



The Gazette

FEBRUARY 2020
VOLUME 13 ISSUE 2

Why Not Host?

Read More on Page 2!



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

EMERGENCY	911
Fire.....	911
Ambulance	911
Sheriff – Non-Emergency	512-974-0845

SCHOOLS

Elementary	
Clayton	512-841-9200
Kiker.....	512-414-2584
Mills	512-841-2400
Patton	512-414-1780
Middle	
Bailey.....	512-414-4990
Small.....	512-841-6700
Gorzycki	512-841-8600
High School	
Austin	512-414-2505
Bowie.....	512-414-5247

UTILITIES

Water/Wastewater	
City of Austin.....	512-972-0101
City of Austin (billing)	512-494-9400
Emergency	512-972-1000
Texas State Gas	
Customer Service	1-800-700-2443
Gas related emergency.....	1-800-959-5325
Pedernales Electric Cooperative	
New service, billing	512-219-2602
Problems	512-219-2628
ATT/SBC Telephone	
New Service	1-800-288-2020
Repair	1-800-246-8464
Billing	1-800-288-2020
Allied Waste	512-247-5647
Time Warner Cable.....	512-485-5555

OTHER NUMBERS

Oak Hill Postal Station.....	1-800-275-8777
City of Austin	
Dead Animal Collection.....	512-494-9400
Abandoned/Disabled Vehicles	512-974-8119
Stop Sign Missing/Damaged	512-974-2000
Street Light Outage (report pole#).....	512-505-7617

NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

Peel, Inc.	512-263-9181
Article Submissions	villagegazette@peelinc.com
Advertising.....	advertising@PEELinc.com

(Continued from Cover)

The decorations are packed away, gifts have been exchanged and life is back to normal once again. Why not bring a little excitement into your life by hosting a foreign exchange student!

Each of our students is fluent in English, comes with their own spending money and health insurance. Most importantly, they come with a dream to spend a year in the US so they can experience life as an American teenager!

Hosting is a very great way of bringing new cultures into your family, home, school and community. Speaking as the host mom to 14 different exchange students, I can say that this is one of the best decisions I've made in my life.

STS Foundation accepts all of host families – from single parents, newly marrieds, empty nesters and same sex couples. **In order to host, you would need to meet the following qualifications:**

- **Host must be 25 years or older**
- **Pass a background check**
- **Provide food for 3 meals daily**
- **Ensure reliable transportation to and from school (bus is ok)**
- **A bed for your student**
- **A safe and loving home**

STS Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that places foreign exchange students with American host families. For more information about hosting, please contact Vicki Odom at 832-455-7881 or email at vicki.stsfoundation@yahoo.com.

SWING Networking Group

Promote your business with local independent business owners. SWING (South west Austin Inclusive Networking Group) has been meeting every Thursday morning from 8AM to 9:30AM at the Waterloo Ice House on Escarpment for 14 years.

We have no dues, no initiation fees, we don't take attendance. Just pay for your own breakfast. The more often you show up the better we get to know you. We are an inclusive group, we will enjoy competition. So, bring your business cards and a good attitude and let's get to know you.

If you want more information, contact Liz Jensen at 512-301-6966 or lizleej@gmail.com or Peter Berardino (The King of SWING) at 512-695-2334 or peterberardino@gmail.com.

A Fun, Fruity, Refrigerated Treat



Save time on family desserts with make-ahead recipes like these Kristoff Ice Box Cupcakes. By using kid-friendly treats that add nutrition to appealing flavor, you can solve busy evenings just by reaching into the fridge. This and other family-friendly recipes are part of Dole's healthy-living

alliance with Disney's Frozen 2. For details, visit dole.com/Disney. #Dole #DoleRecipes

Kristoff Ice Box Cupcakes

Prep time: 20 minutes, plus chill time

Serves: 12

- 3 ripe DOLE® Bananas
- 1 container (8 ounces) fat-free whipped topping, thawed
- 7 low-fat honey graham crackers, coarsely crushed
- 1 pound Dole Strawberries, hulled and quartered

Line 12-cup muffin tin with cupcake liners. In large bowl, mash bananas; fold in whipped topping.

Fill muffin cups halfway with graham cracker pieces, banana mixture and strawberries; repeat layers with remaining ingredients.

Refrigerate cupcakes 4 hours; serve in cupcake liners.

Approximate nutritional information per serving (1 cupcake): 78 calories; 3 calories from fat; 0 g fat; 0 g trans fat; 0 g polyunsaturated fat; 0 g monounsaturated fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 25 mg sodium; 164 mg potassium; 18 g carbohydrates; 2 g fiber; 8 g sugar; 1 g protein; vitamin A 0%; vitamin C 25%; calcium 2%; iron 2%; vitamin E 2%; thiamin 2%; vitamin B6 8%; phosphorus 2%; magnesium 4%; manganese 10%.

Content downloaded from FamilyFeatures.com



*Help Keep Our
Neighborhood
Beautiful!*


AUSTIN TELCO
 FEDERAL CREDIT UNION
 512-302-5555 | www.atfcu.org



Home Equity Loans



as low as

3.25%

APR¹
5 Years Fixed

¹Annual Percentage Rate. Actual rate may vary depending on credit qualifications. Rates and terms are subject to change without notice. Federally Insured by NCUA. Austin Telco NMLS #422857



Selling this Spring? Things to Be Doing Now

By Dianne Field, GRI

The winter months are the perfect time to be preparing your house to sell. Treat it like a business. Your house is no longer just your home, it's an asset you are trying to get top dollar for.

Make Minor Repairs

Patch holes in the walls, replace broken appliances and change burnt out light bulbs. No problem is too small in the eyes of a potential buyer. Small issues send the message the home has not been well taken care of. They could also indicate to a potential buyer that there is other more costly neglect taking place- like water or mold damage.

Depersonalize and Declutter

The more personal your space, the less potential buyers can imagine themselves living there. Get rid of a third of your stuff--stash it in a storage unit if you have to. Clutter includes family photos, collections, travel items, and keepsakes. It's hard for a buyer to imagine their things in the space with yours cluttering every room.

Remove Polarizing Items

Polarizing items are political and religious items and should be packed away with your other personal things. Many people have strong feelings about these types of things, and you don't want a buyer to pre-judge your home based on your political or religious beliefs.

Update the Kitchen

Kitchens are probably the most important room in the house. They are also the most expensive to renovate. Investing a few thousand dollars will get you an 86% return, while a dated kitchen could knock a huge chunk off of the asking price. The fastest and most inexpensive update is to repaint cabinets and update hardware.

Add a Fresh Coat of Paint

Neutral paint tones appeal to a wide range of tastes and look fresh. Paint also has the power to add light to a dark room. Just resist the urge to be bold (save it for your next home). If you must add a pop of color, do so with a blanket or flower vase, not the fireplace.

Clean the Carpets

If you have carpets in your home, they need to be clean before you show your home. You can save money and rent a carpet cleaning machine or hire professionals — either way, the results will speak for themselves.

Improve Curb Appeal

You may not have the budget for a complete re-landscaping of your yard, but cleaning it up, including weeding and mulching, can make a big difference for potential buyers. Add some inexpensive flowers and clear out any excess to make a great first impression for an open house or showing. Ditto for power washing the exterior, especially stone and siding.

Fix Broken Items

If you have broken fixtures, it's time to fix them now, before a potential home buyer is turned off. Whether it's a stuck door handle or a broken toilet, now's the time to get it fixed.

Organize Closet Space

Every buyer is looking for a place to store all their things. Take

half of everything you have in the closets and put it in a storage unit. Then, neatly organize what's left in the closets to highlight the home's storage space.

Listing your Home for the Right Price

Find out what your home is worth, then consider asking fifteen to twenty percent less. No, it's not crazy! You'll have bids from multiple buyers. Buyers don't want to let that kind of deal slip away and are sure bid it back up to its worth.

Work with a Top Realtor

A big sale killer is working with the wrong realtor. Work with a realtor who is informed and can provide helpful services through the entire selling process. They should regularly monitor the multiple listing service (MLS), know what properties are going on the market, and know the comps for your neighborhood.

Take Professional Photos

With the internet and social media, the first impression of your home is going to be online, so you'll want to hire a professional photography company to take the images. Your Realtor can help you choose a company and the final pictures, as they'll know what pictures sell the best.

Clean-Up for Walk-Throughs

Clean like you've never cleaned before, and then keep it that way. Keep your bathrooms and kitchen impeccable, dust and mop, and wash the walls and windows until the day your house sells. Professional companies that specialize in deep cleaning are also recommended.

Lights On!

A dark house is just sad. Maximize the light in your home. Take down the drapes, clean the windows, and swap the lampshades and up the wattage in the bulbs. Do whatever it takes to let the light shine down on potential buyers!

No Pets Allowed

Not everyone is an animal lover. If a potential buyer walks in and sees a dog bowl, smells a litter box, or is picking hair off their pants hours after the Open House, they will think the house is not clean. In fact, a potential buyer shouldn't even be able to tell if a four-legged friend lives there or not. Plan and get your furry friend to a pet hotel or leave with a friend on the days you plan to show the home.

Smells Like Home

You should be able to eliminate any unpleasant odors after a good clean. Even if it's winter, open the windows and give the home time to air out. To add a pleasing smell, bake before an Open House, or light a fresh-smelling candle. Keep it subtle because anything too overpowering will smell suspicious like you're trying to hide something.

Special Touches

Fresh flowers, accent pillows, a new welcome mat--these little touches can amp up the welcome factor of any home and go a long

(Continued on Page 5)

(Continued from Page 4)

way with buyers. You don't have to go out of your way, either. Just a few here and there to make it feel more like home.

It's Always Show Time


Your house needs to be "show ready" at all times because you never know when a buyer will walk through that front door. You want your home to be available whenever they want to come and see the place. Keep the dishes clean and put away, beds made, and immediately clear clutter. It may seem annoying, but will get your house sold!

Leave Your House

Removing yourself is the ultimate depersonalization. You want to give buyers the freedom to open closets, inspect the rooms, and ask questions without feeling like they are snooping around. Before someone comes for a showing, open the windows, turn on all the lights and get yourself out!

Making First Impressions a Lasting Impression

Before they even walk through the door, buyers are judging your house. They should feel warm, welcome and safe as they approach the house. Do some inexpensive upgrades, such as adding light fixtures, replacing the mailbox, or sprucing up the landscaping with some colorful flowers. You can expect a 100 percent return on any money you put into your home's curb appeal.



**YOUR BRAND,
MANAGED.**

LET PEEL MEDIA HANDLE YOUR...

Email Blasts, Social Media
Engagement, Customer Leads,
Online Reputation,
and so much more!

CONTACT US TODAY!

512.263.9181
info@peelincmedia.com
WWW.PEELINCMEDIA.COM



A FOCUS ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY Pathway to Improved Health

By Concentra Urgent Care

Being physically active is one of the most important steps you can take to maintain or improve your health. When combined with eating a healthy diet, regular exercise can substantially reduce your risk of chronic disease, prevent weight gain, and improve your overall level of physical and emotional fitness.

HOW MUCH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DO I NEED?

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) has recently published several recommendations related to exercise:

1. Any physical activity is better than no physical activity
- Includes people with disabilities
- Far outweighs the possibility of risk of injury or illness
2. Most health benefits occur with at least 150 minutes a week
- Both aerobic and muscle-strengthening are beneficial
3. For most people, additional benefits occur when
- You increase the intensity of your physical activity
- You increase the frequency of your physical activity
- You increase the duration of your physical activity

SHOULD OLDER ADULTS EXERCISE, TOO?

The same HHS guidelines apply, but older adults need to make sure that their fitness level and any chronic conditions allow them to safely perform physical activity. For example, if an older adult is at risk of falling, he should do exercises that maintain or improve his balance.

WHAT IF I HAVE A CHRONIC MEDICAL CONDITION?

If you have a chronic medical condition, you should be under the care of a health care provider. It is important to consult your physician about the type and amount of physical activity appropriate for you.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

The health benefits of physical activity far outweigh the risks and some activity is better than none. Persons who have not been diagnosed with a chronic condition (such as diabetes, heart disease, or osteoarthritis) and do not have symptoms (e.g., chest pain or pressure, dizziness, or joint pain) do not need to consult with a health care provider prior to starting an exercise program.

BAKED SPAGHETTI

Ingredients

- 1 package (16 ounces) spaghetti
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 jar (24 ounces) meatless spaghetti sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon seasoned salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 5 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 cups Daisy 4% cottage cheese
- 4 cups part-skim shredded mozzarella cheese
- Chopped fresh basil, optional

Directions

- Cook spaghetti according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, cook beef and onion over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Stir in spaghetti sauce and seasoned salt; set aside.
- In a large bowl, whisk the eggs, Parmesan cheese and butter. Drain spaghetti; add to egg mixture and toss to coat.
- Place half of the spaghetti mixture in a greased 13x9-in. or 3-qt. baking dish. Top with half of the cottage cheese, meat sauce and mozzarella cheese. Repeat layers.
- Cover and bake at 350° for 40 minutes. Uncover; bake until cheese is melted, 20-25 minutes longer. If desired, sprinkle with basil.



Adding Yoga to Workout Regime Can Improve Your Fitness Goals

Implementing yoga into a workout routine can provide unique health benefits, said a Baylor College of Medicine physician and yoga enthusiast.

Yoga is a broad philosophy containing many different paths to achieve the goal of physical, mental and spiritual well-being, said Dr. Bobby Kapur, assistant professor of medicine at BCM and associate chief for emergency medicine at the Harris County Hospital District's Ben Taub General Hospital. In physical fitness, yoga is the practice of physical postures and breathing exercises that allow a person to strengthen the body and at the same time enter a meditative and relaxed state of awareness.

Yoga entails various positions, stretching and deep breathing. Practicing yoga can help a person improve flexibility, balance, limberness, blood circulation, and it can also relax muscle tension and fight infection, Kapur said.

A graphic with the text "GO GREEN" in large, bold, white letters with a black outline. Below the text, a pair of hands is shown holding a small globe of the Earth. A large green leaf is placed behind the globe, partially covering it. The background is a soft-focus green. At the bottom, there is a blue banner with white text.

GO GREEN

Receive your newsletter in your inbox

For details go to
www.PEELinc.com
and click the RESIDENTS tab



Sweet, Luscious Snacks for Loved Ones

Valentine's Day Eats and Treats

(Family Features) Valentine's Day naturally brings thoughts of hearts, flowers, sweetness and love. Because it also occurs during American Heart Month, it's a perfect opportunity to start taking care of your own heart and the hearts of loved ones.

Part of the charm of the day's celebrations is in giving family and friends flavorful foods to enjoy from chocolates and candies to other sugary treats. However, the festivities don't have to be completely focused on unhealthy bites in order to make someone feel special.

This year, it can be easy to share in the fun of Valentine's Day by serving those you love with sweet, seasonal treats. For example, these Frosted Watermelon Cutouts make for ideal snacks for children and adults alike whether it's an after-school treat or a sweet dessert with just three ingredients, heart-shaped cookie cutters and minimal time spent in the kitchen.

If you're really looking to impress that special someone, this Watermelon and Chocolate Dessert Board calls for creativity and plenty of tasty morsels like berries, cashews, almonds and dark chocolate. Without any baking or cooking required, simply spread out the ingredients for a platter that's just as visually appealing as it is appetizing.

Both recipes include the benefits of watermelon, which boasts plenty of vitamin C to boost the immune system's defenses as a cholesterol-free, fat-free and sodium-free food. Plus, watermelon draws its red color from the powerful antioxidant lycopene (12.7 mg per serving), which may help protect cells from damage, and the healthy treat is American Heart Association Heart-Check Certified with just 80 calories per serving, making it the perfect centerpiece for Valentine's Day recipes.

Find more Valentine's Day inspiration and recipes at watermelon.org.

FROSTED WATERMELON CUTOUTS

- 1 seedless watermelon, cut into 1/2-3/4-inch thick slices
- 4 brownie bites
- 1 cup frosting (any flavor)

Using heart-shaped cookie cutters, cut shapes out of watermelon slices or simply use cut watermelon wedges, if desired. Top heart shapes with brownie bites and add frosting as desired.



WATERMELON AND CHOCOLATE DESSERT BOARD

Servings: 6-8

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---|
| 1/2 | medium seedless watermelon, cut into wedges and cubes | 1 | cup strawberries, trimmed and halved |
| 1 | cup fresh raspberries | 1/4 | cup dried cranberries |
| 1 | cup fresh red cherries | 1/3 | cup roasted, salted cashews |
| 1 | cup coconut chips | 1 | cup chocolate covered almonds |
| | mint leaves, for garnish | 1 | bar dark chocolate, broken into squares |

On serving board, arrange watermelon in center and surround with raspberries, cherries, strawberries, cranberries, cashews, almonds, chocolate and coconut chips. Scatter mint leaves around board for garnish.





PEEL, INC.

1405 Brandi Ln
Round Rock, TX 78681

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PEEL, INC.

VW



**SW AUSTIN'S
#1 REALTOR**

ASHLEY'S AWARD WINNING SYSTEM IS SHOWN IN HER RECORD BREAKING RESULTS

Austin's Platinum Top 50 Nominee and Award Winner 2015 – 2019 | AIOREP Top 10 Agent for Client Satisfaction in Texas 2015 – 2018

Austin Business Journal Top Producing Agent 2013 – 2018 | Texas Monthly Five Star Agent 2013 – 2019

ASHLEY AUSTIN HOMES

LESS THAN HALF THE TIME

My listings sell in less than
HALF the time of other agents in
Southwest Austin.

MORE MONEY

Not only do my listings sell faster
than other agents, I average
\$55k more than any other
realtor in Southwest Austin.

WWW.ASHLEYAUSTINHOMES.COM
512.217.6103



SOLD IN 1 DAY



SOLD IN 1 DAY



SOLD IN 2 DAYS



SOLD IN 2 DAYS

SquiresTeam.com

Hello Southwest Austin! John Squires with Keller Williams Realty and the Squires Team would like to thank you for another great year in real estate. Whether you own a **Scott Felder, Newmark, David Weekly, Plantation, Mercedes, Streetman, KB, Highland, John Lloyd, Village Home, Standard Pacific, etc., etc.**, John knows your home's value. There are actually **well over 25 different builders** in Southwest Austin that have come and gone since 1988. The current market is extremely busy, as we have had a rapid increase in calls and visitors to our open houses on weekends. People have filed their taxes and are realizing their financial gains for the year and assessing the possibilities of moving or perhaps picking up lease properties as investments in the area. I sometimes encourage clients to hold on to their previous homes and lease them out if at all possible when moving to their next home. Interest rates have remained fairly constant for owner-occupant and investor loans. About **3.75%~ owner-occupant** and **4.5%~ investor**. All rates are credit driven and percentage of down payment. Still, **GREAT** rates! The Squires Team takes their fiduciary responsibility to their clients very seriously and strives to ensure your home is marketed and sold for the highest value the market will bear. Give us a shout for a no-obligation market analysis on your valuable property or to show you any homes in Austin. **(512) 970-1970** Thanks! John Squires



Call John Squires' real estate sell phone at **512 970-1970** at any time or text for a quick response.

I work by appointment and will provide you with a free, no-obligation market analysis 7 days per week and any evenings at your convenience. I am on your schedule and just a call or text away. Thanks! John Squires

Below are 1-story and 2-story home **sold** statistics for Southwest Austin neighborhoods for the year 2019. These also include all the new-built homes that were on the MLS, so the price per foot may not be relevant to all homes represented in this study. An accurate market study would have to be done on your property to find the true market value range for your specific property. These are general data averages in the Southwest and your home could be worth more or less, depending on many factors.

1-story **"Active"** homes on market averages. Low price \$485,000. High price \$619,000. 2 total homes on market now. Average price per foot \$194.57. Average days on market 28.

1-story **"Contract Pending"** homes on market averages. Low price is \$386,900. High price is \$509,000. 8 total homes under contract right now. Average price per foot \$228.68. DOM is 137.

1-story **"Sold"** homes on market averages. Low price \$342,000. High price \$765,000. 102 total homes sold in 2019. Average price per foot \$210.48. Average days on market 28.

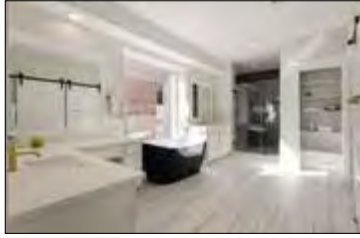
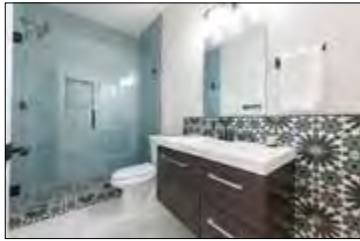
2-story **"Active"** homes on market averages. Low price is \$435,000. High price is \$841,000. 8 total homes on market now. Average price per foot \$193.73. Average days on market 74.

2-story **"Contract Pending"** homes on market averages. Low price \$599,000. High price \$915,000. 16 total homes under contract right now. Avg. price per foot \$196.96. Days on market is 45.

2-story **"Sold"** homes on market averages. Low price \$362,000. High price \$1,265,000. 241 total homes sold in 2019. Average price per foot \$180.29. Days on market 35.

Below is recent activity of John Squires in working with his mid-winter sellers. January/February and March are 3 of the *most* lucrative home-selling months of the year. Call John if you would like the full explanation of when the best times to list your homes are and how to proceed in selling for maximum value! With minimal homes actively on the market, John's listings will get fantastic buyer-traffic and probably sell quickly for high seller profit margins. Listing prices are notated to show value in the area being sold in. Call John for a specific analysis on your valuable home and the best time to list it for sale. Also, let John show you when you would like to see any homes as a buyer. Thanks!

10807 Redmond Road John just listed this absolutely stunning David Weekly model home remodel! White oak hardwood flooring, quartz countertops through the kitchen and baths, complete remodel of kitchen with wall removed, Bosch and Kitchenaid stainless, easy-close shaker cabinets/drawers. Complete interior paint, LED lights, master bath with huge, expanded custom shower, designer faucets, Mahogany front door. Approx. 3696 sq. ft. Offered at **\$675,000.**



10900 Bexley Lane John brought this amazing Highland home to market, right behind Kiker! Loaded with wood floors, hi-end granite kitchen, an amazing master bath with quartz counters, 4/2.5 PLUS game room and office! Big back yard. Approx. 2992 sq. ft. Offered at **\$529,000.**



11501 Alberta Drive John just listed this wonderful David Weekly 1-story at approx. 3230 sq. ft. 4 bedrooms, 3 full baths and a 4-car garage! Quiet area and culdesac! Wow at **\$619,000.!**



Top agent in Southwest Austin and Circle C home sales **over the last 23 years** with over **725~** homes sold. Over **1100~** homes sold Austin-wide. *Only 1 number to call and John Squires answers his phone.* Move-up/down plans, flexible commissions offered. John works on your schedule. Call for a free, no-obligation market assessment on your valuable home. Only John works directly with all his clients and you will never be handed off to an assistant or another agent.

(512) 970-1970

