



Reflections on 2019 and Our Vision for the New Year

Thank you to our fabulous members, business sponsors, and volunteers for helping Northwest Austin Civic Association (NWACA) do amazing things!

We're known for the biggest and best July 4th parade, float contest, and Freedom Festival in town, with the help of nearly 75 volunteers, but did you know...?

We utilize 28 volunteers for general ongoing operations, including a six-person communications team, a ten-person sign distribution team, a seven-person business sponsorship team, plus ten volunteers to put on each town hall meeting, and 20 volunteers to organize and hold the NWACA Annual Meeting. Furthermore, numerous volunteers are required for the activities listed below, for a total of nearly 325 volunteers!

In addition to hosting a website and publishing a monthly newsletter (which goes to all neighbors and is available online at www.nwaca.org), we publish a Community Facebook Page.

NWACA members receive weekly *NWACA Notes* email service and are able to participate in our dedicated Facebook Group page.

Our association provides annual donations to all our neighborhood schools: Doss, Highland Park, and Hill Elementary Schools; Lamar and Murchison Middle Schools; and Anderson and McCallum High Schools.

During years when funding permits, we offer neighborhood project grants through our Special Projects Fund. We have previously helped fund the painting of the Anderson High School Gym, development of the soccer fields at Doss Elementary, and purchased recycling cans for ALL our neighborhood parks. Moreover, NWACA provides funding for ongoing Constable patrol throughout the neighborhood.

Our board, committee members, and involved neighbors participate in monthly cleanups at Bull Creek District Park (approximately 20 volunteers); have performed almost 300 Firewise evaluations (conducted by teams from the Firewise Prevention Committee); support an active Neighborhood Watch program (25+ volunteers); distribute signage for Oak Wilt prevention (six volunteers) and the Scoop the Poop program (two volunteers); and monitor civic issues and city services (four volunteers); and work on zoning and transportation issues that affect our area -- working with government

agencies such as City Council, Zoning and Platting Commission, Austin Parks Foundation, Austin Transportation Department, AISD, the State Legislature, TxDOT and other agencies as needed (20 volunteers). Our committee members devote thousands of hours each year working for our neighborhood. Here is a list of things we did in 2019, by month.

January
February
March

Planning
Oak Wilt Prevention signage placement
"It's My Park Day" at Stillhouse Hollow Preserve

April

Business Sponsorship Drive
"Day in the Park" at Murchison Middle School for groundbreaking of the **Loewy Family Playground**, *the first playground in NWACA that's open during the school day!* (25 volunteers)
NWACA Annual Meeting with representatives from District 10 Council Member Alison Alter's office, Austin Fire Department, Austin Police Department, City of Austin Code Enforcement, Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Parks and Wildlife Game Warden, and Drive a Senior, as well as AISD District 4 Board Member Kristin Ashy and Sgt. Sam Lindsey with Travis County Constable Pct. 2 (20 volunteers)
Spring Recycling Event- electronics, Styrofoam, toothpaste tube, and toothbrush collection (20 volunteers)

May

Cleanup at Murchison Pool (10 volunteers cleaned the area before the pool opened)
Pool Party at Murchison Pool, *with free Kona Ice* (five volunteers)

June

July

Fourth of July Parade, Float Contest, Freedom Festival and T-Shirt Sales (75+ volunteers)
Pool Party at Murchison Pool, *with free Austin's*

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NWACA News

(Continued from Cover)

- August** *Pizza* (10 volunteers)
Town Hall on Changing City Ordinances and Help for the Homeless (15 volunteers)
Joint resolution with Highland Park West Balcones Area Neighborhood Association requesting traffic safety/road improvements along RR 2222 near Mt. Bonnell Road (seven volunteers)
- September** **UT vs. Rice Football Watch Party**, with appetizers on us (four volunteers)
2nd Annual NWACA National Night Out Party, with free *Torchy's Tacos*, *Randall's hotdogs*, & *Sweet Caroline's sno-balls*, plus entertainment from the band *Shotguns Ready* (30 volunteers)
- October** **UT vs. OU Football Watch Party**, with appetizers on us (four volunteers)
Recycling Collection Event for batteries, oil, paint, and antifreeze (20 volunteers)
Annual NWACA Garage Sales, with free advertising and signage (seven volunteers)
Town Hall on the City of Austin Land Development Code Revision (20 volunteers)
- November** **"It's My Park Day"** at Stillhouse Hollow Preserve and a tour of the new trail at Shinoak Valley Greenbelt (20 volunteers)
UT vs. Iowa State and UT vs. Baylor Football Watch Parties, with appetizers on us (four volunteers)
2nd Annual NWACA Turkey Trot around the neighborhood (five volunteers)
- December** **Special Edition Newsletter on the City of Austin Land Development Code Re-Write** (eight volunteers)

The not so fun, but necessary part: NWACA is a corporation, which means we have to purchase insurance, sometimes incur legal fees, and pay sales tax on July 4th t-shirt sales (that we barely break even on). We also pay for signs, a storage unit, website hosting, surveys, and costs associated with running committees.

We need you! Our hope/vision for 2020: additional volunteers, members, and business sponsors. As our membership and business sponsorships grow, we will happily be able to provide grants for special neighborhood projects again this year. Look for application information in future newsletters and on our website.

If you have ideas for activities that might require NWACA support, please email us at nwacainfo@gmail.com. And, if you're not a member, please join us at www.nwaca.org. We're switching to an annual membership system this year, with dues being paid in January. See more information about this change in the pages ahead.

Happy NWACA New Year!

New to the Neighborhood?



If this is your first copy of our newsletter, welcome to the NWACA neighborhood! The map shows our boundaries – Mopac, RM 2222, Loop 360, and US Highway 183 (Research Boulevard). There are about 13,500 households who are your neighbors and are happy you're here!

This newsletter is one way to know what's happening in NWACA, but there's much more. Check out the quick link **For New Neighbors** on the home page at www.nwaca.org and visit our public Facebook page. Use the **Membership** button on the home page, or use the form at the end of this newsletter to become a member of NWACA. Members have access to the weekly **NWACA Notes** and the ability to join the NWACA closed Facebook group, to keep in touch with each other and with the latest news about NWACA.



ARE YOU A NWACA MEMBER?

Receiving the newsletter does not guarantee membership.
Not sure? Visit nwaca.org to confirm!

Here are 5 great reasons to join today!

GREAT NEIGHBORS = GREAT NEIGHBORHOOD
Together, we can continue to do great things for our neighborhood!

STAY INFORMED ABOUT ISSUES THAT AFFECT YOU
We are actively involved in our community and advocate for our residents.

GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS
We encourage friendships among residents through our events - July 4th parade, National Night Out, Recycling Collection, Garage Sales, and more!

PROTECT AND IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY
Learn about fire safety, crime prevention, oak wilt, environmental concerns, park development, wildlife management, zoning/planning, and more!

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY
We are deeply invested in building strong relationships within our business network to positively impact our neighborhood.

Together we can make a difference!
JOIN TODAY @ NWACA.ORG/MEMBERS

NWACA Events CALENDAR

January 5, 2 PM

Parks Committee

Biderman's

January 14, 6:30 – 8:30PM

NWACA Board Meeting

Galaxy Cafe

January 19, 2PM

Tree and Environmental Stewardship Committee

Kneaded Pleasures

January 20, 4:30PM

Communications Committee

Galaxy Cafe

January 28, 5PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committee

Temple Beth Shalom, 7300 Hart Lane

February 2, 2PM

Parks Committee

Biderman's

February 12, 6:30-8:30PM

NWACA Board Meeting

Galaxy Cafe

February 26, 5PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committee

Temple Beth Shalom, 7300 Hart Lane

Hill Elementary School's Safety Improvements

– Chris "Kaz" Wojtevicz



Various safety improvements have greeted Hill Elementary School children this school year. The City of Austin recently finished construction on numerous improvements following a multi-year process to increase the safety of certain routes to schools around the city. These improvements include new sidewalks, sidewalk extensions, and curb extensions.

These Hill Elementary projects were done:

- **Hyridge Drive (Mesa Drive to Tallwood Drive):** New 7-foot-wide sidewalk on south side of street to provide space for students walking and biking

- **Tallwood Drive (at Hyridge Drive):** New sidewalk

- **Tallwood Drive (at Austin Woods Drive):** New ADA ramps and curb extensions to improve visibility and shorten crossing distance

Source: <https://data.austintexas.gov/stories/s/District-10-Safe-Routes-Improvement-Projects/qq9i-judt/>

New sidewalks and ADA ramps make it easier and safer for students of all ages and abilities to get to school. The shortened crossing distances also increase the ease of use for students, parents, and crossing guards. Specifically, for the crossing of Tallwood at Austin Woods, 7-foot curb extensions were added on each side of the street, reducing the crossing distance from 40 feet to 26 feet and improving sight distance for student crossings.

In addition to increasing pedestrian safety and comfort, the new sidewalks narrowed the street width. Along Hyridge Drive, between Mesa Drive and Tallwood Drive, the street was narrowed by 7 feet. (See the diagram from the City of Austin Public Works Department.) Narrower street design discourages higher automobile speeds, which results in lower risks to the public. Even though the city of Austin narrowed the lanes, design speed is still in excess of 30 mph and remains higher than National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) recommendations for neighborhood streets. Narrower (safer) streets are almost always preferable to higher automobile speeds/convenience in neighborhoods.

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Key Contacts

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/department/myaustincodestatus>
APD District Representative,
Officer Darrell Grayson...512-974-5242
District 10 Councilmember, Alison Alter.....512-978-2110
Enroll in the District 10 monthly newsletter:
.....district10@austintexas.gov
.....www.district10austin.com

2020 NWACA Board of Directors

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Chris "Kaz" Wojtevicz, Secretary
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| • Connie Lundgren | • Monique Wright |

Each of the Board members can be reached at:
nwacainfo@gmail.com

The NWACA Board meets on the 2nd Tuesday 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 US Highway 183 (Research Boulevard), on the west by Loop 360, on the south by RM 2222, and on the east by Mopac (Loop 1)

PEEL advertising

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

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Decreasing speed is important because higher speeds are more likely to seriously injure or kill a pedestrian/cyclist and people in automobiles. Specifically, ProPublica's Lena Groeger has this to say about a AAA study on the issue:

Once cars reach a certain speed (just above 20 mph), they rapidly become more deadly. According to [AAA's Brian] Tefft's data, a person is about 70 percent more likely to be killed if they're struck by a vehicle traveling at 30 mph versus 25 mph.

Slower automobile speeds are more welcoming to cyclists and people on other forms of travel like scooters. It also results in a calmer feel around the school and in the neighborhood.

New Membership System in 2020

—Joyce Statz

We are pleased to debut a new NWACA membership system in 2020, which we expect to deploy about January 15. Under development for much of 2019, this new system will make life easier for all of us.

- You will no longer have to wonder when your membership fees are due; everyone will be asked to renew in January.
- If not yet a member, you'll be able to sign up online using a simple form. Just click on the Membership button at www.nwaca.org
- You will be able to set (or remove) automatic renewal via your credit card.
- You will be able to check on your membership status, with just one click and a login.
- You'll be able to submit updates to your membership information online.

If you choose, you can continue to renew your membership via U.S. mail, paying by check. However, if you're able to handle your membership online, that will really be appreciated.

As we move to this new system, we are also making another change to NWACA membership. Like many other neighborhood associations in Austin, NWACA will now have individual residential memberships, rather than household residential memberships. If there are several adults in a household, each can be a NWACA member and have a voice when voting on matters such as elections of the Board or member-only NWACA surveys. In a similar way, we now also have individual supporting memberships for those outside our geographic boundaries, though these are not voting members.

During the first quarter of each year after annual memberships are due, we will review our NWACA Notes email list and the closed NWACA Facebook Group members. Please make sure you're current, so you don't miss any news! As in the past, if any adult in a household is a current NWACA member, anyone in the household can be a NWACA Facebook Group member, can participate in the annual NWACA garage sales, and can bring materials to the recycling events.

Business Spotlight:

ATX Cell Repair

Janice Green



There are those of us who freeze in an apoplectic state when confronted by an electronic crisis with our devices. Thank heavens there are mechanically-savvy individuals whose job is to come to our rescue. Scott Richie, owner of ATX Cell Repair is one of those rescuers. We are lucky to have him in our neighborhood; he formed ATX in 2015 and moved his business to Mesa Drive.

With over 20 years of experience in the cellphone industry, beginning with the installation of car phones, Scott's know-how leads the pack. His services include repairing all brands of cellphones and tablets, hardware removal, data recovery, glass replacement, phone recycling (keeping lithium batteries out of landfills), and buying and selling phones (his shop is full of cellphone and tablet accessories for sale). Panicked customers seek Scott's help, bringing in their headphones, car keys, toys, play stations – a mechanical menagerie of “weird stuff.” Because he both enjoys his clients and solving puzzles, he provides first aid for most situations, including the odd.

Scott is frank when he says he may not be the cheapest repairman, but he strives to be the best. He explained that there are many grades of cellphone parts which makes price-shopping difficult for the consumer. He promises absolute quality so he can sleep well at night.

He has “great customers,” including some celebrities, and customers have followed him from prior work locations because they refused to let anyone else provide similar services. In addition to his loyal word-of-mouth customer base, other repair stores rely upon his experienced guidance and refer difficult problems to him. If a repair does not make financial sense, he'll point you in the right direction for your next purchase.

When asked about the challenges in his business, he told me the story about St. Jude's Hospital, an early tablet client. He had to repair 86 tablets used by physicians in their first stage of computerized medical records. Another challenge he identified, faced by many of our local small businesses, is the weight of skyrocketing property taxes.

There is a display case in Scott's store which is a quasi-time-capsule of the history of cellphones, including such relics as early Nokia and flip phones. This “museum” sparked a discussion about the cultural influences of cellphones.

Scott's first observation: “We're losing our memory. Remember the time when we all had our family and friends' telephone numbers committed to memory?” Only the telephone number for my childhood residence and those of three friends came to mind; the cache of numbers in my head has shrunk drastically.

His second observation was in response to a question about the future of cellphones: “Less and less personal contact.” That's when I opened my phone and added Scott to my Contacts, identified as a First Responder to Device Trauma.

Contact Info: 8127 Mesa Drive, Suite B205, www.atxcellrepair.com, 512-640-5959.



IDEA KWAK'S Writer's CORNER

What a wonderful time of year this is to plan our reading.

The Literary Hub's “The Ultimate Best Books of 2019 List” is one of my favorite best-

of-the-year sources. Emily Temple compiled this year's by examining lists (often multiple lists) from 37 sources, tracking a total of 749 books, and offering her findings to us by number of lists each book appeared on.

At the top with mentions on 21 lists are *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong and *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead. With mentions on 20 lists are Brodessa-Akner's *Fleishman Is In Trouble* and Rooney's *Normal People*. Check here for others: <https://lithub.com/the-ultimate-best-books-of-2019-list/> Two of my other favorite sources are: <https://www.goodreads.com/choiceawards/best-books-2019> and

<https://bookriot.com/2019/12/13/the-best-overlooked-books-of-2019-the-list-list-379/>

The Austin Chronicle usually puts out a list of the year's favorites written by Austin authors so we can watch for that.

Here is some exciting news from Jeff Kerr, whom you might remember from the Writer's Corner review of his book *Lamar's Folly* some months ago. Not only have Jeff and co-author Ray Spivey finished their film *Writer's Block*, but they've entered it in the Vienna Independent Film Festival, where it has been nominated for Best Picture. They'll be traveling to Vienna mid-summer for the festival and perhaps to Los Angeles as well, since *Writer's Block* has already made it to the quarter final list of the Los Angeles Cinefest.

In late Summer and Fall, Jeff and Ray hope for distribution or perhaps on-line screening so maybe we'll get to see the film, which lasts about an hour and 45 minutes, then. *Writer's Block* was scored by Jeff's son, David Kerr, and all the picture's post-production, sound effects, colorization, and editing was done in Austin. The story is about a struggling writer named Skip, who accepts an offer to collaborate with a reclusive, best-selling author at his remote Texas ranch for six months. “It's an opportunity too good to pass up but Skip should've known that nothing comes easy in life... or death.”

You can see a trailer at the website: www.writersblock2019.com and we hope you'll lend your support by following the film on Facebook and Instagram sites: #writersblock2019.



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History Interview: Carolyn Weeren

-Carol Jones

Carolyn Weeren has lived in Austin off and on during her life. She has also lived in Houston and in Abilene. She and her husband Ed have now lived at 4005 Far West Boulevard since the 1980s. Before that, they lived on Silverleaf Drive in Allandale. Back then, across the railroad tracks, what is present-day Mopac was simply untamed wilderness. They did their grocery shopping at the Safeway at Burnet Road and Justin Lane. Austin was a much smaller town then. It was very easy to get around, with little traffic.

Carolyn says that the friendliness and good feeling of the neighborhood in Northwest Hills has stayed the same all these years, while Austin has continued to grow. Every morning, they still sit on their rocking chairs on the front porch, sip their coffee, and watch the kids walking to school.

Carolyn became very close friends with her neighbors on Far West. Her kitchen window faced the kitchen window of the house next door, so they would leave notes for each other taped to the window. They went back and forth to each other's houses in their pajamas. They were like family, and they bonded over raising their children.

Back when their kids were growing up, Halloween was a very fun and safe event. The parents didn't accompany their grade-school age children trick-or-treating. The kids were told to be back at a certain time, and they would head out all over the neighborhood. The parents would sit out on their front porches and watch for them to come back home with their loot.

The Northwest Hills 4th of July Parade is extra special for those living on Far West. All these years, Carolyn has had a front row seat for the parade. It was a surprise at first. Carolyn and Ed had gone on summer vacation to Colorado. Their daughter had to be in town for summer band practice, so Carolyn's mother was staying at the house with the daughter. Suddenly one morning, with no warning, there was a parade coming down the street right in front of the house! Later, Carolyn participated in the Ladies Lawn Chair Brigade dance group.

They had season tickets for Anderson football games. Their world revolved around Friday night football, which was often standing room only. People would attend who didn't have kids involved in the game. It was a community-wide event, just like in a small town.

They have fond memories of stores and restaurants that are no longer around. The Kitchen Door was their favorite deli. A children's bookstore called Toad Hall began on Far West, before later moving to the 26 Doors shopping center on 38th Street. The Mexican food restaurant near HEB was La Fiesta, before it was El Arroyo, and then Cielo's (now closed). Carolyn and Ed still enjoy eating out at Boulevard Bar & Grill.

The Northwest Hills Pharmacy store was a wonderful place where you could get all kinds of things. It was the perfect store to buy special gifts for showers and other occasions. Carolyn remembers when the original post office was next to the pharmacy. At one point, there was a small neighborhood grocery store there called Arnold's.

It was delightful talking with Carolyn! If you have memories of the neighborhood or Austin, please contact nwacainfo@gmail.com.

Gourmand's Corner: Food Adventures in China

- Chris Hajdu



My family travelled to China in June this year with our daughter's Mandarin Immersion class from Doss Elementary School and several other parents. The trip was meant to allow our kids the opportunity to use the language skills they'd been working on for years. It was also an opportunity to explore Chinese culture and to expand our own horizons. Our trip included stops in Shanghai, Changzhou, Nanjing, and Beijing.

As any fan of the late Anthony Bourdain knows, one of the ways to expand your cultural horizon while travelling is to dive into the local food scene. During our visit, we saw (and tasted) many interesting and exotic foods. Some, we had seen before in Austin (dumplings, noodles, and tea), but others were wholly new experiences! We also took part in many fun preparation methods including Gong Fu tea ceremonies, making our own dumplings, and hand pulling noodles. Since coming back home, I've tried to find places here in Austin that duplicate (as close as possible) the tastes and experiences of China.

Here are some of the highlights from our trip and places in Austin that we've found where you can sample the different types of food or drink.

In Shanghai, we had Xiao Long Bao (Shanghai Soup Dumplings) at Nanxiang Bun Shop, where Anthony Bourdain went on his show. If you haven't had soup dumpling before, you need to. They look like normal steamed dumplings, but they have a little bit of soup inside. There is a very special way to eat them (so as not to burn your tongue) and any place can share with you their approach. While a few restaurants in the Austin area have them, nothing compares to the original. If you are dying to try them, however, these local eateries have acceptable versions: Xian (Domain), Jade Restaurant (Davenport Village), Julie's Noodles (183 @ Ohlen), Wu Chow (downtown), and Fat Dragon (North 183.)

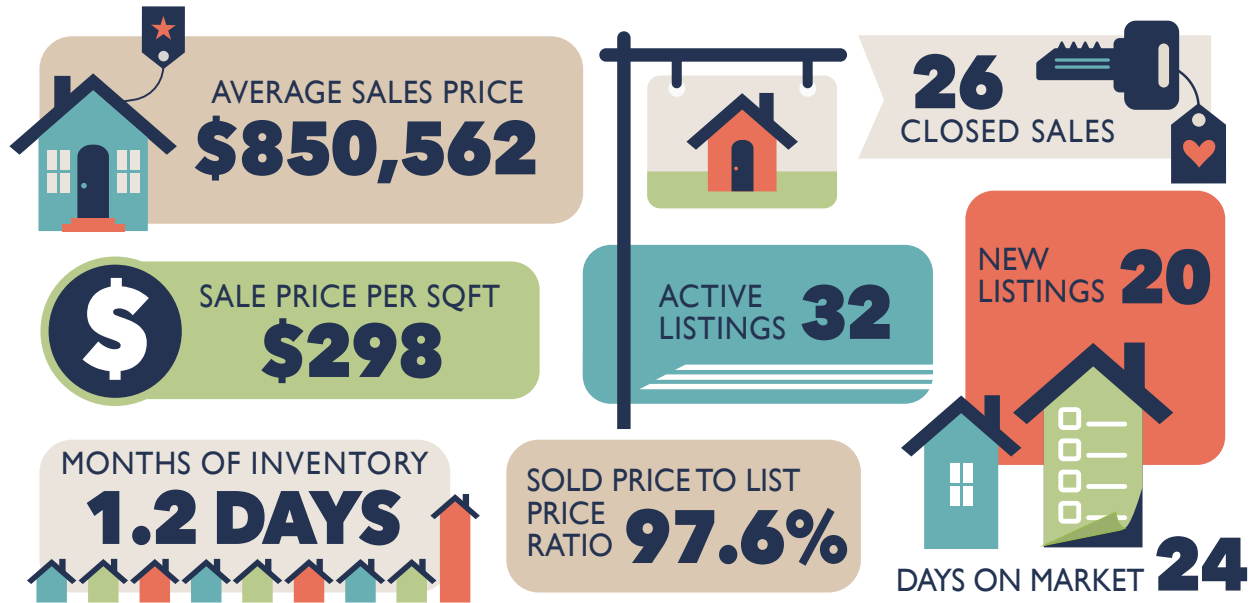
We also took part in multiple Gong Fu tea ceremonies. This is a ritualistic way of brewing and serving tea that goes back to a simpler time when brewing tea was more of an art than a daily necessity. It involves a sophisticated set of steps and always uses loose leaf tea. The tea produced tastes amazing and is served in tiny tea cups. In Austin, there are two places I've found where they make and serve tea in this traditional method: International Buddhist Progress Society (Loop 360 near Lakewood) - <http://www.ibps-austin.org/en/home-en/> and Guan Yin tea house (I-35 across from Mueller) - <https://guanyinteahouse.com/> Check their websites to see the times for tea ceremonies.

Most mornings, breakfast for us was a Jianbing. It's an inexpensive, easy-to-carry breakfast food that is sold by street vendors and designed to be consumed on the go. Jianbing is made using flour and starts out looking like a big crepe. Onto this are added sauces, vegetables, egg, meat and an optional crunchy cracker. It's always cooked fresh and you can customize it by adding or removing any of the ingredients, making it more or less spicy, or making it vegetarian. It's served in a paper wrapper that's placed in a plastic bag. For this reason, and the varieties of ways it can be customized, I consider this the Chinese equivalent of the breakfast taco. A good local version can be found at the Insennity food truck near the UT Co-Op: <https://insennity.com/>

A personal favorite of mine is Sichuan Cooking and we were able to try the real deal while in China. For those not aware of Sichuan cooking, it heavily features sichuan pepper. Sichuan pepper is more closely related to citrus than to spicy peppers or black pepper. Its purpose in food is to provide

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NORTHWEST HILLS AND WESTOVER HILLS MARKET REPORT UPDATE



SOURCE: ABOR MLS INCLUDING DATA FROM 10/1/19 THROUGH 10/31/19 FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOMES. BASED ON NWACA BOUNDARIES: MOPAC/HWY 360/2222/SPICEWOODSPRINGS

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NWACA News

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a numbing feeling. It's hard to explain and really needs to be experienced to truly appreciate it. Sichuan pepper is mixed with spicier pepper varieties to produce what is called a mala flavor which directly translates to "numbing and spicy." Good Sichuan food in Austin can be found at A&A Sichuan and Asia Cafe (Both on North 183) and Sichuan River (West Gate Blvd.) Traditional Sichuan dishes include Mapo Tofu, Gong Bao (Kung Pao) Chicken, Twice Cooked Pork, Sichuan Boiled Beef or Fish, Dry-Fried Chicken with Chilies, Dan Dan Noodles, and Spicy Sichuan Wontons. Just tell them not to skimp on the sichuan pepper.

My daughter's favorite food during the trip was the fruit. We had so many amazing fruits while in China. Some you can get here (longan - dragon eye, lychee, mangosteen, pitaya - dragon fruit) and some you cannot find in the US, like Chinese bayberries, which are also known as yum berries. We've had luck finding some of these fruits at HEB, but I recommend taking a trip to one of the Asian supermarkets to check out the many varieties. While there, it's fun to wander the aisles and see what other interesting things are available. A little hint: Check out the snack and candy aisles! Markets to check out include: MT Supermarket (Chinatown), Hong Kong Supermarket (183 at Ohlen) and H Mart (183 at 620)

While in Beijing, we had the traditional Beijing Duck (formerly Peking Duck.) Beijing Duck is cooked in such a way that the skin comes out very crispy and the meat is cooked to perfection. It's traditionally served with tiny pancakes, scallions, cucumber, and sweet bean sauce so you can make your own "duck taco" to your liking. I have not personally compared but have heard from many others that the duck at Din Ho (183 at Ohlen) and First Chinese BBQ (Chinatown) are both very good.

We also had the best noodles and dumplings as we travelled throughout China. This included hand pulled noodles, and hand made dumplings. We even got to make dumplings with one of the host families and learned the technique very quickly. For good noodle and dumpling options in Austin, I recommend Xian (multiple Austin locations), Julies Noodles (183 at Ohlen) and Chen's Noodle House (North 183.) At Xian, you can watch your noodles made right in front of you, so you know they are fresh. Good noodle dishes at Xian include the Dan Dan Noodles and Zha Jiang Noodles. They make several noodle shapes and can recommend which shape is best for each dish.

Well, I hope this article has inspired some of you to get out of your comfort zone and explore! If you have any recommendations or opinions on other places, let me know at nwacainfo@gmail.com and I'll include some updates in a future article. Just remember one thing: General Tso's is not a real Chinese dish!

2nd Annual NWACA Turkey Trot

— Vicki DeWeese



Thank you to Pooja Sethi for organizing the event this year. It was a HUGE success! We had nearly 100 runners, joggers, bikers, baby strollers, walkers, and dogs participate as we made our way from Far West up Mesa to Burney to West Rim and back to Far West for the 3K Turkey Trot! Pooja said she had so much fun and loved doing it, as did NWACA board member Louri O'Leary, her husband Jim, and their dog Lollie. Louri reported how much they enjoyed meeting new neighbors and "how nice it was being able to stay close to home and walk and visit with all." NWACA member Midori Campbell was very appreciative of the water stop mid-way along the route, and she commented that she "may have burned off a cranberry or two." We were fortunate the weather cooperated with a light mist and only slightly cooler temperatures. Everyone is looking forward to next year's NWACA Turkey Trot, which promises to be bigger and better than ever!



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Neighborly Resolutions

—Joyce Statz

Moving through the neighborhood in my car and on foot, I see things which suggest some new year's resolutions for each of us to be a great NWACA neighbor. Consider these:

1. "Don't Mess with our Streets"

Make a resolution to put trash into its appropriate container: take the dog poop home, clean up after the trash pickup, don't toss trash out of the car window, ... And when you're walking, take a bag with you and pick up the stuff you see. Clean sidewalks and clean streets encourage everyone to put the trash where it belongs. It also keeps the trash out of our creeks, where it eventually goes into our drinking water.

2. "Walk Left, be Safe"

We're a neighborhood of walkers and runners and strollers. Everyone should be aware of best practice (and the law): walkers and runners need to be facing traffic, so they can see what's coming their way, and so drivers can clearly see the pedestrians. That means you walk on the left side of the road, while cars and bikes use the right side. And, please, when walking at night, wear

something light colored or reflective; drivers need to see you.

3. "Signal Your Intentions"

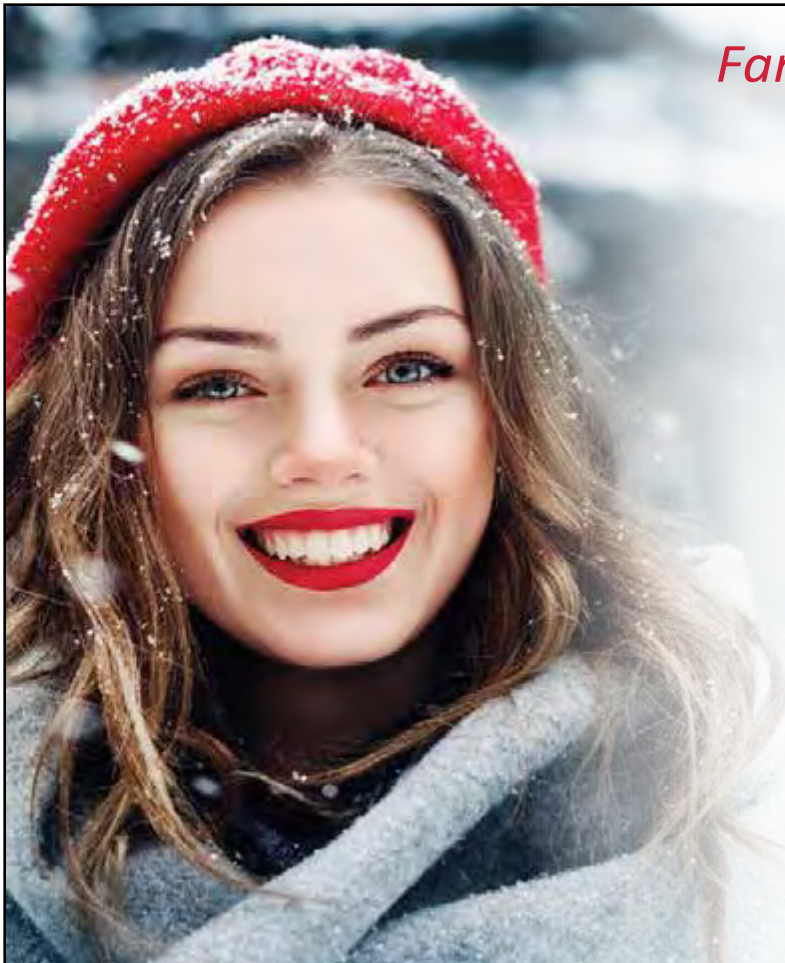
Drivers need to alert pedestrians and other drivers when they expect to turn left or right. Many drivers in our community don't do that, which causes consternation to other drivers, and impedes progress for everyone. Please use your signal before you actually turn. [And perhaps we encourage other drivers to honk, when someone doesn't exercise this courtesy!]

Thanks for making our neighborhood a great place to live!

Wanted: Steck Valley Greenbelt Volunteers

—NWACA Parks Committee

If you'd like to get involved with improvements to the Steck Valley Greenbelt, please let us know. We have a group that's interested in doing some trail building, and we've had interest expressed in the past to create a playscape near the greenbelt. The NWACA Parks Committee would like to hear from interested neighbors. Contact us at nwacainfo@gmail.com.



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BEING FIREWISE WITH SKYLIGHTS – Joyce Statz

Over the last several years, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has issued a series of fact sheets that help homeowners harden their homes against wildfire. The fact sheets issued to date are on the NWACA web site for you to peruse. Go to www.nwaca.org and enter “fact sheet” in the search bar. This month, we focus on the fact sheet about skylights.

While they’re not pervasive, there are skylights on homes in the NWACA area. If you have skylights or are planning to install them, keep these tips in mind regarding wildfire risk.

- If you have a high roof that will not collect leaves or other vegetative debris, a glass skylight is preferable to a plastic dome skylight, which is combustible.
- If you have a roof with a steep slope, a glass skylight is a better choice than plastic, since glass is more resistant to radiant heat exposure.
- If you install a glass skylight, use a dual-paned one; it is less likely to fail than those with a single pane.
- If your roof has a low slope and is likely to collect combustible debris, that debris is more likely to collect on a flat glass skylight than on a domed plastic skylight, so plastic is preferred here.
- If debris does collect near or on a skylight, the debris should be removed on a regular basis. Wind-blown ember ignition in the debris may create a fire hot enough to break through either a glass or plastic skylight.
- The metal flashing in the frame needs to be maintained to protect the wood framing members from both moisture- and ember-related damage.
- If there is a threat of wildfire, or if you need to evacuate, be sure to close any open skylight.

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*Data represents Brian Copland's 2019 transactions and marketing.

Understanding City Code: Watering Restrictions

— Alan Carson

Austin's water supply is from the Colorado River, which has a drainage basin of 40,000 square miles. It stretches northwest from Austin and almost all the basin is semi-arid, with a rainfall of substantially less than that of Travis County, which is about 35 inches per year on average. Thus, our water supply turns out to be a feast or famine, due to the vagaries of weather.

For example, we had a drought in from 2008 to 2016 that left the reservoirs used by Austin below 34 percent capacity. This was a record low and the water flowing into the lakes was little more than a trickle. Two years later, in 2018, Lake Travis took in more water in one week than Austin uses in four years. Of course, most of that water flowed on down to the Gulf of Mexico.

To conserve our water, particularly considering the growth that our area is now experiencing, the City of Austin has established five levels of water restrictions. The lowest, the Conservation Stage, is the least stringent, followed by Stages One through Four, each becoming stricter, with the latter being an emergency stage with no outdoor watering. These stages are determined based on the water levels of Lake Travis and Lake Buchanan.

How does one find the current restriction level and what are the details? Search for Austin Water Restrictions on the internet to access the city's website about restrictions. The first page has a condensed list of restrictions and exemptions; under the section titled Resources, you'll find a link to five pages of frequently asked questions. There is too much information to be able to include it in this article. If you would like to access the city code about this topic, click on the last Resources item, Water Conservation Code.

Does the city consider water restriction code violations a serious matter? Fines start at \$50 per violation and increase after each violation. Failing to follow the restrictions can even result in your being charged with a Class C misdemeanor in municipal court. That should be convincing!

If you have a question or concern about a City code that we haven't yet covered, send us email at nwacainfo@gmail.com, and we'll have Mr. Carson check it out. It may become the topic of an upcoming article.

Special Thanks to Members

— Membership Committee

NWACA thanks members who generously contributed to the 4th of July Parade Fund, the Park Fund, and the Constable Fund, between November 15, 2019 and December 14, 2019.

Donations to the 4th of July Parade Fund help NWACA to host the best 4th of July parade in Austin! The Park Fund helps us do events in our parks and revitalize parks in the NWACA area. The Constable Fund helps us provide the patrol activities of the Travis County Constable.

- Pat Armstrong
- Osker and Frances Cerbins
- Eleanor Cochran
- Al and Sandy Cumming
- Courtney Graeber and Jon Sprencel
- Stephanie Henney
- Stephanie and Craig Saur
- Beryl Simpson and Jack Neff
- Dennis and Barbara Thomas
- (and apologies to anyone whose donation we might have missed!)



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For more info email us at: nwacainfo@gmail.com



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Crape Myrtle Care

— Joanie Arrott

Crape myrtles can be found throughout our neighborhood, so a short article on caring for this ornamental tree is warranted. Though not native to Texas or the United States, this popular tree is hearty, adaptable, and well-loved for its colorful, flowering branches. They have very few pests and traditionally bloom the entire summer. While the crape myrtles grow well in our area, proper care is essential.

Contrary to some gardeners', landscapers', and tree trimming vendors' advice, crape myrtles do not require regular pruning. In fact, the only pruning they do need is thinning the trunks (in developing trees) to the desired permanent number, removing suckers as they sprout at the base, and cutting out dead wood and crossing or rubbing limbs. As with many other popular varieties of shade and ornamental trees, pruning in the cooler months decreases cold hardiness.

Topping always causes trees to sucker more at the base, making more work in the long term. Cutting back will also not increase the bloom; rather it will delay the bloom and sometimes cause droopy growth. These trees require full sun, so a shady location might be the cause for limited blooming.

Thoughtful and healthy reasons for pruning crape myrtles include tree safety and health, storm damage, damage to property near the tree, and (the least important reason) aesthetics. Always have a landscaping plan that considers the growth size and needs of any trees, shrubs, and plants, and consider any nearby structures. Pruning not only harms the trees because it involves actual cutting, but poorly made cuts can slow the overall healing process and divert nutrients away from the remainder of the tree. Pruning cuts should be properly covered immediately; pruning tools should always be cleaned before going from one tree to another. Tree pests that carry fatal diseases, including crape myrtle bark scale and oak wilt beetles, can easily infect a stand of trees through uncovered pruning wounds.





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