



THE MUELLER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

the FRONT PORCH FLYER



Mueller has its very own burrowing owl! Burrowing owls spend most of their time on the ground or on low perches such as fence posts. They hunt close to the ground catching insects and small animals, and they are active during the day.

Photo by Jill Long.

FRONT PORCH FLYER

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EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Dusty Harshman

Kathy Sokolic

EDITORIAL STAFF

Greg Buford, Cynthia Cammack,
Andrew Clements, Shawn Collins,
Ani Colt, Luke Downs, Susan Egan,
April Geruso, Drew Harris, Bart
Jacob, Judith Katzman, Woody
Lauland, Layla Mansuri, Dennis
Mick, Sadia Tirmizi, Preston Tyree,
Lila Valencia, Chrissy Yates

✉ fpf@muellerneighborhood.org

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✉ contact@muellerneighborhood.org
muellerneighborhood.org

Letter from the Chair

Hi Neighbors,

We're now a full month and some odd days into a new year and a new decade. Looking back over the past ten years, it's amazing to see how much our neighborhood and organization has grown. It goes to show how much can happen in a decade and as we enter a new one, it's important that we lay the foundations for continued growth and success into the future.

Every year, after its members are elected, the Steering Committee brainstorms its overall goals and direction. These goals can be as broad as increasing engagement across our community or as specific as centralizing reference materials and procedures. However, all of this is informed by what we hear from our members whether it be through the work of our various MNA committees, in conversation, at our meetings, or at our events.

Helping to lead these efforts are the newly elected Steering Committee officers. Here are their names and positions:

John Wooding - Chair

Richard Carr - Vice Chair

Alison Raffalovich - Secretary

John Thomas - Treasurer

Let's lay the groundwork for an incredible new decade by taking advantage of the many opportunities to get involved in building community here in Mueller. Don't hesitate to reach out when you have ideas, thoughts, or concerns; that's why our organization is here.

Your neighbor,
John Wooding

Call for Volunteers for the MNA Egg Scramble



Have you and your family enjoyed the Mueller Neighborhood Association's Egg Scramble in past years? We could use your help this year with setup, cleanup, and supervising bounce houses. All the fun takes place at Ella Wooten Park on Saturday morning, April 11. Send an email to jmquenan@gmail.com if you can help.

Turning Neighbors into Friends

By Kathy Sokolic

There are so many ways to get to know your neighbors if you want to. It may take a little effort, but the initial work pays off when you get to have amazing experiences with your new best friends!

My friend and neighbor, Carole Mick, leads what she calls an “Entertainment Group” here in the neighborhood. Each member of the group is assigned a month and plans an activity for all the other members. I asked her exactly how this idea came to fruition, because — what a great idea!

Carole replied: “When we first moved here I quickly met my new neighbors. We were all quick to share other new friends we’d made. Every once in awhile, we’d figure (out) something fun to do with one group or another, and by that time there were 16 people who...enjoyed getting together for things like lunches, movies, museums, plays, etc.”

Since no one in the group has more than one event to plan every 17 months (they skip December), the effort by any one person is low. The person in charge of the month picks a date, communicates the costs involved, and organizes the transportation. If tickets are involved, the organizer sometimes purchases the tickets in advance as well, to be reimbursed by the individuals later.

No one is required to attend all of the events. If someone isn’t interested in the event, they just don’t go. There is no vote on any of the events or the dates.

I asked Carole for some advice on how to create a successful event group. She noted that size is key. “Too many people can limit venues and make transportation difficult to manage. We all meet new people we’d like to include but at 16 we find all our outings have worked out.” Usually, about 8 to 12 attend any given event, and no one has ever picked an event that no one wanted to do.

When planning events, the sky is the limit. The group has even done hula hoop lessons and taken a downtown tour on Segways. Now in their 8th year, events are being planned for 2020 and everyone is still having a blast!



Hula Hoop Lessons provided by Carole Mick



Volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House provided by Carole Mick

Resolutions

By Judith and Steve Katzman

As we take notice of one year ending and a new one beginning, we often think this new year will be different or should be different. That thought fits nicely with the custom of making New Year's resolutions and it is easy to feel a renewed sense of resolve just at the end of our over-spending, over-eating, overindulging. Exhausted from excess, we are briefly more open to limits and restrictions. A new beginning ... for a while.

For most people, the resolve fades quickly. For some, it starts going bad the moment we define a resolution as a "should" or a "have to." In that moment we give up our freedom to choose and will at some point begin rebelling to take back our autonomy. We have competing ideas ... I want to eat healthy for long term benefit and simultaneously I want what I crave right now.

So why is this always a struggle?

Our brain's reward system did not evolve to care about the rewards of future gratification which may, or may not arrive. So each time we are faced with temptation our brain is inclined to have its way now. Our higher self, our conscious self must override instinct, to consciously control the natural immediate gratification impulse.

One suggestion from psychological research includes putting time between your urge and its gratification. This touches on the question of autonomy; you're still in control. But adding a ten-minute delay between seeing the cookie and eating it is a way to practice delaying gratification. You may choose to indulge, delay another ten minutes, or walk away. It also gives you time to remember the long-term goal, bringing it nearer. Thinking before acting is the idea.

Also, instead of being self-critical and succumbing to an all-or-nothing mentality, we do better to be forgiving and to give credit for progress if not perfection. Maybe you had just one scoop of ice cream which is better than two. And we can be analytical. What happened? How can I do it differently next time? How can I remember the long-term goal (e.g., health, relationships, stress management, career goal) and keep going? Research shows that noting, in real-time, what happened when the resolve went south and paying close attention is an indicator of progress. Instead of feeling like a loser, you use the failure as information about what to avoid next time or how to approach situations differently.

February is as good a time as any to try a deliberate experiment in change. Give a lot of thought to what you value and the change you would like to see. (This is your long-term goal.)

If it's health, maybe more visits to the farmers market, walking around the lake, replacing a bad habit with a healthy one. If it's relationships, finding ways to examine your own role. If it's work, finding ways to increase productivity or decrease stress. If it's community, finding ways to support local businesses or make a new friend. If it's the earth, finding out how to consume less or use less plastic.

Most important, remember that impulse control, procrastination, distraction, and temptation are all part of being human. We're always trying to learn how to better manage ourselves.

It's January so It Must be Winter in Austin

By Joe Denton

With our warm weather and lack of any killing frost, it hardly seems right but now is the ideal time of the year to take care of your trees and help them prepare for spring and new growth. It's time to prune trees, freshen your mulch, feed the roots, and check your irrigation.

While it's true you can prune your trees any time of the year, it is best to prune your trees when they are dormant. Some like Live Oaks and Monterey Oaks are evergreen and only shed their leaves as they put on new leaf buds. They can be safely pruned now as well.

Here's some things to look for when pruning. Look at the overall shape, are some branches encroaching into the sidewalk or into the street. Encroaching limbs need to be removed to maintain a clear path of 8 feet over the sidewalk and 14 feet over the streets and alleys. Look to see if you have any limbs that are crossing and rubbing against each other. Wounds created by rubbing branches invite insects and disease into an otherwise healthy tree. Look to see if you have limbs that are rubbing against your home and roof. Those branches need to be pruned back to prevent damage.

A local arborist friend once told me a tree is like a child: You



Arborist Tim Brosnan illustrates proper tree trimming by Joe Denton

need to start early to teach or train. Waiting too long usually has poor results. So start early with your trees. Limb them up every year by taking out the lowest branches starting the first year and gradually bring them up as they grow. It's better to cut a small branch, 1-2 inches than to wait until the branch is 3-4 inches in diameter. The wound heals faster and the tree grows over the cut sooner. Pre-treat your

tools with a little bleach or disinfectant to prevent spreading disease between trees.

With small branches, you can cut with a pair of loppers, with larger branches you can use a small hand tree saw. If you have to cut something larger it might be best to seek an arborist.

Making the actual cuts you need to cut at the branch collar and not flush with the trunk of the tree. Also don't cut so far out as to leave a stub. Cutting at the collar actually aides in the

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healing of the wound. When cutting larger branches, 2-3 inches in diameter, use a three-step process. First undercut the branch 5-6 inches away from the trunk, then cut the branch further out on the limb to sever the branch from the tree. Then make your final cut at the branch collar next to the tree trunk. This prevents the weight of the branch from stripping bark from the tree when it comes off.

To paint or not to paint? This has been debated a lot amongst arborists, but there is little reason to paint the wound on the tree. It, in fact, may slow the healing down. If you pruned an oak during the warmer months it might be advisable to paint it to prevent the spread of oak wilt.

Before you leave the tree make sure the tree stakes and wire supports are removed so it won't girdle and eventually weaken the trunk. Give the tree a strong shake to see if the root ball moves. If so, you may want to leave the tree staked another year or consider calling an arborist if the root ball still moves after several years. Your tree roots might be girdling the tree underground.

For more information on tree care check out the POA Landscape Committee's brochure detailing other considerations for your tree care on www.muelleraustinonline.com, Community Documents "Street Tree Brochure (Page 1 and 2)."

Minor Mishap's Winter Solstice Lantern Parade

By Woody Lauand

Every year on December 21st, when the North Pole tilts farthest from the sun, would-be modern pagans from all over the world gather on England's Salisbury Plain to observe the winter solstice. Here at Mueller, however, we don't have to travel as far as Stonehenge to mark the arrival of winter. We go to Lake Park instead.

On the longest night of the year, Minor Mishap, a self-described "25-piece renegade circus-punk brass band," comes prepared to guide us through the additional hours of darkness. It's all in keeping with the band's mission to build community and redefine public spaces.

Wearing black and yellow costumes accented with lights, their instruments similarly illuminated, the musicians welcome all comers, especially those carrying homemade lanterns, to follow them on a circuit of the lake. "The lanterns," says drummer Jason Silverberg, "are based on an old Chinese tradition symbolizing peaceful new beginnings."

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The event is family-friendly, and young and old alike become part of the “beautiful chaos,” as Jason describes the show.

As the darkness deepens and the temperature drops, raucous music echoes among the trees, and the water reflects the lights swaying in the merry-makers’ hands. The scene begins to resemble a medieval festival in which people used noise and fire to celebrate the change of seasons.



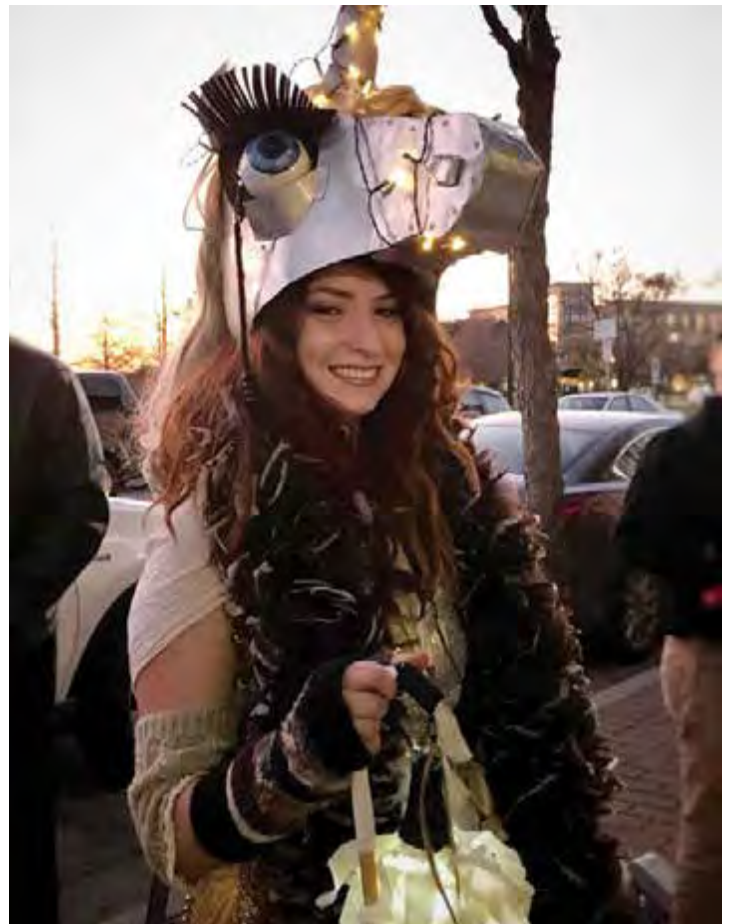
Accordionist Photo by Woody Lauand



Clarinetist Photo by Woody Lauand



Sousaphone Player Photo by Woody Lauand



Unicorn Photo by Woody Lauand

How to Haze a Wiley Coyote

By Shawn Collins



Coyote, photo provided by the City of Austin

Coyotes are taking over Mueller ... at least that's what it seems like with the reported sightings in the Mueller Neighbors group on Facebook.

But seriously, there are lots of coyotes in the area and they will sometimes prey on housepets if they are easy to access. And coyotes they are wild animals, so don't feed them or do anything else accommodating that will keep them coming back.

Instead, you should haze these beasts if you get the chance. This isn't the kind of hazing with goofy costumes or chugging Lone Star. Coyote hazing is a whole different thing.

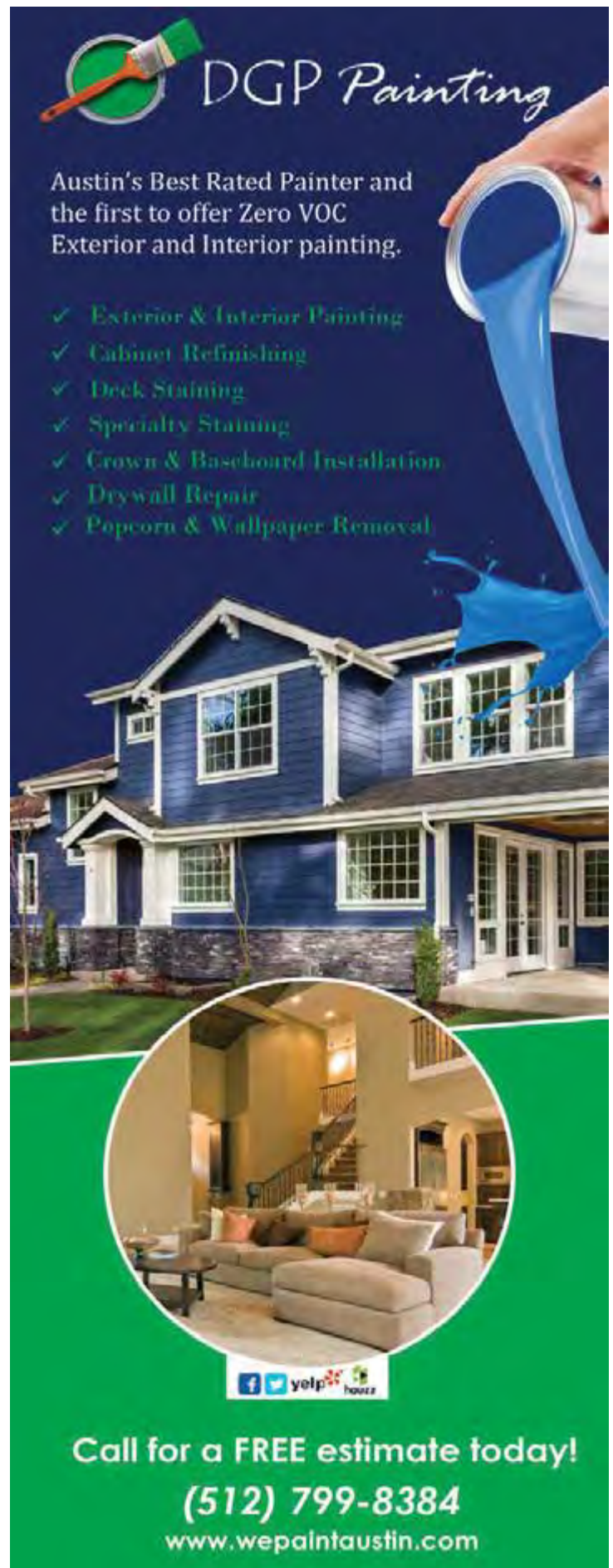
These urban coyotes can become habituated (lose their fear of humans) in an environment that is not hostile towards them. According to The Humane Society of the United States, "hazing is a method that uses deterrents to move an animal out of an area or discourages an undesirable behavior or activity."

Coyotes are usually the most active at dawn and dusk, but they do sometimes hunt or travel during the day. They range in size from 25-40 pounds and can appear even larger due to their thick coat.

Here are some tips to haze coyotes from the City of Austin:

- Make eye contact, yell and wave your arms. You want the coyote to know the behavior is directed at it. Waving your arms will make you seem bigger.
- Use noisemakers such as whistles, air horns, a "shaker" can full of small rocks (or something similar), or bang something like pots and pans together.
- If the coyote does not leave immediately, throw non-edible objects near it. You can use something like small rocks, sticks or tennis balls. Remember, the goal is not to hurt the coyote, you're trying to get it to leave and associate humans with unpredictable, "scary" behavior.
- Spray the coyote with a water hose, water guns, or spray bottles. You can also use a mixture of water and vinegar, pepper spray or bear repellent.
- If the coyote does not leave after escalating hazing efforts, maintain eye contact and back away slowly. Notify 311 immediately.

Let's keep those coyotes out of our parks and yards.

A vertical advertisement for DGP Painting. At the top, there is a logo featuring a paintbrush with green paint and the text "DGP Painting". Below the logo, it says "Austin's Best Rated Painter and the first to offer Zero VOC Exterior and Interior painting." A list of services follows: Exterior & Interior Painting, Cabinet Refinishing, Deck Staining, Specialty Staining, Crown & Baseboard Installation, Drywall Repair, and Popcorn & Wallpaper Removal. To the right, a hand is shown pouring blue paint from a can. Below the list, there is a large image of a two-story house with blue siding and white trim. At the bottom, there is a circular inset showing a modern interior living space with a large sofa and a staircase. Below the inset, there are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Yelp, along with a "HOUSE" icon. At the very bottom, it says "Call for a FREE estimate today! (512) 799-8384 www.wepaintaustin.com".

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Austin Film Studios' New Creative Media Center

By Rick Krivoniak & Kathy Sokolic

Austin Film Society (AFS) founder and artistic director Richard Linklater and Austin Council Member Kathie Tovo cut the ribbon for the grand opening of Austin Studios' new Creative Media Center on Monday, December 16. AFS partnered with the City of Austin, which provided \$5.4 million in 2012 bond funds for design and initial construction. The transformed National Guard Armory facility fronting Tilley Street at E 51st St. features 15,000 square feet of leasable office space situated around a central lobby and shared meeting, screening, and break room amenities to support creative media artists and businesses. The former hangar is now dubbed Stage 7, providing 23,500 square feet of production space.

Rebecca Campbell gave a heart-felt welcome to the attendees, calling out the dedication of the filmmakers in Austin and support from the local community who continue to embrace a love for film.

Austin's Art In Public Places (AIPP) program participated in the project, and on the same evening, dedicated the "Split Diopter" sculpture, visible from Tilley Street a bit south of 51st Street. Commissioned by AIPP and created by Texas artist Eric Eley, the sculpture's dimensions mimic the aspect ratio of film, and it references the anatomy of a film camera lens with Elgin Butler ceramic blocks. It is lit by red, blue, and green LED lights, colors featured in all projected images.



Kathie Tovo and Richard Linklater cut the ribbon, by Kathy Sokolic



Split Diopter, sculpture by Eric Eley, by Kathy Sokolic

New Dell Children's Outpatient Building Planned

By Dennis Mick

Ground will be broken in March for the new Dell Children's Medical Center pediatric outpatient facility for complex care on Dell Children's current Mueller campus facing Mueller Boulevard. The new facility will house world-class cardiovascular, neurosciences, and cancer programs to care for central Texas children and families close to home.

The project comprises a four-story pediatric outpatient facility of 161,000 square feet and two parking garages. It will gather pediatric subspecialties adjacent to the hospital, reducing multiple office visits and trips to Dell Children's for tests and imaging.

Cost of the project is \$113 million, and completion is anticipated for the Fall of 2021. *Photo of building courtesy of Ascension Health Care.*



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MUELLER'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2020

February 15, 10AM:

Mueller Neighborhood Association Meeting
Seton Administration Offices, 1345 Philomena St

March 21, 10AM:

Mueller Neighborhood Association meeting
Seton Administration Offices, 1345 Philomena St

April 11, 9AM:

Mueller Neighborhood Egg Scramble
Ella Wooten Park

Events at Mueller Farmers' Market on Sunday:

February 2, 11am - 1 pm: Season's Best Chef Demo w/ Maggie Perkins

February 9, 11am - 1 pm: Valentine's Day Card Making

February 9, 10am - 2 pm: All of Us Research Program

February 16, 11am - 1 pm: Season's Best Chef Demo w/ Maggie Perkins

February 23, 11am - 1 pm: Mardi Gras Celebration



Mueller Neighborhood Association Membership Form

To become a voting MNA member, a Mueller resident must complete this form and submit annual dues. New members must then wait 14 days before they may vote. Annual dues are \$5.00 per resident, 18 years or older. These funds are used to help pay for the Front Porch Flyer, MNA Grants, funding neighborhood events, and operating costs such as printing, record-keeping, and the MNA P.O. Box. You may give your dues to your Block Captain, bring it to an MNA meeting, or mail it to MNA, PO Box 49123, Austin, TX 78765. Checks may be written to "Mueller Neighborhood Association."

NAME:

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(Your email will only be used for official MNA communications)



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