saves on excessive use of paper.

Here is a very informative City of Austin recycling website:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/what-do-i-do>

Stay tuned for future tips that will include creative ways to recycle or reuse. If you have any questions or recycling ideas, please send them to: recycling@hpwbana.org

LAURA MORRISON
FOR AUSTIN MAYOR

A Mayor who
 will continue
 to fight for
 neighborhoods
 at City Hall!



Pol. adv. Laura Morrison Campaign, Steve Bercu, Treasurer. This campaign has not agreed to comply with the contribution and expenditure limits of the Austin Fair Campaign Chapter.

Cash is King...Except When it's Not

by Rebecca Wolfe Spratlin

Paying cash for a real estate transaction gives buyers a real competitive edge. Right? Well, sometimes. It is one of those "it all depends" issues.

It is still a sellers' market in Highland Park West and the Balcones area neighborhoods with only one month's inventory. This means that there are only enough homes on the market to meet buyer needs for one month. This creates a very competitive market for buyers who are trying to find ways to make their offers stand out. The last two homes I sold in our neighborhood were the results of three offers on one home and seven offers on the other. In one case, the cash offer won out but on the other, a mortgaged offer won out.

Cash can be a Competitive Advantage for Buyers in these cases:

- When the cash offer has the terms most attractive to the sellers. This can include many points of negotiation such as offer price, closing date, the length of the option period, amount of the security deposit, etc.
- When the home is in poor condition. If a home has not been maintained or has some serious structural issues (e.g. foundation issues, failing roof) it may not meet the underwriting criteria of mortgage companies and can only be sold for cash.
- When the purchase price of a home is well above prices of nearby homes and there are concerns about the home appraising for the sale price. This is only an advantage if buyers do not add terms to the contract that stipulate the home has to appraise for the sale price.
- When the sellers want a quick close. While mortgage loans usually take

about 30-35 days to close, a cash sale can often close in a matter of days.

Cash may not be a Competitive Advantage for the Buyer in these cases:

- When the cash offer is well below the asking price or is below competing offers and the other terms are not as attractive.
- When cash buyers cannot provide "proof of funds" along with their offers. Proof usually comes in the form of recent bank statements and investment accounts that prove the buyers have the cash available to complete their transactions.
- When offers requiring mortgages have attractive terms and are accompanied by strong pre-approval letters from the mortgage lenders. These letters show that the buyers are well qualified for the loan amounts necessary to close the transactions.
- When offers with mortgages do not make the purchase contingent on the approval of the loan or the appraisal. This type of offer is usually submitted by buyers who have the cash to buy the home, but prefer to take advantage of current low interest rates.

It is true that if all things are equal, the cash offer will usually win out. However, in the many years I have been brokering real estate, I have never come across offers that are completely equal. There are always offers that stand out based on the sale price and terms favored by the sellers. Next month's article will focus on how to make buyers' offers as attractive as possible to sellers in competitive situations.



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Highland Park West Balcones Area

WIDOW SPIDERS

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

There are four species of widow spiders found in Texas, the best known being the black widow. Coloration for widow spiders can vary dramatically, but Southern black widows are typically jet black with two reddish-orange triangles on the underside of the abdomen, forming an hourglass shape. The triangles sometimes do not touch each other creating a broken hourglass shape. Males and juveniles are smaller and often show more color, with bright markings on their sides or back.



a loosely woven web and remain for the rest of their lives. As time progresses, widows build larger webs to capture larger prey. Males eventually leave their webs to find females for mating. In a natural setting, most females do not eat males after mating.

Widow spiders do not like being in the open. They can often be found outside in protected areas such as rainspouts, shrubbery, firewood piles or unused grills or BBQ pits. It is also possible to find them in garages, cellars, crawl spaces, attics, furniture, or electric or water meter boxes. Widows are shy creatures and often people are bitten when they accidentally disturb a web.

The bite of a black widow sometimes is not noticed, but when it is, it often feels like a pin prick. The bite location will have two red marks surrounded by redness and swelling. The bite reaction is systemic and intense pain usually occurs within 1-3 hours and continues for up to 48 hours. Other symptoms include tremors, nausea, vomiting, leg cramps, abdominal pain, profuse perspiration and rise in blood pressure. It is also possible for breathing difficulties and unconsciousness to occur. If bitten by a black widow, immediately seek medical attention.

When working around the house or in the yard, it is best to wear leather gloves to avoid being bitten by venomous arthropods.

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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Females lay eggs in an oval sac which can hold from 25 to over 900 eggs. Depending on temperature and time of year, eggs usually hatch after about 20 days. Spiderlings stay near the egg sac for several days where they consume their brothers and sisters. Survivors throw a thread of silk to the wind and are carried off in a process called "ballooning". They eventually locate a sheltered spot where they build



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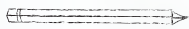
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5-7 OKTOBERFEST | FREDRICKSBURG | OktoberfestInFBG.com

5-7 & 12-14 ACL FESTIVAL | ACLFestival.com

6 SURFTOBERFEST | CORPUS CHRISTI | FACEBOOK.COM | Surftoberfest.com

WEEKENDS BOO AT THE ZOO | AUSTIN ZOO | AustinZoo.org/boo-at-the-zoo

13 OKTOBERFEST | GERMAN FREE SCHOOL | GermanTexans.org/events/oktoberfest

21 AUSTIN FERMENTATION FESTIVAL | TexasFarmersMarket.org

25-11/1 AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL | AustinFilmFestival.com

26-28 PECAN FEST | SEGUIN TX | SeguinGoNuts.com

27 HOGEYE FESTIVAL | ELGIN TX | HogeyeFestival.com

28 ZOMBIE CHARGE FUN RUN | ZombieCharge.com



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