



nwacaNEWS

NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

JUNE 2020

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 6

From The Board

Word for the Summer-CHANGE!

Our world continues to see many changes, some we have learned to relish, others, not so much.

It has been wonderful to see so many neighbors outside, meeting one another from afar. It has been wonderful to see how neighbors have come together to provide food and other essentials to those in need. It has been wonderful to see how resourceful we have all become (home haircuts?) and how neighborhood businesses have reinvented themselves to help our community. Priorities have been reevaluated and generosity flourishes.

As we move forward, the NWACA board continues to work hard on your behalf, albeit virtually, for the most part. NWACA Board election results are in. Please welcome new members: Carol Dochen, Jessica Halich, Ben Luckens, Joyce Statz, and Anita Tulsiani; and please extend heartfelt thanks to returning Board members: Joanie Arrott, Ruven Brooks, Julie DePalma, Vicki DeWeese, Charlie Galvin, Richard Grayum, Bridget Keating, Connie Lundgren, Robert Nash, Robyn Nunis, Louri O' Leary, Mike Polston, Julie Rawlings, Chris Roddy, Teri Schock, Julie Waidelich, Chris "Kaz" Wojtewitz, and Monique Wright. In June, we will elect new officers for 2020-2022 and the new board will begin their term in August.

NWACA is pleased to fund a special project grant for \$10,000 toward Murchison campus and community garden improvements. Lauren Ward and Emma Garrett applied for the grant, which will provide funding for benches and tables around the campus, a new mural in the large gymnasium, and updates and additions to the garden area. Please see the article inside for drawings of the proposed project and information about how you can participate. We hope to have the opportunity to provide another NWACA special projects grant in October.

Thank you to our household members and business members whose contributions help us educate, advocate, support neighborhood projects, and host great events! Please see the page inside honoring our fabulous business members!

NWACA tries hard to keep our community up to date on

(Continued on Page 4)

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

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| • Connie Lundgren | • Monique Wright |

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

The NWACA Board meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, except December. Please visit our calendar at www.nwaca.org to see the specific time and location. If you wish to speak at a Board meeting, please send email a week before the meeting, so that we can 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 May 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 occur in a virtual fashion; others may be postponed or canceled.

June 7, 2:00 p.m.

Parks Committee
Virtual

June 9, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

NWACA Board Meeting
Virtual

June 20, 9 a.m. to noon

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

June 23, 5 p.m.

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees Joint Meeting
Virtual

Date TBD

Electronics and Styrofoam Recycling; also accepting used toothpaste tubes and toothbrushes
St. Matthew's Mesa Parking Lot

July 4

4th of July Holiday

July 5, 2 PM

Parks Committee
Biderman's

July 18, 9AM – noon

Monthly park beautification in the park and on trails. Sign up at:
<https://austinparks.givepulse.com/recurring/804435?>
Bull Creek District Park

July 19, 2 PM

Tree, Environment, and Wildlife Committee
Epoch Coffee

July 28, 5 PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees Joint Meeting
Temple Beth Shalom, 7300 Hart Lane, r.201

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(Continued from Cover Page)

neighborhood, school, and business activities. NWACA members can subscribe to our weekly email service, NWACA Notes, or join our Facebook page to read about current events in our neighborhood. To join NWACA, please go to www.nwaca.org. If you have information to share, please send it to nwacainfo@gmail.com.

A reminder - Summer is high wildfire season. While you're spending more time at home working on projects, now would be a great time to schedule a Firewise evaluation, so that you can learn how to harden your home and landscaping against fire. No one will enter your home, and you can interact with the evaluator from a safe distance. All educational materials and recommendations will be sanitized before giving them to you. Go to www.nwaca.org to sign up.

Now, more than ever, we are reminded of how fortunate we are to live in this special place and we look forward to continuing to build upon our wonderful community spirit. Please look out for your neighbors and try to help neighborhood businesses. Keep an eye out for Constable Sam. Together, we will maintain a strong, safe neighborhood! As always, we are a click away at: www.nwaca.org and nwacainfo@gmail.com.

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.

What's New with Austin Independent School District (AISD)?

— Teri Schock

Ask any parent you know who has an elementary, middle, or high school student how the district's virtual learning is going, and you will probably get the same answer: "It's tough."

With the COVID-19 virus still a huge concern, Austin ISD will continue its virtual education platform through the end of the school year and into the summer. As of the beginning of May, the district has been able to reach about 96% of students through its virtual learning program. It is anticipated that current 8th grade students who did not score at "approaches grade level or above" on the MOY (Middle of the Year exam) in English Language Arts and math will have the opportunity for virtual learning summer school beginning in June. It is possible science and social studies will be added to the curriculum. Summer virtual learning for 6th and 7th graders is a maybe, and all classes are still in the planning phases.

AISD has instituted a hiring freeze to be able to cut spending and be able to continue to pay the teachers currently employed. In addition, the district is seeking a superintendent to replace outgoing Dr. Paul Cruz.

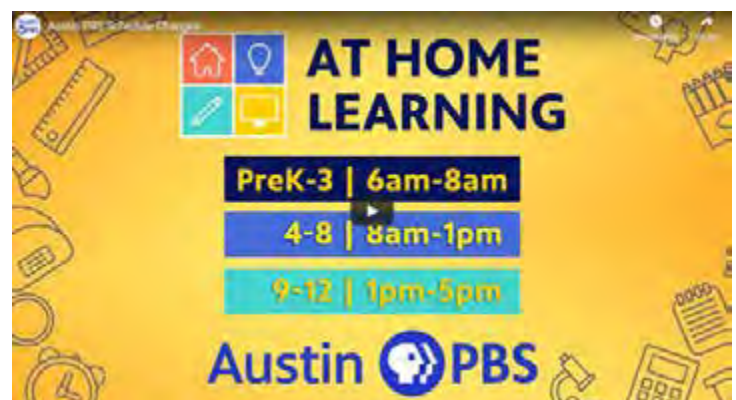
Middle and high schools will continue requiring physicals for all incoming 7th-12th graders who are trying out for an athletic sport. AISD is reviewing protocols on how physicals will be handled; that information should be available to all parents the first week of June or shortly thereafter. Fall athletic sports try-outs are currently scheduled for the first week of school.

At this time, it is uncertain how the fall school semester will be handled, but these are the most likely options:

- School as usual.
- Distance learning continues.
- Blended learning at school and at home.

Although the campus will remain closed to students and teachers this summer, school fields and courts are open to the public.

Many high school seniors have been disappointed to learn they will not be able to celebrate their graduations in the typical manner; however, planning is underway for a virtual graduation in June and an in-person graduation in August.





IDEE KWAK'S

Writers CORNER

GAIL SNEDEN

Gail Sneden paints. Her art hangs in collections in Austin as well as Richmond, VA, Boston, MA, Florida, Wyoming, Oklahoma, Italy, and the Middle East. From being sequestered into a special studio in Turkey to sharing studio space near the HEB on Burnet Road; from visiting art museums in Florence, Rome, Venice, Paris, Elba, and Padua and staying in Australia, New Zealand and Turkey, to painting in her Northwest Hills neighborhood home; Gail looks for “what else I can do and what else I can try.”

At age 5, she began drawing with her father who studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and by the 1960's, she was taking private lessons from George Chavatel, an early proponent of acrylic painting. Later at UT Austin she took art history and studio classes, followed by ongoing studies

with talented Austin painters Gustav Likan, Noel Robbins, Elizabeth Locke, Phillip Wade, and Sydney Yeager.

Her undergraduate and graduate degrees however are in science.

While her lifelong avocation for art was ongoing, Gail taught science in high school, then worked in public health research, first with the American Heart Association, then with UT. Mother of four children now grown, the last ten years have allowed her much more uninterrupted time to paint than had many of the previous years.

Usually working with acrylic or oil on canvas, her earlier pieces were in earthy tones, recent ones in lighter, brighter colors. Evolved over time, Gail's process starts with small sketches that grow into figurative or abstract works varying in size from 12x12 to 48x60 inches. Rather than the subject calling her attention, the light, texture, and line attract her, some of her pieces inspired by architecture, others by the human form

About her art, Gail says, “It captures a special time or place in my life. And it reminds me how I want to live and where I want to travel. Painting represents the good things in life. [It] just makes me happy!”

Now, when happiness and stability are so shadowed by fear, we turn to poetry, to online museum tours, to virtual dance and theater performances, and to music of every kind. And one of Gail's quotes seems most appropriate for what we are experiencing.

“Art can get you through times of little money better than money can get you through times of little or no art.”

A sampling of her lifework which includes figure studies, landscapes, peopscapes and more whimsical, “just for fun” pieces, can be seen on her website <http://gailsnedengallery.com/>



Brian Copland

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78731 Real Estate Update

In April 2020, 31 homes sold in 78731, the average sold price was \$992,000, and the median days on market was 5 days. Compared to this time last year, homes sold faster and for more.



Average
Home Prices
Increased
11%



Median
Days on
Market
5

I feel very lucky to be selling real estate in Austin because it's always in high demand. Reach out if you are interested in moving and want to talk about your options.



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\$1,650,000



4303 Tallowood Drive
5 BR / 3 BA

\$895,000

*MLS data from Austin Board of REALTORS® for 78731 homes sold in April 2019 and April 2020

Work with the #1 agent at the #1 brokerage in Austin, Texas ranked by Swanepeel.

History interview: Donna Burkett

- Carol Jones



Donna Burkett's mother, Jeanette Joseph Burkett, was a vivacious beauty who had smiles and jokes for everyone. Her business, Jeanette's Beauty Salon on Spicewood Springs Road, and her husband's bar next door, Jack's Lounge, were popular gathering spaces for the growing Northwest Hills neighborhood in the 1970s.

One of Jeanette's brothers, "Papa Joe" Joseph, owned the Triple J Tavern downtown, where Esther's Follies is now. Papa Joe was considered the unofficial mayor of East 6th Street and had lots of colorful characters in his bar over the years.

Jeanette's parents Salem and Fronia Joseph fled Lebanon in 1906 to come to America. They promptly launched their own business, peddling dry goods door to door downtown. Soon they opened a grocery store at 3rd Street and Congress. They lived at 405 E 8th Street between Trinity and Neches (now a parking lot). On the south side of the street, the land sloped down so sharply toward the river that the houses all had walkout basements. A video on YouTube titled *Fronia Making Bread under the house on 8th St* shows her rolling and tossing Lebanese mountain bread.

Fronia Joseph loved being in America so much that when she returned from visiting family in Lebanon, she came off the airplane, knelt down, and kissed the ground. She was a devout Catholic and a fervent United States patriot. In her living room there were two portraits: one of Jesus Christ, and the other of John F. Kennedy. When she wasn't cooking for her family she crocheted exquisite tablecloths and multi-colored yo-yo quilts, not letting any scrap of fabric go to waste.

Salem Joseph knew what it was like to go through hard times. During the 1930s Depression, he allowed people out of work to get food for their families from his grocery store without worrying about payment until later. Many years later, his daughter Jeanette was trying to sell some family-owned property in south Austin. The potential buyer hesitated, until he found out that Salem was her father. His own father had been one who benefited from Mr. Joseph's compassion, so he told Jeanette that he would buy her property as a way of paying him back.

Jeanette met her future husband Jack Burkett when he bought a grocery store from her sister, who told her, "Jeanette, I just sold my store to a good-looking son of a gun. You should come down here." Jeanette dressed up and went to the store every day for about a week, buying a bar of soap each time, making sure Jack noticed her. Jack said later that he thought she must have been the cleanest woman in Austin. In 1955, Jack and Jeanette bought about 12 acres in Northwest Hills near Forest Mesa and Spicewood Springs Road.

After working as a florist and a hairdresser, she opened her first Jeanette's Beauty Salon in the 1960s on Hancock Drive near Bull Creek Road, next to Acme Cleaners. In 1970, when Northwest Hills was just getting developed and Spicewood Spring Road was still a single country

lane, they decided to open a new salon there. Jack built a long one-story building near where Taco Shack and Bank OZK are located now. Jeanette's Beauty Salon was right next

to her husband's bar, Jack's Lounge. Jeanette joked that "We went into the beauty saloon business."

Jack's Lounge was a hot spot, frequented by newly arrived IBM workers. It was also, as a newspaper article gently phrased it, "a resting spot for men who made their living chopping and selling cedar." (For a fascinating look at the history of Northwest Hills area residents who chopped cedar, I recommend Ken Roberts' book *The Cedar Choppers: Life On The Edge Of Nothing*.)

At Jeanette's Beauty Salon, Jeanette was able to apply her creative talents to the shop's design. In the middle of the salon was a large round raised platform, covered in bright red carpet, with red upholstered hair dryer chairs perched on top. The platform was surrounded by a beautiful decorative white curved railing. The slogan for the salon was "The Beauty Shop that puts you on a pedestal. (We really do!)" Jeanette was loved by her customers for her sparkling personality and artistic flair.

Growing up in Northwest Hills, Donna can remember the smell of the fresh, clean country air as soon as they drove up to Spicewood Springs Rd from downtown. They were far enough away in the countryside that when her downtown cousin would ask her mom to let her go visit Donna, her mom would say, "Well you just pack your bag to spend the night, young lady, because I'm not going to drive all the way out there to the country tonight to pick you up!"

Donna remembers many fun dances and celebrations at the American Lebanese Association clubhouse on Toomey Street. There were events for every holiday: Christmas, New Year's, Easter, and Valentine's Day. The families are close-knit and proud of their Lebanese heritage and their work ethic. Thanks to Salem and Fronia's hard work, their descendants have made their mark on Austin and Northwest Hills today.

It was delightful talking with Donna Burkett! If you have memories to share, please contact us at nwacainfo@gmail.com.





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NORTHWEST HILLS AND WESTOVER HILLS MARKET REPORT UPDATE

SALES	This Month			Year-to-Date		
	April 2020	April 2019	Change	2020	2019	Change
Single Family Sales	24	24	0.0%	64	74	-13.5%
Condo/Townhome Sales	8	13	38.5%	44	62	-29.0%
Total Sales	32	37	-13.5%	108	136	-20.6%
Sales Volume	\$21,294,400.00	\$17,547,975.00	21.3%	\$71,912,114.00	\$73,712,559.00	-2.4%

AVERAGE	This Month			Year-to-Date		
	April 2020	April 2019	Change	2020	2019	Change
List Price	\$887,685	\$830,987	6.8%	\$942,144	\$865,275	8.9%
List Price/Sqft	\$323	\$302	6.9%	\$323	\$299	8.0%
Sold Price	\$887,267	\$751,166	17.8%	\$900,529	\$767,758	17.3%
Sold Price/Sqft	\$311	\$291	6.9%	\$323	\$292	10.6%
Sold Price/Original List Price	100.3%	98.8%	1.5%	100.0%	97.3%	2.8%
Days on Market	13	36	-63.9%	33	63	-47.6%

MEDIAN	This Month			Year-to-Date		
	April 2020	April 2019	Change	2020	2019	Change
List Price	\$785,000	\$699,900	12.2%	\$848,500	\$749,900	13.10%
List Price/Sqft	\$303	\$300	1.0%	\$308	\$284	8.4%
Sold Price	\$817,500	\$672,000	21.7%	\$840,900	\$696,250	20.8%
Sold Price/Sqft	\$312	\$290	7.6%	\$318	\$281	13.2%
Days on Market	5	5	0.0%	5	17	-70.6%

HIGHLIGHTS

- **YEAR-TO-DATE SALES** Volume is down 2.4% from the same period in 2019.
- **TOTAL SALES** in April 2020 are down 13.5% from April 2019.
- **AVERAGE SALES PRICE YTD** in 2020 is up 17.3% during the same period in 2019.
- **AVERAGE SOLD** Price/Sqft is up 6.9% from the same period in 2019.
- **MEDIAN SOLD** Price/Sqft is up 7.6% from April 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 activity slowed in March due to concerns with COVID-19, we have experienced an increase in activity as of early May 2020. As a result of limited inventory for our neighborhood, prices have continued to hold steady and increase and days on market have declined. As the government continues to lift restrictions, we expect housing activity to increase. Although interest rates continue to remain low, we have seen many lenders tighten their guidelines. We feel optimistic about the future of real estate in Austin based on the increased momentum we're experiencing at this time. Please call Julie today for a personal, no-obligation consultation 512.784.1990



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Murchison Middle School Common Space Improvements

- Lauren Ward

The Murchison Middle School campus serves 1400 students in 6th through 8th grade and is the largest middle school in the Austin Independent School District. Upon the completion of the Loewy family playground, our neighborhood has created a hub for social connections near the Murchison campus. The Murchison PTA, with the leadership of Emma Garrett, applied for a NWACA Special Project Fund grant to augment this hub further; the PTA was awarded \$10,000 grant by the NWACA Board in May 2020.

Our application proposed improvements to shared campus spaces, including additional picnic tables and benches, and a new large-scale mural in the Murchison gym. We will also update the Murchison garden and greenhouse. It is our hope that as construction on the Murchison campus is completed, we will continue to improve outdoor facilities used by the community – tennis courts, basketball courts, flowers and seating on the Murchison hill, and more.

NWACA has provided the initial seed money – as well as the first letter of endorsement – for the Murchison Community Garden. A separate committee, chaired by Lauren Ward, has been established to complete the transition of the school garden to a larger, shared community garden. We plan to enlarge the garden by over 50%.

There is limited availability of community garden space in northwest Austin. This garden will be a place where community members who do not have their own gardening space (those living in apartment buildings), or who have too much shade (like so many residents in the neighborhood) could grow nutritious produce. In addition, we hope that the garden will serve as a gathering place, facilitating positive social interactions.

Thank you, NWACA, for the generous contribution to all the projects at and around Murchison.

If you would like more information on the Murchison Community Garden, please contact Lauren Ward at lauren.ward02@gmail.com

Murchison Community Garden Scale Drawing



Free Estimates on New A/C Systems
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City of Austin Launches New Collection App

- Joanie Arrott

Is recycling pick-up this week? Does my trash pick-up day slide due to an upcoming holiday? If you ever ask these questions, the City of Austin's newly released Austin Recycles App is just what you need! It's the easiest and fastest way to get important alerts and reminders about your City of Austin trash, recycling, and compost services.

The app offers many features including:

- Accessing schedules for trash, recycling, and compost pickup by entering your home address
- Creating reminders for regular trash pick-up, recycling, compost, and other curbside collections
- Receiving alerts if there are delays or service interruptions
- Disposal guidelines for many items such as pizza boxes, broken glass, or dead animals; and whether or not items can be recycled or composted.



The app is available for both Apple and Android devices and can be accessed in your device's app store. With all the uncertainty around, this helpful tool will keep your household in the know on collection details.

Understanding City Code: Residential Trash Collection

- Alan Carson

"Residential Trash" is what goes into the City of Austin brown trash cart. The city's website concerning residential trash collection can be found at <https://austintexas.gov/trash>. This website provides information on cart sizes and obtaining additional carts; note that your monthly charge for trash is based on cart size, and information on pricing and size options is accessible here. It also includes a list of items that are prohibited in the cart as well as acceptable items.

The following items can be placed in the brown cart if properly bagged and sealed:

- Dusty materials such as cooled ashes, sawdust, vacuum cleaner dust
- Broken glass if wrapped in newspapers and labeled BROKEN GLASS
- Loose animal waste and cat litter
- Styrofoam packing peanuts
- Needles and syringes if placed in a hard plastic or metal container with a secured lid

The following items are prohibited in your brown cart:

- Rocks, dirt, concrete, gravel, and construction debris
- Hazardous waste, such as solvents, paints, batteries, automotive fluids, fluorescent bulbs, and pool chemicals
- Dead animals

If your pet dies, you may bury it in your yard or have it cremated. There are several pet crematories in Austin, and there are firms that remove dead animals. The city is responsible for removal of dead animals from their rights-of-way; you can request removal by calling 311. Travis County is responsible for pickup of dead livestock; the Texas Department of Transportation is responsible for removal of animals from county, state, and federal roads and highways. For more details see <http://www.austintexas.gov/departments/dead-animal-pickup>.

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.

Understanding City Code: Residential Recycling Collection

- Alan Carson

Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) provides curbside recycling collection services, using the blue City of Austin cart, for single-family and multifamily properties with four units or fewer. Multifamily units with five or more must use a private hauler.

The ARR website <https://www.austintexas.gov/departments/residential-services> provides information on collection schedules and guidelines, links to rates and fees, and ARR contact information. To check what you should or should not place in your carts, use the link "what do I do with...". Just enter the item you are concerned with and it will inform you as to the proper disposition of the item.

The ARR website includes a link to the Austin Reuse Directory, that identifies where various types of reusable items can be donated. A browser search for Austin Reuse Directory will also take you to the site, which is published by the Austin EcoNetwork.

The city recycles clothing, housewares, hazardous waste, and electronics – items that should not be placed in the blue cart – in southeast Austin. To access the website with details about what is accepted, search for Austin Recycle and Reuse Drop-Off Center. Not only can you dispose of hazardous waste (free for Austin and Travis County residents), but you can also go to the ReUse Store and get art supplies, re-blend paint, cleaning products, household chemicals, and automotive fluids, all at no cost. Free mulch is also available; just bring a pitchfork or shovel, gloves, and a container.

The Center is located at 2514 Business Center Drive, Austin 78744.

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.

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR MEMBERS
Your support is what keeps this community strong

Austin Members:

- Austin Emergency Center
- Austin Yard Cards
- Coach MO's Elite Fitness
- Capstar Lending Home Loans
- Cruise Planners
- Dochen Realtors
- Epoch Coffee
- Loewy Law Firm
- Nest Properties Austin
- NWA Kickball
- PostNet Far West
- Randalls
- School of Rock Austin, TX
- S & D Plumbing
- St. Matthew's Episcopal Day School
- OTR ELT
- Torchys
- TSO
- The Turquoise Table

Northwest Members:

- A+ Federal Credit Union
- ACF north west
- Armed and Dangerous Orthodontics
- A Jones For Organizing
- Box Brainers
- Austin Asset
- Austin Terrier
- College Nannies+Sitters+Tutors
- Crampt Storage On Demand
- Fancy Fluff
- Functional Fitness Training
- First Presbyterian Church - Austin
- Galaxy Cafe
- Journey Martial Arts
- Kasey Gilliam Bramlett Residential Real Estate
- The MedSpa at NW Hills Jennifer L. Walden, MD
- Orpheus Academy of Music
- Shotguns Ready
- Sir Speedy Far West
- SMSD School of Dance
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Sheltering in Place – This Time for Wildfire

- Joyce Statz

In the last few months, we had lots of practice sheltering in place for Coronavirus. To deal with this relatively long-term constraint, we developed new habits and identified the things we needed to stay healthy and to alleviate boredom. Now, let's think about another time we may need to shelter in place for a short, perhaps very tense time - the day that a wildfire threatens our neighborhood and we can't evacuate. How can we best prepare for sheltering in our home during a wildfire?

First and foremost, we need to harden the home so it can be a safe place to shelter. That means there is at least a 30-foot space around the house free of dead plant material, downed tree limbs, stacks of firewood, and any other combustible material. Regular landscape maintenance, cleaning roof gutters, and keeping the tree limbs at least 6 feet off the house's roof will improve the likelihood that the home survives embers from a wildfire, as well as a rare moving wall of fire. Screening all vents is also a necessity, to ensure that embers can't get into the attic; use at least 1/8th inch, but preferably, 1/16th inch metal window screen, to be able to keep out the fine cedar tree embers.

Secondly, there are things you need to do inside and outside the

house, to effectively wait out the fire and to deal with the aftermath. An Idaho Firewise web site provides excellent guidance at <http://idahofirewise.org/evacuation/if-you-get-trapped/>. Here are some of the highlights, slightly edited to match our local environment.

To survive, you must stay inside your home until the fire front passes. Although it will be very hot inside, it can be four or five times hotter outside.

- Close all windows and doors; place wet towels under door and window openings.
- Have your fire extinguishers out and ready to use.
- Fill sinks, tubs, and buckets with water for extinguishing any embers that enter the space as well as for drinking and flushing toilets.
- Plan for loss of power. Have flashlights and batteries ready.
- Disconnect electric garage door openers. Operate doors manually.
- Close metal window blinds. Remove flammable window treatments.
- Move furniture away from windows and sliding glass doors.
- Shut off attic fans, whole house fans, and interior fans to keep smoke and ash from being drawn into the structure.

(Continued on Page 12)

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"Firewise" (Continued from Page 11)



FIREWISE USA™ Residents reducing wildfire risks

- Bring pets inside and place them in carriers.
- Leave exterior and interior lights on to help firefighters find your house in dense smoke.
- Stay in the center of the structure, away from windows and glass doors.

Outside your home:

- Protect some hoses from flames and have them ready to use once the fire front has passed.
- Move all flammable materials at least 30-feet away from your shelter, including vehicles and recreational equipment, lawn furniture, and firewood.
- Plan for loss of power.
- Store water for putting out burning embers or small fires after the fire front has passed.
- Shut off natural gas and propane.
- Open gates in any wooden fence to prevent flames from spreading to your house.

To have this checklist readily available if you need it, clip it out or copy it and put it in an accessible location. Wildfire season in Texas is most of the year, especially when we are in a drought period.

Austin Fire Department on Fireworks

– Public Service Announcement

Each year in late June and early July, the Austin Fire Department reminds Austin citizens that fireworks are illegal within the Austin city limits. Statewide, there are hundreds of brush, grass, and structure fires started by fireworks annually, doing millions of dollars in damage and risking the lives of innocent bystanders. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), there are more fires on a typical Fourth of July than any other day of the year. Fireworks account for two out of five of those fires, more than any other cause. In addition, the risk of fireworks injury is highest for persons aged 15-24.

It is illegal to store, use, and handle fireworks within the City of Austin, and to use or sell fireworks within the City of Austin and within 5,000 feet outside the city limits. The Austin Police Department responds to fireworks complaint calls made to 311. Do not call 911 for fireworks complaints; call 311.

The U.S. Department of Transportation does not classify the following items listed as common fireworks, and their use is allowed within the City of Austin:

- (some) Wire Sparklers
- Smoke Bombs
- Glow Worms and Snakes
- Poppers, Trick Noisemakers, Snappers

(Continued on Page 14)

City of Austin Adopts New Oak Wilt Management Strategy

– April Rose, City of Austin, Urban Forest Health Coordinator

Austin's Urban Forest Health Program increases urban forest resilience through a community centered approach to tree health. One threat to tree health is oak wilt, an often-fatal fungal disease that infects oak species throughout Texas. The City of Austin's oak wilt program has adapted to leverage new opportunities including:

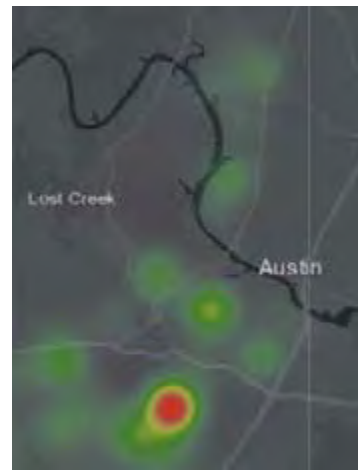
- *Growth in private sector capacity:* Certified Arborists and Registered Consulting Arborists have increased in number and expertise in response to the demand for diagnosis and management of tree diseases.

- *Public information and access:* Public information has become prolific and people are increasingly accustomed to accessing online content such as flood risk, wildfire potential, and crime statistics.

- *Neighborhood communication:* Neighborhoods are well connected through newsletters, email, and social media.

Leveraging these communication channels emphasizes the Urban Forest Health Program's underlying message that a community approach to forest health is the best way to manage oak wilt and increase neighborhood tree resilience. In Austin we have shifted the focus away from lot level to the neighborhood and community scale, leaving diagnosis and management to private sector arborists.

Where Does Oak Wilt Reside in Austin?



We are piloting a feedback tool that allows Certified Arborists to submit the location of oak wilt symptomatic trees and recommend public trees for preventive treatment. This data, coupled with City of Austin oak wilt observations contribute to an online, interactive map that increases public awareness about the potential for oak wilt throughout Austin, and increases the City's capacity to proactively

treat significant public trees. To interact with the oak wilt map visit: <http://www.austintexas.gov/page/oak-wilt-suppression>.

The Forest Health Program provides neighborhood presentations and community-wide messages that focus on oak wilt and other forest health topics including the importance of working with Certified Arborists. By exploring new technologies, increasing public-private partnerships, and offering diverse education to the public we are proactively managing the forest, not the trees.

For more information contact: April.Rose@austintexas.gov

To learn more about oak wilt visit: <https://texasoakwilt.org/>

To find an Oak Wilt Qualified Arborist visit: <https://texasoakwilt.org/vendors/>

Asian Giant Hornets

- Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

What headline can draw people away from thoughts of the current state of the world and Coronavirus? That would be MURDER HORNETS! I cannot think of a more sensationalized headline, so kudos to whomever came up with that attention grabber. This headline is popping up everywhere from social media outlets, television, newspapers, and others. Quite frankly, it makes me cringe each time I see it. Asian giant hornets (AGH) are *Vespa mandarinia* NOT "murder" hornets. If you want to use a common name instead of the scientific name, then call them by the correct common name of Asian giant hornet.

Asian giant hornets are large, around 2 inches in length, with an orangish head, brown antennae (the base of the antennae are yellow-orange), brown to black eyes, and ocelli (simple, dot-like eyes located between the compound eyes). Their thorax is dark brown with greyish wings and the abdomen has alternating bands of brownish-black and yellow-orange.

Asian giant hornets are capable of inflicting a painful sting. Please note that while the sting can lead to death in some cases, it is not what typically happens. People are also capable of receiving painful stings from insects already here in Texas such as honeybees, paper wasps, yellowjackets, or even fire ants and some people can die from being stung. Death by insect sting usually depends upon the number of stings and how the person's body chemistry reacts to venom injected by the insect. Asian giant hornets are capable of killing other insects, including honeybees and other pollinators, but they are not doing this to be vicious or killing for sport. The hornets use insects they kill as food for their larvae... just like other wasps that we have here in Texas.

We do not currently have Asian giant hornets in Texas. If you think you have these wasps, then please send samples or images to me for identification, as Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is identifying any items of concern for our clientele.

Some insects that may be confused with AGH to the untrained eye:

- Paper wasps are reddish brown in color & sometimes have yellow markings on their bodies and are ½-1 inches in length. Paper wasps make paper-like nests out of chewed wood fiber that have open cells and hang from a single stalk.

- Yellowjackets are yellow & black in color and are ½ in length. Bald-faced hornets are a type of yellowjacket. These wasps also make a paper-like nest, but it is enclosed with a single opening.

- Cicada killer wasps have a reddish head and thorax with an abdomen that alternates with yellow and black markings. These wasps reach 1 ½ inches in length. Cicada killers burrow into the ground, so you may see holes left behind from their digging.

FACTS about Asian giant hornets in North America:

- A colony was found late last year (September 2019) in Nanaimo, British Columbia on Vancouver Island. The colony was located and destroyed.

- A sighting and dead specimen was found in Washington state in December 2019 in Blaine, WA. This was the first reported sighting of the Asian giant hornet in the U.S.

- It is currently unknown how the hornets entered the U.S. and genetic testing leads to the conclusion that the hornets found in BC & WA are two separate introductions.

- Agencies are currently monitoring & trapping with lures to discover any queens or workers. They are talking about attaching radio tracking devices to captured wasps to track them back to their nest.

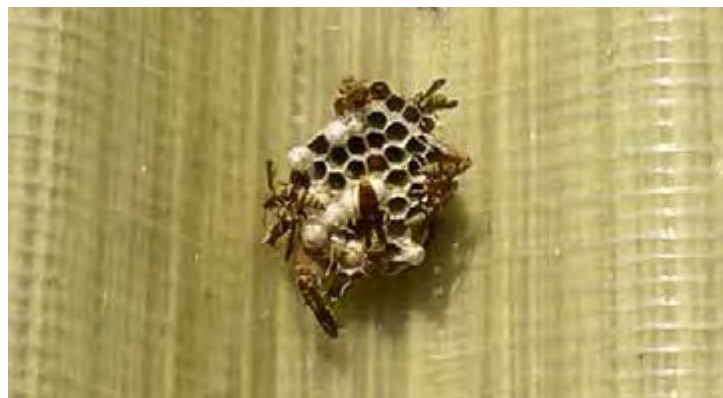
For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com



Asian Giant Hornet



Cicada killer wasp on redbud



Paper wasps on paper net

"Fireworks..." (Continued from Page 12)

However, sparklers can reach temperatures of 1,800 degrees and smoke bombs shoot a flame of 2 to 3 inches when ignited; even though these items are legal, they can still be very dangerous.

Be especially vigilant around dry grasses, brush, and the green spaces that surround our homes; with our intense spring rains and summer droughts, there is a lot of wildfire fuel throughout Austin, which can lead to tremendous destruction and threat to lives. Fireworks are not Firewise.

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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go to www.nwaca.org and pay online via credit card or PayPal

or send this form and payment to:

NWACA P.O. Box 26654, Austin, TX 78755

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Please check a committee on which you would like to participate:

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Members, please request to join our **Facebook Page** and sign up for **NWACA Notes**, our weekly email.



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Dawn,

May 5, 2020

We wanted to send you a quick letter thanking you for the wonderful service and difference you have made in our lives. Not only did you help us find our dream home in Northwest Hills, at an ideal price, but you were able to sell our previous home on Honeycomb Rock Circle quickly, for a record price, and during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

It was an easy decision when we decided to use you to sell our home in October 2019 and together we planned on selling in March 2020, to maximize the value in the spring market. What we couldn't anticipate was the Pandemic that put many buyers on the sidelines (preventing open houses, required people to stay home, restricted potential buyers from selling their house because they couldn't show it, and jumbo loan rates that jumped overnight).

You did a beautiful job of preparing us to move by providing everything from guidance and assistance on premarket inspections, repairs, staging, landscaping, and even choosing a mover. The process of moving after 24 years is hard and we appreciate how easy you made the process for us.

Before the Pandemic everyone thought we would sell our home quickly, but the day we brought it to market, everyone was afraid we wouldn't be able to sell for month. Your consistent professional marketing process performed miracles and we were under contract in 10 days and closed within a month.


Dawn, thank you so much for investing with us and bringing all your resources to make sure we had a successful sale, even in the hardest of times. The photos, brochures, websites, staging, and virtual tours were very impressive and worked wonders. As a real estate broker, I appreciate your professionalism, service and results, and recommend you to all my friends and family.

Thank you again, Gigi and David Armstrong



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