

Mueller Residents Host International Acts During South by Southwest

Photos courtesy of Robin Dusek, Cathy Schneider, and Kat Malcom

For struggling, unsigned musicians, appearing at South by Southwest can be an expensive proposition. After raising enough money for airfare, they're still faced with finding accommodations in Austin. Most simply can't afford traditional lodging. Since the early 1990s, the SXSW International Artist Home Share Program has matched cash-strapped acts with Austinites who are willing to provide them with shelter at no cost. Recently, I spoke to some Mueller residents who have participated in the program over the years, generously opening their doors to strangers from around the world.

Robin Dusek started hosting artists ten years ago, when she was still living in a 700 square foot cottage in Rosedale. Since 2013, she's occupied larger quarters in Mueller. Hosts are required to furnish basic bedding for their guests (artists can't be asked to sleep on floors) but aren't expected to provide transportation or food. Robin, however, always goes the extra mile to be hospitable. She provides rides from and to the airport and introduces her guests to local specialties like breakfast tacos and barbeque at the Salt Lick. For Robin the reward for hosting is meeting interesting new people. "I now have lots of friends on the Glasgow punk scene," she laughs. Robin describes her participation in the home share program as "Absolutely my favorite thing about living in Austin!"



Photo 1, Robin Dusek with Mexican band Agrupacion Carino, courtesy of Robin Dusek



Photo 2, Dennis and Cathy Schneider with Scottish band Lylo, courtesy of Cath Schneider

Cathy and Dennis Schneider are youthful retirees who applied to be hosts after Cathy saw one of Robin's posts on Facebook. In exchange for opening their homes, hosts receive free music wristbands for all members of their households. Last year, Cathy and Dennis used theirs mainly to attend shows by the young Scots who were staying with them. They admit to developing parental feelings for the boys. Cathy bought them snacks and occasionally cooked breakfast for them, and Dennis helped get them to at least one gig. Sharing their house with five band members and their manager proved less disruptive to the couple's life than they'd imagined. From their downstairs master, they were hardly aware of their guests' coming and goings. The young men were invariably respectful of the Schneiders' home and truly grateful to them. "You feel appreciated," Dennis says. "That encourages you to participate again."

Kat Malcom is an Austin native and a longtime supporter of the local music scene. A self-described former hippie, she's hosting for the fourth time this year. Kat always establishes a rapport with the single young women who stay with her during SXSW. She's proud

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FRONT PORCH FLYER

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of her hometown and eager to show it off. Kat makes a point of taking her guests to the Oasis. "I like to get them away from downtown Austin," she says. "Otherwise, that's all they'll see." As much as she enjoys their company, Kat acknowledges that she can't monopolize her guests' time. "Their highest priority has to be attending the conference to network. I want to help them get a leg up. It (the home share program) can be the difference between someone coming here or not."



Photo 3, Kat Malcom with Portuguese artist Da Chick, courtesy of Kat Malcom

To learn more about the SXSW International Artist Home Share Program, go to: https://volunteer.sxsw.com/artist-home-share.

La Mejor Fiesta en Mueller



Una tarde perfecta en Mueller (A perfect afternoon in Mueller), Courtesy of Maria Salas

It was a beautiful day to be outside. And is there anything better than spending time doing fun stuff with family visiting from out of town?

I have a trike that I seldom use because riding by your lonely self is not very entertaining, and when I'm on my own I prefer to walk around Mueller parks or to a restaurant or even to HEB.

My nephew came to visit me on his way home back from Big Bend and I wanted to do something that would make everyone happy two young parents and three young children.

When they arrived after a long drive, there were five trikes outside my house and we took off to the lake and the hangar. That day and the next morning, we must have spent longer on the trikes than all the time I have ever ridden by myself.

The scenery was spectacular with the conifers along Simond carpeting my trike Nessie's way

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in reds. While riding in the park we spotted all types of critters from green herons to turtles. We stopped to eat a meal at Stella's, ice cream at Youngblood's (alas, closed now), and cupcakes at Lady Quackenbush's. The children also got to play some football with kids that were in the playground and we received a lot of compliments and questions about the trikes.

The next morning we watched the sunrise by the little bridge on the new section. The wood there still smells like new. And the kids promised to come back to see the spider, the pollen grain, and especially Nessie - only if I have trikes waiting for them again.

Message from the MNA Steering Committee Co-Chairs

We have been busy this month working with the many committees and their members with the aim of making our community work better for all of our residents and visitors.

The Transportation and Urban Planning Subcommittee, chaired by April Geruso, has taken on some of the issues relating to Capital Metro planning and bus routes around and within Mueller. They also will be working with Capital Metro to do another Transit Adventure. This provides a great opportunity to learn the fare system and a route. Beyond this, the committee aims to increase awareness for pedestrians and cyclists, and to educate all on the founding principles of the neighborhood You should be seeing an article in the Front Porch Flyer about the work this committee is doing in the near future.

Ani Colt, chair of the Aging & Neighborhood Subcommittee, presented at the last Steering Committee about the work the subcommittee is doing to try to bring an innovative new project to Mueller at the corner of 51st Street and Berkman Drive. The project is described as meeting some of the largely unfulfilled needs of the Mueller dream and would include facilities for aging-inneighborhood, an urban community center, and additional missing middle housing options. The subcommittee has spoken with Catellus and is working to find a developer for this development.

The website and communications subcommittee, chaired by Bill Kirwin and Bart Jacob, are hard at work behind the scenes to upgrade the web site and building an archive documenting our MNA and neighborhood history. This project will further allow us to connect with and marvel at how far we have come. Our processes are being documented to ensure the next set of officers have an understanding of the Steering Committee tasks and responsibilities and are able to keep all our projects running.

This just scratches the surface at the progress being made by the Steering Committee. We look forward to seeing you around the neighborhood to discuss this and more. Don't forget to join us at our monthly meetings, held every third Saturday of the month at 10AM at the Seton Administrative Offices and at Wildflower Terrace during the summer months.

Your neighbors, Preston Tyree & John Wooding Co-Chairs of the MNA Steering Committee

Beyond the TLAs: Your Neighbors in Action through MNA Committees

By Alison Raffalovich

Those of us who live in Mueller are happy to celebrate the unique qualities of our wonderful neighborhood – its diversity, friendliness, active lifestyles and neighborliness. One of our other unique qualities, an alphabet soup of Three-Letter Acronyms (TLAs), is perhaps less celebrated. Between the MNA, POA, HOA and more, it can be more than a little confusing for newcomers. I think I was here for more than three years before I started to make sense of it all, and I'm still learning!

So let me put a human face on a vital role played by the Mueller Neighborhood Association – the various committees that live under its umbrella and bring positive change to the neighborhood. Fundamentally the MNA is all about creating Community. We aren't responsible for the parks, pools, infrastructure, etc., but we do invest both time and money in fostering a vibrant community identity through our signature events (Spring Egg Scramble, the Fourth of July Festival, and Fall Fest) and other activities. Through this on-going series, I'll take you on a brief spin through the various committees and introduce you to some key volunteers in each – in the hope that YOU'LL be inspired to get involved!

This Month's Subcommittee in Focus: Front Porch Flyer Committee

Kathy Sokolic chairs the team responsible for this beloved neighborhood newsletter, which after a period of online-only publication is back by popular demand in print edition! It's a great way to keep up with interesting stories, neighborhood news and events in the 'hood, along with history and interesting sites in our part of Austin. The committee always welcomes story ideas and contributions from neighbors, so if you have interesting observations you'd like to share with articles and/or photos, let the Flyer team know by emailing fpf@muellerneighborhood.org! Manage your Flyer subscription here: https://peelinc.com/index.php/resident-subscriptions/

MNA Subcommittees

Beyond the Front Porch Flyer Committee, the list of current active subcommittees are as below. If you have an interest in becoming involved, email steering@muellerneighborhood.org.

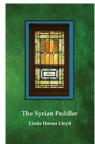
- Neighborhood Engagement Committee
- Block Captain Network
- Aging in Neighborhood Committee
- Local Business Committee
- Transportation and Urban Planning Committee
- Finance Committee
- Nominations Committee
- Website Committee
- Yard Sale Committee
- Transition Committee (indirectly tied to MNA)
- Community Space Committee (indirectly tied to MNA)



an MNA business partner.

The Audible Book: A Mueller Experience

By Linda Hanna Lloyd



A little over a year ago I decided to adapt my novel, The Syrian Peddler, for audio. I didn't know the first thing about this, so I reached out to some neighbors, voice-over artist Mike Sears and Alex Nannola of Control Tower Studios.

Over the course of the next nine months Mike narrated my book in his home studio and Alex took care of the technical stuff recording, mixing and other magic—in

Control Tower's Mueller studio. I agreed to narrate the book's introduction, which was my first experience with recorded narration.

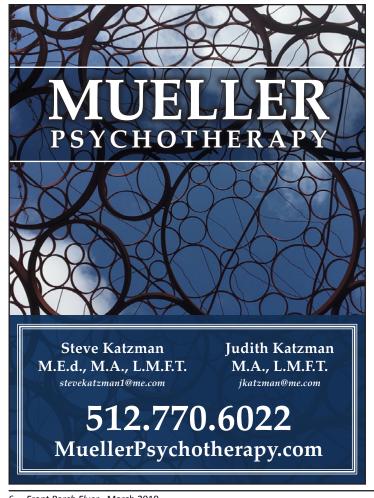
My novel represented something of a challenge for Mike, as it is the story of my Syrian grandfather immigrating to the United States in 1905 at the age of seventeen. There are many foreign words and names in the book and a plethora of characters with Syrian accents. Nevertheless, Mike's true artistry shone through, and the result far exceeded my expectations.

During the process Alex suggested we add music between

the chapters to set the tone for the reader. I searched in vain for suitable royalty-free music. Finally, one of our Windsor Park neighbors, my piano teacher Jeanne Attaway, helped me compose my own score using just a few chords played in different keys. After a great deal of revising and practice, I invited Alex to recorded me in my own home and—voila!—we had the music we needed.

After a great many reviews and edits, Alex gave me a digital file of my book that I uploaded to Audible's Audiobook Creation Exchange. I remained on the edge of my seat while Audible conducted extensive quality checks to ensure my book was perfect and aligned with their standards. Finally, after an almost year-long odyssey, my audiobook became available for sale.

During this process I learned to my surprise that some readers prefer to listen to books, and I've become a fan of audiobooks myself. With a good narrator, you can see the scenes floating by in your mind and almost put yourself in the picture. Publishing an audiobook with the help of Mike and Alex was an incredible experience, and I can't wait to get started on the next project.





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Before Others Fall

By Ani Colt and Preston "Ty" Tyree

Looking down the stairs. Photo by Preston Tyree

I'm sore, not just from all the hard coughing symptoms of "the virus" going around, but also from slipping down four stairs. It happened when I was at the worst of the illness, early in the morning. Being very careful, holding onto the rails at each side at the top of the stairs, my left foot

slipped. As I felt myself lose control and started falling, I could see myself crumbled and broken on the landing nine steps down. But I held on for dear life and hung there, holding on to the railings, my left leg down four stairs and my right down two or three, torquing my body, twisting my right shoulder and straining my left leg and knee.

Rather than before a fall, we are looking at the possibilities for putting in an elevator. I can't help but wonder if we could be the first Mueller home elevator buyers and help others before they fall. Help others, like ourselves, who bought a two story — master up.

In our case, we could not find a one story or a master down in the time frame and price range we had to buy in Mueller. It was only after committing to our home that we realized our layout does not have an obvious space to install an elevator. So, it would be costly and complicated.

Elevators are not cheap, but if it can keep us from having to sell our home and move out of the neighborhood, we are willing to consider installing one. There are a lot of options in the market. The the prices of the newer, more compact and less expensive home elevators range from \$20,000 and \$30,000. This kind of installation will need maintenance and repairs, so we would have to budget for that as well.

We assume that as more people age into the stages where they need assistance, home elevator designs will continue to improve, and pricing will come down. One elevator company is easyclimber.com.

We are also considering a stair lift. As you probably know, a stair lift allows someone to ride on a seat along a rail installed in the stairwell. We received an estimate for three options, and they ranged from just under \$10,000 to over \$13,000. We have 18 stairs and two landings. Our estimate was from Acornstairlifts.com.



Mueller Commission Update

By Michael Jones, Mueller Commission Chair

The future of the Mueller development after the completion of the project's Master Development Agreement (MDA) was a major topic at the January and February meetings of the Robert Mueller Municipal Airport Plan Implementation Advisory Commission (aka the Mueller Commission).

Commissioners discussed the duties of a Transition workgroup in January and approved the creation of the workgroup in February. The workgroup will explore transition issues that may arise once the MDA is completed. The workgroup will also serve as a liaison to area stakeholders, including the Mueller Neighborhood Association. The Mueller commissioners serving on the workgroup include: Ken Ronsonette, Carol Drennan, Corky Hilliard, and Kathy Sokolic.

During the Commission's January 8 meeting, Catellus representatives provided an update on new developments in Mueller's Town Center District. A copy of their presentation is posted on the City of Austin website

(see link - http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document. cfm?id=314396).

In addition, Austin Energy officials discussed the status of the city's Green Building initiative at the commission's February 12 meeting.

The Mueller Commission is comprised of 11 volunteers appointed by City Council to advise the city on implementation of the MDA. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month (except in July and December) at the Britton, Durst, Howard & Spence Building, located at 1183 Chestnut Avenue in the northwest corner of Rosewood Park.

East Austin residents interested in filling one of the Commission's two vacant positions may submit an application with the Austin City Clerk's Office and contact the offices of Council Members Natasha Harper-Madison (District 1) or Paige Ellis (District 8). You do not have to reside within these districts to be appointed to the Commission.

In 2017, the MNA established a Neighborhood Transition Committee that have since identified a number of activities and strategies to plan for transition that can be undertaken working in partnership with the Master Developer, Catellus. The committee looks forward to sharing their work to date with the PIAC Working Group on Transition. Interested in the MNA Transition Committee? Contact Karen Sharp at karenlynnsharpMNA@ gmail.com



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I <3 My Phone

By Judith Katzman

Would you consider filing for separation...from your smartphone, just for a while? We have become more than a little attached to these devices. And it's serious enough that psychologists are debating whether or not to have "digital addiction" included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V). The pings and dings alerting us to new Facebook posts, emails or texts, cause cells in our brain to release dopamine, one of the chemical transmitters in our reward circuitry. Soon enough, the alert itself creates more reward or pleasure than the actual text, email or instagram post, and our sense of well-being is at the mercy of notifications.

Teens average 4.5 hours a day on their phones, not including talking or texting. Experts are seeing an inability to focus in class along with an increase in depression and anxiety among teens. But how can kids do any better if adults are always looking at their phones? How many times have we shaken our heads at the sight of a baby gazing at a parent who is gazing through a blue haze at eBay?

We live in a constant state of partial attention, and it's not a coincidence that mindfulness classes are showing up in every setting and at every age level. We must remind ourselves to attend to what matters. And we have to reacquaint ourselves with what it means to give undivided attention to a person or a moment. Spouses, friends and children are hungry for it.

Luckily, we live in an interesting, dynamic community. We have the Lake Park, the farmer's market, birds and ducks, the demonstration garden and hiking trails, sculptures, restaurants and each other. What would happen if we just noticed what's around us, without taking a snapshot, without posting it online?

Phones aren't going away, and we don't want them to. But we should use moderation, at least. We've seen couples and families in therapy who have begun feeling closer by just not having the phone nearby at meals. Taking a short break from our phones is a good starting point, and who knows where the trial separation might lead?

New Mueller Women's Group

Looking for a fun way to meet more female friends? Check out the Mueller Women's group. It's free and open to all ages.

The group is designed to help members meet new friends living in Mueller and surrounding neighborhoods. Monthly events include happy hour, brunch, movies and more.

To join, just go to: https://mewe.com/join/muellerwomensgroup, upload a photo and list some of your interests. Want to meet other people who like to hike? Fellow independent movie fans? Other working moms? Sign up today to get started!

Explore Mueller Through Geocaching

FRONT PORCH FLYER

By Bart Jacob

One reason we love Mueller is the ease of walking, biking, and exploring the many facets of the neighborhood. Have you ever heard of Geocaching? It's an outdoor recreational activity using a GPS device to hide and find treasures called "geocaches."

A typical cache is a small waterproof container containing a logbook, a pen or pencil, and often little trinkets of some sort. Upon discovering the cache, the geocacher will sign the log with an established code name and date it in order to prove they have found the cache. These geocaches are often hidden in interesting places that the casual pedestrian would miss.

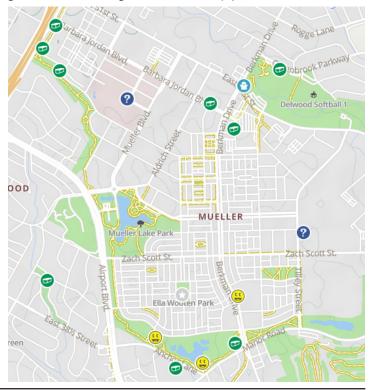
My family has searched for geocaches on family vacations across the US as a way to break up long road trips and see interesting sites. We consider it a fun challenge to locate these well-hidden treasures.

I recently set out to discover what geocaches have been placed in and around Mueller. There are several, and their discovery has resulted in many enjoyable walks around the neighborhood.

Your phone or other mobile GPS unit will lead you to within several yards of a hidden cache, and then it is up to you to locate it. Often there are even hints available online. Geocaching is great fun for people of any age and is a wonderful family activity.

To get started, visit geocaching.com and register for free. You can download their app and start hunting for treasures near you! You might even find some interesting aspects of Mueller you didn't know existed.

Image 1 is a map that shows geocaches in Mueller. Grab the kids, get out, walk the neighborhood, and enjoy the hunt!



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Stain Solutions

Try as you might to prevent them, spills, drips and splatters in your house are inevitable. Whether you, your family or your guests are the culprits, stains happen. Most, if not all, are treatable, especially if you act quickly and use the right stain-removing technique.

If there's an accident on your carpet or a rug, start by scooping up any solids and soaking up any unabsorbed liquids. Then, blot the stain with a white cloth or paper towel. You should work from the outside in so you don't spread the spill, and dab at it instead of rubbing or pressing hard.

You also can try spot cleaning with a soapy water mix. Dilute a ¹/₄ teaspoon of clear hand-dishwashing soap with 1 cup of lukewarm water. Spray the solution on the stain, and mist the area with clean water or blot with a wet towel. Then blot the area with a dry towel. Repeat this process until you get as much residue out as possible.

Follow these specific instructions for cleaning up the more stubborn stains and sticky spots on your floors:

• Red wine: Begin with the same three steps—blot, apply soapy water and rinse. Then, dribble very hot water from a sponge onto the spill. Continue to blot with a clean towel, and repeat until the

carpet no longer shows any red.

• Soft drinks and coffee: Begin with the same three steps—blot, apply soapy water and rinse. Then dab on hydrogen peroxide. Wait one hour before repeating the process. Hydrogen peroxide bleaches a stain without breaking down carpet dyes. Use a 3 percent solution, which can be found at a drugstore, and apply at full strength.

• Candle wax and chewing gum: These are easiest to remove when hot or cold. For the cold method, harden the spot by rubbing it with an ice cube inside a plastic bag. Then, carefully scrape off the residue with a dull knife or a plastic card, such as an expired credit card. For the hot method, apply paper towels over the waxy area, and then use a clothes iron on low heat to soak up the wax. Replace the paper towels until all the wax is removed. Use a hair dryer to heat gum. Then with a plastic bag over your fingers, pull the goo off.

So the next time your carpeting endures a nasty spill, rest assured that it doesn't have to become a permanent stain. With these simple tips, you can keep your carpets and rugs looking great for years to come.

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Helping You Put Down Roots

As a Mueller Pioneer and neighborhood organizer, I am in-the-know of all things Mueller and what's on the horizon throughout the city. A house is more than just materials – each part is a vital branch of the community. Contact me today!