



nwacaNEWS

NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

MAY 2020

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 5

Welcome New Board Members!

By the time you read this, NWACA will have elected a new board for 2020-2022. You may have already read about our new board members via our Facebook group or NWACA Notes email, or on our website. If you're not a NWACA member or don't have access to our social media, you can read about the new board members in our June newsletter.

I would like to express my gratitude for having been able to serve on the NWACA board. I have learned so much and met so many wonderful people; it has been an honor to serve. And, I would like to say thank you to the board members that I have worked with for the past four years. They have all worked amazingly hard.

During the "Stay at Home, Stay Safe" period, our board and committees have continued to meet virtually with one another, with City of Austin officials, and with community leaders to try to assess needs in our community, support businesses, and share resources. In collaboration with District 10 Council Member Alison Alter, we have also met with neighboring associations to share resources. If you or anyone you know of has an unmet need, please email us at: nwacainfo@gmail.com and we will try to be of assistance.

While we will be unable to host our annual meeting originally scheduled for May 6th, we are hoping to moderate a prerecorded meeting in the upcoming months, once our planned presenters become safely available. In the meantime, the board continues to try to provide up to date, verifiable information to our neighbors and businesses through social media. Please let us know if you have ideas that should be covered or new ways that we can support one another. While many of us may feel that we don't have control over much in our lives right now, we actually can control one very important thing - how we treat other people. It has been amazing to see how everyone seems to have been taking that to heart with a smile, a wave, checking on neighbors, and spreading air hugs of love and kindness. Take care everyone.

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

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 Hajdu, Vice-President
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| • Charlie Galvin | • Christopher Roddy |
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| • Bridget Keating | • Julie Waidelich |
| • 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 put 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.

NWACA Events Calendar

These events are as planned on April 15. As you consider participating in one of the events listed, please check first with the organizer, since the Covid-19 outbreak may affect the ability to conduct the event. Some may be able to occur in a virtual fashion; others to be postponed or canceled.

May 3, 2PM

Parks Committee

Biderman's

May 12, 6:30PM-8:30PM

NWACA Board Meeting

Galaxy Cafe

May 16, 9:00AM-NOON

Monthly Cleanup Event, please sign up at
[https://austinparks.givepulse.com/recurring/804433?event=Bull](https://austinparks.givepulse.com/recurring/804433?event=Bull+Creek+Park+Cleanup)

+Creek+Park+Cleanup

Bull Creek District Park

May 17, 2PM

Tree, Environment, and Wildlife Committee

Epoch Coffee

May -Date TBD

Cleanup at Murchison Pool before it opens

Murchison Pool Park

3700 North Hills Dr.

May 26, 5PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees Joint Meeting

Temple Beth Shalom, 7300 Hart Lane, r.201

June 7, 2PM

Parks Committee

Biderman's

June 9, 6:30PM-8:30PM

NWACA Board Meeting

Galaxy Cafe

June 20, 9AM to NOON

Monthly park beautification in the park and on trails; sign up at:
[https://austinparks.givepulse.com/recurring/804434?event=Bull](https://austinparks.givepulse.com/recurring/804434?event=Bull+Creek+Park+Cleanup)

+Creek+Park+Cleanup

Bull Creek District Park

June 23, 5PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees Joint Meeting

Temple Beth Shalom, 7300 Hart Lane, r.201

Date TBD

Electronics and Styrofoam Recycling; also accepting used
toothpaste tubes and toothbrushes

St. Matthew's Mesa Parking Lot



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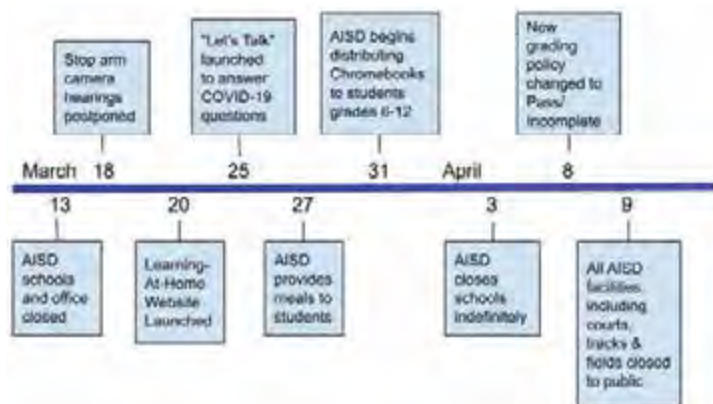
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AISD's New Virtual Education Plan (as of April 14, 2020)

– Teri Schock



Since the news of the Covid-19 pandemic, each of us has experienced much change, including the students in our community. On March 8th, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) canceled all district-sponsored international trips. Then on March 12th, all large gatherings, field days, and spring break camps were cancelled through April 3rd. On March 13th AISD canceled all classes for that day, the Friday before spring break. Students have not returned to their schools and classrooms since.

The district rapidly developed distance learning curricula and launched their Learning-At-Home website with online courses and recommended learning resources for all grade levels on March 20th. The AISD At-Home-Learning web site, <https://sites.google.com/austinisd.org/aisd-learning-at-home>, is a resource for students, families, and teachers, with valuable information and support. Teachers will provide feedback on students' progress as they prepare for success next year and in the future.

On March 31st the District began issuing Chromebooks to sixth-to-12th grade students. Internet hotspots are being distributed for home use, and 500 school buses will be outfitted with mobile hotspots to serve communities in need. Paper packets are being provided at the meal distribution locations to families who do not have access to technology; elementary school students can receive a packet of school supplies next week to support hands-on learning as well.

On April 6th, AISD students returned from spring break to an online classroom setting of sorts called Continuous Learning, which was intended to be implemented in phases for grades Pre-K through 12. Continuous Learning's purpose is to continue to prepare students for their return to campus with increased teacher interaction, direction, and feedback. Depending on the school, class, or grade level, the Continuous Learning resources can include the use of printed material, email communication, phone recordings or calls, and online platforms. This includes teacher-facilitated instruction that students participate in on their own schedule, in order to provide maximum flexibility for students and families.

A new policy was created on April 8th, in which all students will receive either a grade of pass or incomplete rather than A through F grades. Receiving an incomplete will not affect a student's ability to advance to the next grade or to graduate. However, a record of incomplete will identify individuals who require additional support

this summer and in the coming year. More information can be found at <https://www.austinisd.org/covid19/continuous-learning>.

The Texas Education Agency canceled STAAR tests and other academic assessment requirements for the remainder of the year. You can read more about that at: <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/correspondence/taa-letters/cancellation-of-staar-testing-for-the-remainder-of-the-school-year>.

Placement exams, in the form of free-response essays or short-answer questions, will all be taken at home. The College Board is providing free video review lessons for students. Teachers are also supporting students by providing online instruction.

ACT April examination has been canceled. The next scheduled ACT is June 13. The SAT March and May examinations have been canceled. The June 6 SAT is still scheduled. Khan Academy, a free online resource, is available to all students who wish to prepare for the exam.

Information regarding Continuous Learning, SEL, meals, and hands-on options can be found at the Austin ISD Learning At-Home website. More information is also available at [austinisd.org](https://www.austinisd.org) and on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/austinisd/>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/AustinISD>) pages.

Inviting NWACA Business Members

– Julie Waidelich

Are you interested in becoming a NWACA Business Member? We are in the process of renewing our business members and encourage local businesses to get involved. As a business member, you will have an incredible opportunity to get involved and network within our community. Please learn more by going to <https://nwaca.org/businessmembers/> or click on the *Business Members* tab at www.nwaca.org For more information, please contact Julie Waidelich at julieswaidelich@gmail.com.



IDEE KWAK'S Writers CORNER

Two of our neighborhood authors have released new books in the last weeks.

Jeff Kerr whose film, *Writer's Block*, has recently garnered accolades, just published an earlier work, *The Republic of Jack*. Set in Austin, Jack Cowherd's governorship becomes his presidency when Texas secedes. Will he be impeached, arrested, charged with treason? With a release date of April 21, you can get an early copy now.

(Continued on Page 6)

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RECENT 78731 HOME SALES

Address	Bedrooms	Bathrooms	List Price	Sold Date
7612 Parkview Circle	4	3	\$945,000	March 5
5815 Westslope Drive	4	4	\$975,000	March 9
4702 Palisade Drive	3	2	\$649,999	March 9
4013 Sierra Drive	4	3	\$895,000	March 12
3908 Edwards Mountain Drive	3	3	\$1,200,000	March 13
3805 Green Trails S.	5	4	\$1,150,000	March 19
7401 Chimney Corners	4	2	\$825,000	March 20
5902 Highland Hills Drive	3	2	\$860,000	March 23
7829 West Rim Drive	4	3	\$1,195,000	March 23
5105 North Rim Drive	4	2	\$799,000	March 26

*MLS data from Austin Board of REALTORS® for homes sold in March 2020

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(Continued from Page 5)

Trust Me is Richard Z. Santos' debut novel. "With crisp, cinematic dialogue and insight into all that's duplicitous, corrupt, juicy and thrilling"... [this is] "a story that sinks its teeth into a crooked land development deal in New Mexico with reverberations all the way to the seats of national power."

Both books are available on Amazon.com and both authors would appreciate a review.

Some interesting sites for books and libraries during these times:
<https://www.timeout.com/news/how-to-find-free-audiobooks-from-the-bbc-033020>

<https://booksonthewall.com/blog/6-places-read-free-books-online/>

<https://about.jstor.org/covid19/>
https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/03/26/821925073/national-emergency-library-lends-a-hand-and-lots-of-books-during-pandemic?utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_term=nprnews&utm_campaign=npr

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.atlasobscura.com/articles/archives-to-browse-from-home.amp>

May your time pass quickly in the pages of a good book.

Gourmand's Corner: Covid-19 Impact

– Chris Hajdu



Covid-19 and our "local lockdown" have had a tremendous impact on local distilleries, breweries, restaurants, and bars. It's hard to believe that just one month ago, I was writing about our wonderful Central Texas distilleries and urging people to get out to the tasting rooms and enjoy the spring weather. Now, as that memory fades, we are seeing that these businesses are adapting and changing.

One change is that distilleries have gone from making tasty drinks to making hand sanitizer. Thanks to new Food and Drug Administration rules, they are now allowed to make hand sanitizer using their high proof spirits as a base. Distilleries taking advantage of these new rules include Desert Door, Milan and Greene, Treaty Oak, Still Austin, Tito's, Deep Eddy, and several more. Still Austin is plans to produce 100,000 gallons of sanitizer over the next few months! Many of these distilleries are donating a portion of their product to first responders, hospitals, clinics, and city health departments. Some are selling the remainder to the public. And, not to be left out, Zilker Brewing Company is also making hand sanitizer.

Restaurant and bar owners have had to scramble to reinvent themselves. Changes include:

- increased use of delivery services
- the rise of curbside pickup orders including alcoholic drinks (thanks TABC)
- restaurant closings, both temporary and permanent.

We've seen an increase in usage of delivery services whether by the restaurants themselves or via third parties like DoorDash, UberEats, Grubhub, Seamless, and Postmates. Several restaurants have added or enhanced to-go menus, including alcoholic beverage options, thanks to newly changed rules put forth by the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission.

Here is a list of restaurants that continue to serve our area with online ordering, delivery, and/or curbside pick-up. Some restaurants have even added family meals. A few have instituted procedures where you park outside, announce you are there via text, phone, or flashing your lights, and then wait for someone to bring the food to your vehicle in order to minimize social interactions. The businesses listed below update their websites and other social media regularly to keep customers aware of changes in hours, how to order, and delivery and pickup options. Things are changing all the time so check before you go or order.

• Far West: Daily Juice (also selling Wholly Bagel), Biderman's Deli, Hao-Q, Saffron, Wendy's, Bert's BBQ, Snap Kitchen, Kneaded Pleasures, and Boulevard Bar and Grill

(Continued on Page 8)



Help Keep Our
Neighborhood
Beautiful!

NORTHWEST HILLS AND WESTOVER HILLS MARKET REPORT UPDATE

YEAR TO DATE (JANUARY - MARCH)		2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
SOLD	SINGLE FAMILY HOMES	39	50	39	48	48	35
LIST PRICE	AVERAGE LIST PRICE	\$960,026	\$883,124	\$801,493	\$739,797	\$789,523	\$663,988
	MEDIAN LIST PRICE	\$869,000	\$765,000	\$724,995	\$685,000	\$749,000	\$619,000
SOLD PRICE	AVERAGE SOLD PRICE	\$898,960	\$785,293	\$681,357	\$700,197	\$680,627	\$611,931
	MEDIAN SOLD PRICE	\$850,000	\$725,000	\$632,000	\$650,000	\$664,000	\$569,000
LIST PRICE/SqFt	AVERAGE LIST PRICE/SqFt	\$324	\$297	\$277	\$263	\$261	\$250
	MEDIAN LIST PRICE/SqFt	\$310	\$283	\$276	\$257	\$260	\$244
SOLD PRICE/SqFt	AVERAGE SOLD PRICE/SqFt	\$332	\$293	\$274	\$255	\$256	\$248
	MEDIAN SOLD PRICE/SqFt	\$318	\$281	\$272	\$257	\$252	\$246
DAYS ON MARKET	AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	39	56	52	40	52	50
	MEDIAN DAYS ON MARKET	5	27	17	18	11	27
SOLD PRICE/ORIGINAL LIST PRICE		99.4%	96.4%	96.5%	94.9%	98.0%	96.3%

HIGHLIGHTS

- **YEAR-TO-DATE SALES** Volume is down 22% from the same period in 2019.
- **TOTAL SALES** in March 2020 are down 11% from March 2019.
- **AVERAGE SALES** Price YTD in 2020 is up 14.5% during the same period in 2019.
- **AVERAGE SOLD** Price/Sqft is up 13% from the same period in 2019.
- **MEDIAN SOLD** Price/Sqft is up 13% from May 2019.

LET'S TALK
I'M HERE TO SUPPORT YOU!



NOW is a great time to start the conversation. If you would like additional information about the current market or have questions about selling your home, I'd love to help. Please let me know how I can be of service to you.

I am scheduling calls and virtual meetings upon request.

The 2020 real estate market started with a very active January and February. Although we continue to see activity, showing demand has slowed down due to the COVID-19 concerns. We attribute much of the continued activity to low interest rates and low inventory. Currently, active listings are down 33% from last year, which means serious buyers have significantly less homes available to purchase.

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"Gourmand's Corner" (Continued from Page 6)

- 2222/Balcones: Che-Zee, Zuzu, McDonald's
- SpiceWood/Mesa: Dominoes, Wally's, Torchy's, Troy ATX, Taco Shack
- Anderson Lane: Cabo Bob's, Cover-3, Chipotle, Jersey Mikes, HopDoddy, Whataburger
- Mopac: Chinatown, Austin Terrier, Austin's Pizza
- 360/2222: County Line BBQ, 360 Pizza, Waterloo Icehouse

Sadly, at the time I am writing this, a few restaurants and coffee shops have opted to close, including Epoch, Starbucks, Siena, Be More Pacific, Jack Allen's, Westwood Gastro Pub, Galaxy Café, and El Dorado. Perhaps, by the time this article is read, some of them will be serving again. Some, however, have indicated that they may not reopen, depending on how long they have to remain closed. It's been tough on several of these places. I know that El Dorado, to help get through this time, has setup a GoFundMe page to help make ends meet and to support their employees.

By the way, a major shout-out is in order for HEB. HEB started preparing for the pandemic months prior and has stayed strong and steady through this all (with a few expected hiccups over toilet paper and other highly desirable commodities.) HEBs all over Texas have also started partnering with local restaurants to provide ready to-go meals as a service for their own customers and to help provide some revenue for the restaurants. Our HEB on Village Center is providing meals from local restaurant Fresa's at the time I'm writing this article. Check to see how things change; they plan to add more restaurants if the service is successful.

I'm hoping that in a few months we will be back to our usual way of life, and some of the modifications we've had to adjust to will revert to normal. It will be interesting to see if delivery and to-go options become more commonplace. No matter what, I hope each one of you gets out there to support our local business establishments.

Stay Safe!

History Interview: Dotson Smith – Carol Jones



In swimming competitions every second counts and legendary swimming coach Dotson Smith has made the most of every second of his life. Before retiring in 2011, he coached for over 60 years; he built and managed Swim-A-Day in Northwest Hills for over 20 years. Dotson, now 83 years old, told me that he never did grow up – he just kept

swimming. The pure joy of the sport, and of teaching kids, teens, and adults to love it too, has kept him young.

Even as a child, he knew that swimming and coaching were in his future. He was recruited from Tyler High School to join the University of Texas (UT) swim team in 1955. He remembers paying \$15 a month for room and board, and \$50 a year for tuition. After UT, Dotson coached the Austin Aquatic Club with future federal judge Sam Sparks, Wally Pryor (Cactus Pryor's younger brother), and close friend and future attorney Tommy Smith (no relation).

Dotson majored in economics, and he remembers having amazing professors. He studied under Walter Prescott Webb and Robert Montgomery. Sometimes on campus, he would see Webb walking around with Roy Bedicheck and J. Frank Dobie, the famous trio of friends who are immortalized in the Philosopher's Rock statue at Barton Springs Pool. Another memorable economics professor was Ruth Allen, who broke traditional gender barriers by teaching at UT in the 1920s-1950s when female professors were quite rare.

(Continued on Page 9)



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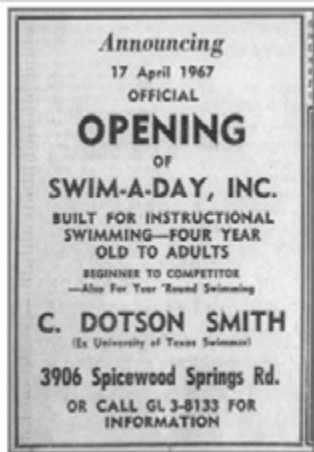
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While in college, he and his friends would take blankets out to Bull Creek and play bridge. He has fond memories of walking down from UT to eat at the original Matt's El Rancho on South First Street, before Matt's moved to South Lamar. For a kid from Tyler, Austin-style Tex-Mex food and praline candy for dessert was heaven.

He briefly tried graduate and law school, but Dotson soon decided that swimming was just a whole lot

more fun. Watching the pool at Northwest Park fill up with hundreds of kids in the summer gave him an idea.

In 1965, Dotson and his UT chum Tommy Smith scouted land to buy. They found 10 acres for \$12,000. The land was just off Spicewood Springs Road, up a dirt road, near present-day Terrina Street and Forest Mesa Drive. At the time, Northwest Hills was considered far out in the country. But, Dotson had a vision: he built and developed the Swim-A-Day pool and complex as a training facility for all ages.

The Austin American-Stateman proclaimed Swim-A-Day's grand opening on April 17, 1967. Swim-A-Day transformed the Northwest Hills community, as well as the swimming community in the rest of Austin. His "big bathtub," as he calls it, was the first year-round swimming pool in Austin besides the YMCA. Swim-A-Day was an open-air pool, but it had a roof to keep the hot sun from baking the swimmers, and siding that could be put up in the winter to keep them warm. He also installed solar panels to heat the pool.

At Swim-A-Day, Dotson influenced many Northwest Hills kids to love to swim. His students included a long list of future lawyers and doctors and UT professors, and even a future Police Chief, Brian Manley. Swimming did not discriminate. His pool was open to kids from all backgrounds and races. He also helped many kids with disabilities, such as blindness, cerebral palsy, and Down's Syndrome, learn how to be confident in the water. One of his students, Kathy Keys, won first-place ribbons in the Texas Special Olympics.

Dotson still lives in his Greystone Drive house that he bought in 1978 and walks the neighborhood every day with his beloved dog, Spencer. He participates in the Deep Eddy Mile competition every year, and he usually wins. He believes that swimming 1,000 yards a day is the perfect way to help prevent arthritis pain and improve his bridge game as well.

It was delightful to talk with Dotson Smith! If you have memories to share, contact nwacainfo@gmail.com.

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Business Spotlight: How Our Small Businesses are Coping

— Janice Green

Are the heartbeats of Northwest Austin's beloved small businesses still detectable? To find out, I contacted friends, made over the last 3-plus years while writing this column, and asked "how are you doing ... really?" Here are their answers – responses that demonstrate innovative thinking and their love for our 'hood.

Edis Chocolates edischocolates.com 512.795.9285

"Adapting to this was and is very challenging." Edis Rezende, our local chocolatier and baker, had to limit her menu, move tables/chairs outside, and offer delivery or curbside pick up. She is helping employees with basic necessities (mostly food items) because she wants to keep and reassure them that they are valued. She believes she would not have made it this far without their help, though now she is doing most of the baking herself.

Edis told a funny story about a customer who called in an order, but when Edis went out to the parking lot to deliver the order, she did not see her client's car. Her client called again, courteous and kind, but said she was parked outside. Still, Edis didn't see her. Edis' phone rang once again. Her customer was laughing and very apologetic. She had just realized she was parked somewhere else!

"I miss the kids' eyes sparkling over the treats and telling me their histories. I miss seeing my regular customers. I realized that the shop is my home, and I will do everything I can to keep it running and creating new treats."

Austin Terrier austinterrier.com 512.369.3751

Sanjay Rana had to scale back to a skeleton crew that works on take-out and UberEats delivery orders. "It has been difficult, but necessary, to furlough a large portion of our staff. The biggest change our clients will experience, in addition to not being able to dine in, is our reduced operating hours. We are gradually having to take less popular take-out items off the menu, to reduce waste due to spoilage. Our brunch program is suspended. But on the plus side, we are temporarily able to offer beer and wine to-go, if ordered with food."

Innovation is afoot. Austin Terrier has started offering all their burgers and pizzas as "Make-At-Home" kits. This makes it easy to whip up a fresh hot meal in the comfort of your home when you are ready to eat. It is also a great way to keep children engaged in the cooking process. Having a strong take-out program, beyond the pandemic, is a new priority for Austin Terrier.

"Many of our neighbors and long-time customers have stepped up and helped support us by sharing social media posts, purchasing gift cards, and providing generous tips for our staff. Our customers have been encouraging cheerleaders during these difficult times. We are eternally grateful for their support."

Studio Mantra mantraaustin.com 512.960.4660

Mantra's on-site location may be closed, but live online yoga

classes are now offered through streaming. "Our community is able to experience a little normalcy in their lives as they gather for these online classes at the same time each day, along with other students they've been practicing with for years!"

Unfortunately, their massage therapists are out of work for the time being, and the hardest part for them is not knowing when social distancing will be a thing of the past. Amy Hogan and Reena Kaven, owners, explained, "We've set up a "Tip your Therapist and Teacher" section on our website and many kind souls have donated. We've also hosted a live-stream dance party with a donation-based registration fee which all went straight to the therapists! Thanks to our loyal members and students we've been able still to pay our teachers to teach the streamed classes." Amy had me in stitches when describing the humorous new-tech learning curve for 20 not-so-tech-savvy yoga teachers.

For the future, Studio Mantra envisions a hybrid situation (regular studio classes and streaming classes) once the pandemic ebbs and passes. "We understand that some students and clients will still be a little apprehensive to gather in social settings. Plus, our streaming classes have been enjoyed by our students across the country who can practice with their favorite Mantra teachers. We are exploring the possibility of pre-recorded classes with our instructors that can be accessed on-demand through our website, and this will be an additional revenue source for our talented teachers. Once this whole thing is over, most people will be ready for a stress-reducing therapeutic massage."

"We have been BLOWN AWAY by the support we've received from our Northwest Austin community. We've had TONS of emails, phone calls and social media posts containing the kindest words and most hopeful wishes for Studio Mantra."

"We're all doing our best to figure out how to live in a virtual world and still experience joy! The goal for Mantra in all this is to be that source of joy for our community ... to continue to bring people to their mats, in an effort to maintain self-care and sanity during this uncomfortable time. All are welcome ... we are here for everyone."

Troy ATX Restaurant troyatx.com 512.897.2860

Our Turkish restaurant gem has always been a Davarci family operation. They have retained their employees even though their business is down about 75%. Troy is open at regular hours for deliveries and to-go orders. And for customers over age 60, they offer free delivery on orders over \$15 and within a two-mile radius of Troy.

"Right now we are focusing on how we can reach all our customer needs. Everybody should stay safe and consider other people's safety. We should stay strong and support each other. These pandemic days are temporary. Respect and love are forever."



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Crime and Covid-19

– Connie Lundgren

I hope everyone is staying safe and sane during this unusual time. Before discussing area crime, I want to give a shout out to all the parents at home with their children, organizing home school, doing extra cooking, and entertaining little and big ones. Extra creative effort is required to stave off boredom and remain somewhat productive while “sheltering in place.” Watching our own daughters, I have concluded it is a herculean effort, and my hat goes off to all of you. Families keep us strong! Hopefully, this time of fewer commitments will bring refreshing and new solutions for moving forward.

While I have not seen many reports of car burglaries and other crime on Next Door, I decided to check with Officer Grayson, our Austin Police Department (APD) District Representative, to see what effect Covid-19 has had on crime in our area. Officer Grayson said that reports of family disturbances and vandalism have increased, but burglary of cars and homes has decreased. This seems to be a national trend as well.

Grayson also reports that APD has not seen a large number of Covid-19 cases in the homeless population, but that resources and personnel are ready to treat and contain the virus if necessary. There have been no positive tests among Baker Sector patrol officers to date, but three officers are quarantined due to possible exposure. Officers are working one day in the office and three days at home; they are on standby to supplement patrol if needed. Sounds like everyone is working overtime!

I would like to caution our residents that once restrictions are lifted and we begin to transition back into our routines, remember to lock your doors when you leave home and lock your car in the evening. With loss of jobs and wages, there may be more vandals and thieves.

Wishing everyone a safe “shelter-in-place”, and please call it in if you see anything suspicious.

Understanding City Code: Austin Code Department

– Alan Carson

In 2009, the Austin Code Department was established by the City Council, with a Mission Statement “To build a safer and greater Austin together through code education, collaboration, and enforcement.” It maintains the balance between code compliance and code enforcement by identifying dangerous and substandard conditions and implementing programs to ensure a minimum standard is met. The department now has over 140 employees; one of its responsibilities that most of us are familiar with is responding to 311 calls.

The city is divided into four code compliance districts with neighborhood inspectors assigned to each district. Code Inspectors are quite knowledgeable. Their training includes 240 hours on the codes and ordinances, and they must complete 50 hours of additional training each year.

Resources available include having a code Inspector or speaker attend your neighborhood meeting or community event; a code inspector is generally present at NWACA Annual Meetings. A speaker can be requested using an online form at least one week prior to the event. Another resource is an online tool named Citizen Connect, which allows users to search for complaint cases by address, case number, or region filters. A user can also create alerts for a specific address or even a radius around an address. Instructions for the tool and access to it are at <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/citizen-connect>. You can also call (512) 974-CODE (2633) or 311 for the same information. Note that you can always call anonymously.

To find the website for the Code Department, search for Austin Code Department in your web browser.

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.

Wagon Ruts on Bull Creek – Richard Denney



If you are familiar with Bull Creek District Park, 6701 Lakewood Drive, you may have wondered about what appear

to be wagon ruts in the creek bed. There's a lot of discussion on the internet: are they really wagon ruts, or a natural feature? Or maybe they were created by some modern construction? If they are indeed wagon ruts, how old are they, who made them, and where were wagons headed that caused enough traffic to create such ruts?

Travis County Historical Commission has been working with Austin Parks and Recreation Department recently on Bull Creek history, and they may have solved the mystery once and for all. Clementine (Walden) Jackson was one of the last of the Walden family of early settlers to have lived along Bull Creek. In 1966 she wrote in her memoir, *The Walden Home in the Valley*, about a visit to the old wagon ruts (p.41):

"Today ... I went out to Bull Creek. I wanted to go down on what we always called the flat bottom where you can still see the deep wagon ruts cut into the solid rock bottom cut in there by the first Walden family, first by our Grandfather Hughill (sic) Walden with an ox wagon, then by his three sons: Junes, William, and my father, John Walden."

(Continued on Page 14)

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NWACA News

"Wagon Ruts on Bull Creek" (Continued from Page 13)

You may recall a newsletter issue in 2017 where I wrote about interpretive signage being installed in the parking lot off Winding Ridge Boulevard along Bull Creek. One of the interpretive signs is about the old mill built nearby ca. 1850s by Hughell Walden, Clementine's grandfather. Clementine says the ruts were first cut in the 1850s and 1860s by wagons going to and from the mill.

The mill was used for lumber, for shingles, and for grinding corn. The home of Edward Zimmerman built in 1861, now on the property of The Settlement Home for Children, is said to have been built with lumber from a mill on Bull Creek, quite possibly this one. Another historic home, Martin Wieland's "Fortress Home" (a blockhouse), in what was then Dessau, Texas, was built in the 1850s and is said to have used large cedar beams cut from trees on Bull Creek. Those beams, too, may well have been milled at Walden's mill.

We know the ruts Clementine wrote about are those in Bull Creek park by her reference to what she called the "Mabry dam" just upstream (p.42). The dam was created by Gen. W.H. Mabry (as in Camp Mabry) ca. 1892, the year he signed a lease agreement with John Walden's widow, Rachel, to lease her land to impound water from his dam. A new revelation: Gen. W.H. Mabry owned land and built a dam on Bull Creek!

Other families living in the valley of Bull Creek likely also helped in the creation of these ruts as they came and went from their homesteads. If you measure the ruts, they are a consistent width of about 4'8", a standard width often cited for wagons and railroad gauges. Other ruts appear up and down the rock bottoms of Bull Creek, but these in the park are among the most visible, comparable to the prominent ruts near the Chisholm Trail crossing of Brushy Creek in Round Rock.

Bull Creek continues to surprise us with its secrets.

For more information, including sources, visit TCHC's blog https://traviscountyhistorical.blogspot.com/2017/03/water-powered-mill-on-bull-creek_15.html

Richard Denney is now part of the Travis County Historical Commission. For more on this topic and other local history, visit <https://traviscountyhistorical.blogspot.com/>



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Growing a Gutter Garden?

— Joyce Statz



As we approach our usual hot summer, we all need to ensure that our homes are well-hardened against wildfire. Here are six simple things to do that reduce your wildfire risk.

Gutters – Check the gutters on your roof to see if you have a garden growing there! If no garden, is there debris of any sort? If so, have someone clean the gutters. Plants growing in the gutter indicate that debris gathers there, creating fuel for wildfire embers. A fire in the gutter can get to the wooden underpinning of your roof and into the house.

Mulch – Flammable mulch next to the house is extremely dangerous, especially if the house has combustible siding or other combustible wall elements. While embers may not ignite the mulch immediately, they will smolder and eventually carry fire into anything flammable nearby. Use nonflammable mulch (pea gravel, small rock, decomposed granite, etc.) in the first 18-24 inches next to the house.

Tree Limbs Near and Over the House – Ensure that tree limbs over the house are pruned six to ten feet away from the roof to prevent branches from lifting the shingles during a windstorm or during the wind generated by a wildfire.

Shrubs and Trees in the Yard – Keep shrubs and trees trimmed of dead and dying branches to minimize fuel for a wildfire. Be sure that trees and all other vegetation are watered and healthy, so they are less likely to burn. Limb up trees to at least six feet from the ground and keep vegetation under the trees at a low height. To prevent a ground fire from getting into the trees, eliminate vegetation that forms a ladder for fire to climb into the trees. As you landscape, consider that when a plant is on fire, its flame may be three times the height of the plant. Eliminate any vines that grow into your trees.

Leaves and Other Debris – Look for areas where leaves and other combustible debris gathers and remove that debris regularly. Some common places to look include around the front door, on the deck, under the deck, under stairways, behind air conditioning units, in flower beds and flowerpots. These areas are where embers are also likely to be blown during a wildfire; remove anything that could act as kindling.

Vent Screening – One of the most vulnerable parts of a house is a vent that brings air into the attic, since embers that enter there may not be noticed during a wildfire. Only hours later, the house may be in flames because those embers landed on something flammable. Check your gable vents and any roof vents to be sure they are screened with 1/8 inch metal

mesh (or finer). Metal window screening serves the purpose perfectly. Many homes have ¼ inch mesh, which is fine to keep out small animals, but the tiny embers from our juniper fires go through that easily.



Rewild Northwest Austin

– Maura Powers

Smithsonian magazine recently published an article about the rewilding of America by transforming neighborhood yards.¹ Many neighborhoods in the NWACA area were built and landscaped before the importance of native plant species to native pollinators was well understood. Now we know that they co-evolved to sustain each other. Other plants, while beautiful to us, provide nothing in support of our native ecology.

Many neighbors have begun planting natives in their yard. The results serve as proof that native plants are as attractive as non-natives, with the added benefit that they are sustaining our native birds, butterflies, and other beneficial insects.

The *Smithsonian* article recommended these steps to “rewild” our nation:

1. **Shrink your lawn by half.** Replace grass with native plants. This results in reduced water, pesticide, and fertilizer use.
2. **Remove invasive plants.** Exotics sustain less animal diversity. Worse, some exotics crowd out indigenous flora.
3. **Create no-mow zones.** Native caterpillars drop from a tree’s canopy to the ground to complete their life cycle. Put mulch or a native ground cover such as Virginia creeper (not English Ivy) around the base of the tree to accommodate the caterpillars.
4. **Equip outdoor lights with motion sensors.** White lights blazing all night disturb animal behavior. LED devices use less energy, and yellow light attracts fewer flying insects.
5. **Plant keystone species.** Some native plants contribute more than others. Native oak, cherry, and cedar elm are several of the best tree choices. For more information consult the City of Austin’s Landscape Plants guide. <http://austintexas.gov/departments/grow-green/plant-guide>
6. **Welcome pollinators.** See the plant guide’s suggestions to help beleaguered native bees, such as rosemary, sunflowers, and sages.
7. **Fight mosquitoes with bacteria.** Inexpensive packets containing *Bacillus thuringiensis* can be placed in wet sites where mosquitoes hatch. Unlike pesticide sprays, the bacteria inhibit the mosquitoes, but not other insects.
8. **Avoid harsh chemicals.** Dig up or torch weeds on hardscaping, or douse them with vinegar. Discourage crabgrass by mowing lawn 3 inches high.

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<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/meet-ecologist-who-wants-unleash-wild-backyard-180974372/>

Smithsonian magazine, April 2020, p. 80, “Wild Man,” by Jerry Adler.

Flush Only Toilet Paper, Please!

– PSA from Austin Water

Did you know rags, debris, and wipes are the biggest causes of sewer overflows and backups?

Toilets are meant for only one activity, and you know what we are talking about! Flushing anything other than human waste and traditional toilet paper can result in sewage back-ups, expensive damage to your home plumbing system, and problems in the sewer and water treatment system

Toilet paper is the only paper product engineered to be compatible with the sanitary sewer system. It is the only item that breaks down in water quickly, unlike other paper that doesn't break down.

Never Flush

- disposable wipes (even if marked “flushable”)
- feminine hygiene products
- paper towels
- dental floss
- face cleaning pads
- cotton balls or ear swabs
- condoms
- diapers
- cooking grease
- pills

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 March 15, 2020 and April 15, 2020.

Donations to the 4th of July Parade Fund help NWACA 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.

- Arthur Cook
- J. Edward Jones
- Dottie Riley
- (and apologies to anyone whose donation we might have missed!)

Crape Myrtle Bark Scale

– Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service



Crape myrtles are a popular landscape tree in parts of Texas, prized for their beauty. While this tree has been relatively maintenance free for years, that is no longer the case now that crape myrtle bark scale (CMBS) has been found in Texas.

Crape myrtle bark scales are small, wingless insects, pinkish in color and covered with a white, velvety covering. When you look at the bark of an infested tree, look for round to oval shaped white velvety insects. If you puncture one with a toothpick, it will exude a pink substance.

When inspecting crape myrtles for CMBS, look along trunks, limbs, as well as smaller twigs and branches found towards the top of the tree. You'll want to look for scale insects and sooty mold. Sooty mold is a black colored fungus that grows on honeydew; honeydew is an excretion from scale insects (and other small, soft-bodied insects such as aphids and mealybugs).

Heavily infested crape myrtles have CMBS that produce copious amounts of honeydew on the tree and surrounding area which leads to growth of sooty mold, turning landscape plants

black. Infested crape myrtles produce fewer and smaller blooms which may be difficult to tell unless you have an uninfested tree to compare.

Only male crape myrtle bark scales fly. Others are dispersed by wind, birds, other insects, or landscape maintenance equipment to nearby areas. Long-distance transport occurs via infested material. Once CMBS are in an area, they can move onto to nearby trees.

Control options are varied for CMBS. There are lady bugs that eat CMBS, but this may take time for control as the ladybug population is tied to the population of insects they feed upon. Ensure that if you buy and plant crape myrtles, that you inspect them and not plant any infested trees, or you select a different species of tree or shrub for the landscape.

Pesticide treatment for crape myrtle bark scale can be done with either a contact spray or a systemic. Studies from TAMU discovered that contact sprays should be used when pest numbers are peaking (crawler/ nymph numbers peak mid-April through May), and two treatments should be done with the second treatment taking place 2 weeks after the initial treatment. Insecticides with bifenthrin as the active ingredient tend to work best.

Systemic treatments should be applied earlier, when the leaves are budding out. Systemics such as imidacloprid and dinotefuran are best used as a soil treatment in March so that they are taken up by the tree and in place for the crawler population in April-May. These products should be used when trees are NOT in bloom to protect pollinators.

For a video on how to treat crape myrtles for CMBS, you should go to this link:

<https://citybugs.tamu.edu/2018/08/28/how-to-treat-your-crapemyrtle-for-bark-scale/>

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

This work is supported by Crops Protection and Pest Management Competitive Grants Program [grant no. 2017-70006-27188 /project accession no. 1013905] from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

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Pollinators

– Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension



stingless, so people should not be afraid of them.



stages. Host plants are needed for egg laying and caterpillar feeding; nectar plants are needed for adult feeding; and overwintering sites are needed for various stages.



apples and peppers).

Ideas to help conserve pollinators:

- Plant native plants that provide nectar blooms spring, summer, and fall
 - Provide a variety of colors
 - Provide a variety of flower/ bloom shapes
 - Provide multiple levels of plants (groundcover, shrubs, trees, etc.)
 - Plant in clumps of the same plant to make it easier for pollinators to find them
- Reduce turf and replace with flowering plants
- Plant native bunch grasses to provide food and shelter for insects
- Allow fallen leaves to remain on property to provide shelter
- Create areas of bare soil for ground nesting bees (choose sunny areas that will provide dry soil)
 - Use integrated pest management to reduce pesticide use
 - Provide water in a SAFE manner for insects; use shallow dishes with rocks, stones, sand, or some substrate to allow insects to drink without drowning

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

Indianmeal Moths

– Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service



Probably the most encountered pantry pest by homeowners is the Indianmeal moth. These moths can be found in pet food, birdseed, cereals, dried fruit, nuts, powdered milk, candy, and more. Food can become infested while in fields, warehouses, or stores and then brought into the home with infested products.

Indianmeal moth adults are small with grayish wings tipped in copper. Larvae are creamy-yellow to yellowish-green to pinkish in color with a dark brown head. Larvae tend to feed on the top of infested items and may produce silk that binds the food together. When larvae are preparing to pupate, they leave the item where they were feeding and crawl to corners or edges of walls, shelves, containers, or other items to spin a silken cocoon.

To eliminate a pantry pest problem, the first step is to locate and remove all infested items. Begin with oldest food items, usually in the back of the pantry, and inspect everything, including unopened food items since these may also be a source. When you find an infested item, do not stop your inspection, multiple items can be infested. Not all pantry pest infestations come from the pantry. Check rooms for items such as dried decorative peppers, dried flowers, potpourri, natural supplements, make-up, or rice heating packs.

Infested items can be thrown away or treated with heat or cold. If you don't want to throw away food, either place infested food in a zip-top plastic bag and place it in the freezer for about 5-7 days or spread infested food in a thin layer on a baking sheet and bake at 250 degrees for 4-6 hours to kill any insects. Once all insects are dead, you can sift the food or pick out the insects. Another option would be to leave the insects in the food and get a little more protein with your meal!

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

PSA: Coyotes in the Spring

– Austin Animal Center



Austin Animal Center's Wildlife Officer, Sarah Whitson, answers some important coyote questions: <https://www.facebook.com/atx311/videos/545485232841312/>

The City of Austin has a lot of green-space and dense habitat that support coyotes and other native wildlife. During this time of the year, coyotes may be more active as coyotes search for mates and prepare for denning season. Denning season generally lasts from April-November, where residents may experience a flushing behavior if they walk their dog near a den. Coyotes are typically most active at dawn and dusk, though they may be seen hunting or traveling during daytime hours. We want to share space with coyotes, but NOT time.

The City of Austin has a coyote management policy that uses science and research to manage coyote-human interactions. Hazing is the most effective management tool that encourages coyotes to avoid contact with people and pets. You can haze coyotes by shouting, waving arms, stomping feet, clapping hands, and throwing non-edible objects, such as rocks or tennis balls in their direction. It reinforces coyotes' natural wariness without harming them. The more the community efficiently hazes coyotes, the more coyotes will associate people with a negative consequence and stay away. Help keep your community safe by following these steps:

- Always keep pets on a leash and bring them indoors at night. Monitor small pets while outside and keep them close.
- Haze coyotes seen during the day by shouting, clapping, stomping, waving your arms or throwing rocks.
- Limit attractants around your home such as pet food, outdoor pets or items that would invite rodents and wildlife. Please do not feed deer or other wildlife.

Report sightings, encounters, incidents and/or concerning behavior to 311. The City of Austin does not remove or relocate native wildlife. Wildlife Officer, Sarah Whitson monitors coyote activity and can help mitigate issues and provide information about living with wild neighbors. Visit our website to learn more <https://austintexas.gov/department/coyotes-central-texas> for con

Help Keep Our Wildlife Wild!

NWACA advises residents to NOT feed wildlife. Many well-intentioned individuals do so out of concern for the wildlife they are feeding. However, intentional and unintentional feeding of wildlife attracts predators to the wildlife being fed. Additionally, an association with humans and food contributes directly to habituated behaviors of animals like coyotes and feral hogs, which then become aggressive in pursuit of a food or prey attractant. Please eliminate food attractants from your yards for the safe enjoyment of our streets, parks and playgrounds for neighbors and pets.



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