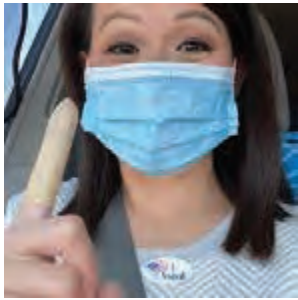




## TIME TO VOTE

### *Familiar yet different, election season is here*

Unless you've been locked in an isolation therapy tank for the last month, you've likely been inundated with political messages. While the national race dominates the headlines, and is undoubtedly important, there are many local political races and issues on the ballot that warrant our attention and participation.



*happy voter*

For many, this year's election season may seem both familiar and strangely different. The age-old conventions of candidate yard signs, TV ads, editorial endorsements, and direct mail are juxtaposed with concerns about voting safety during a pandemic – we wonder about: absentee voting by mail while listening to news stories of diminished postal capacity; social

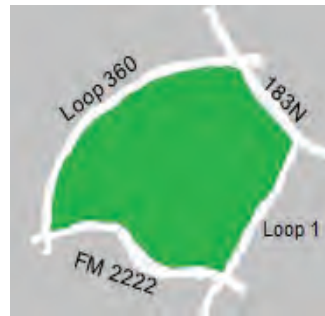
distancing in voting lines, wearing a mask, and using a little finger cover to cast a vote; and the push to recruit younger poll workers who may be at lower risk of acquiring Covid-19. Uncertain times for sure. You will be pleased to see that this NWACA newsletter contains highly detailed information by neighbor and contributor Sandy Dochen on the plethora of ways one can vote.

It may be cliché to say, but it seems so, so true. This election feels like one of the most consequential in a long time. Setting aside the race for the presidency, there are many things to think about. There is a crowded field for the District 10 City Council seat and numerous issues awaiting a new council, including police funding and community safety, growing homelessness, the still unresolved land development code, traffic congestion, affordability, and perhaps even finding creative ways to help our character-defining homegrown businesses limp through to the other side of the pandemic. And of course transportation is on the ballot in a big way. These are just a few of the issues we will be considering during early voting and/or on election day.

*Continued on Page 2*

## New to the Neighborhood?

### *Welcome to NWACA!*



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](http://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](http://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](http://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

## 2020-2022 NWACA Board of Directors

Joanie Arrott and Robert Nash, Co-Presidents

Julie Rawlings, President-Elect

Chris "Kaz" Wojtowicz, Vice President

Bridget Keating and Julie Waidelich, Co-Secretaries

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| o Julie DePalma   | o Louri O'Leary  |
| o Vicki DeWeese   | o Chris Roddy    |
| o Carol Dochen    | o Teri Schock    |
| o Charlie Galvin  | o Joyce Statz    |
| o Richard Grayum  | o Anita Tulsiani |
| o Jessica Halich  | o Monique Wright |
| o Ben Luckens     |                  |
| o Connie Lundgren |                  |

**Each of the Board members can be reached at:**  
**[info@nwaca.org](mailto:info@nwaca.org)**

The NWACA Board meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, except December. Please visit our calendar at [www.nwaca.org](http://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](mailto:advertising@peelinc.com). The advertising deadline is the 8th of the month prior to the issue.

## Continued from Cover

Overwhelming? We hope we can help make it less so. That's why NWACA is co-hosting, with adjacent neighborhoods, a virtual District 10 candidate forum on Sunday afternoon, October 4. We're also hosting a virtual Project Connect forum, presenting expert views in favor of and opposed to this major transportation proposal, on Monday evening, October 12. The Zoom account for these sessions will accommodate 300 simultaneous live participants, and we will also make both forums available for viewing any time after they are recorded. We'll aim to organize an additional forum addressing just neighborhood issues should the District 10 race result in a runoff. Go to [www.nwaca.org](http://www.nwaca.org) to get the Zoom link for these sessions, live or recorded.

Please read Sandy Dochen's article outlining just about everything you could want to know about voting. Learn all you can about the issues and make a plan -- and a backup plan -- to vote this year. Our community is counting on you.

Note that with Covid-19 conditions and other uncertainties, dates and details in our articles about current events should be verified.

As always, we welcome your feedback on how our all-volunteer neighborhood organization can better serve you. So, reach out to us with your ideas and suggestions at [info@nwaca.org](mailto:info@nwaca.org)



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- Occipital Neuralgia
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- Many Other Conditions

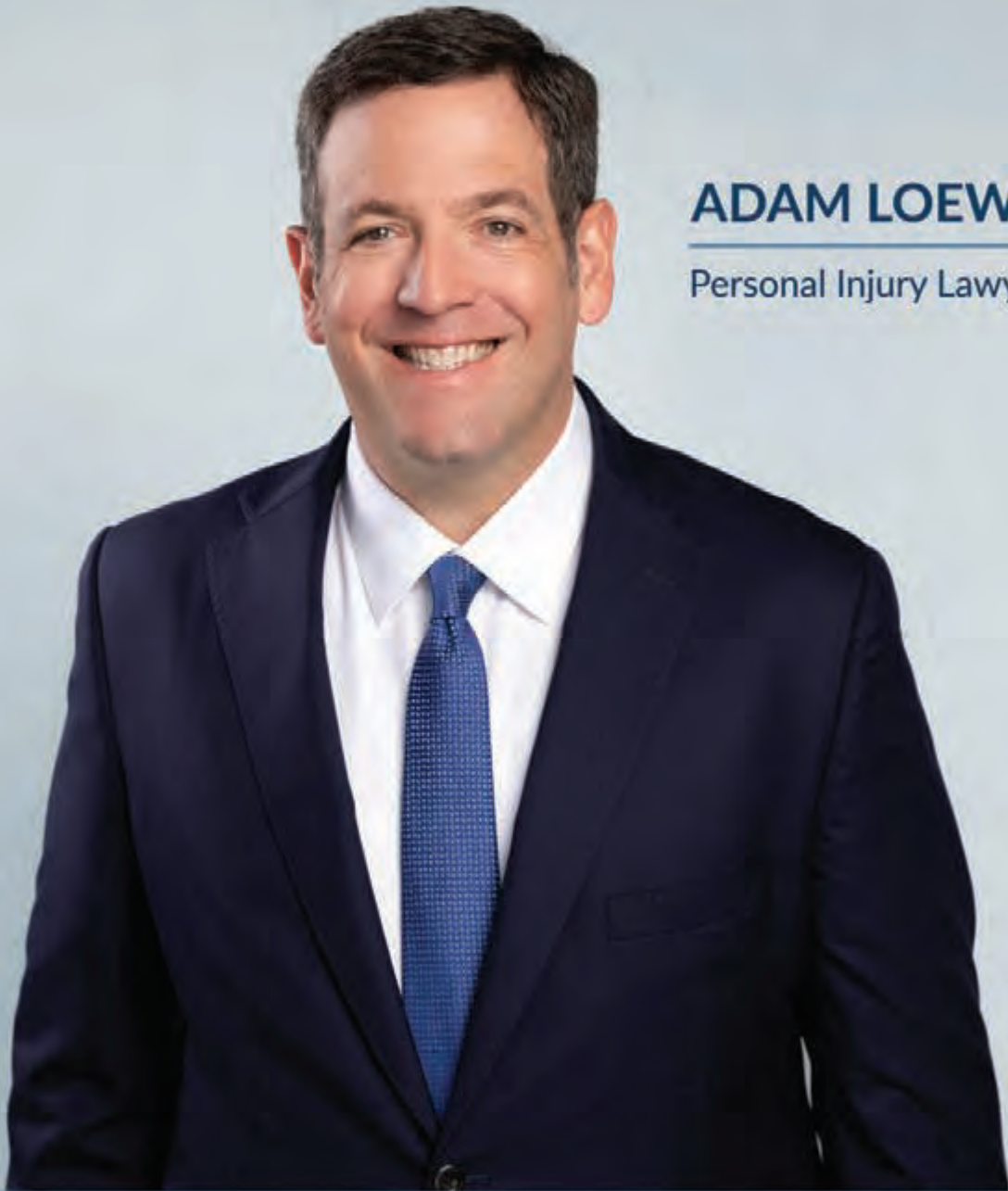




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## NWACA Events Calendar

These events are as planned on September 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.

### October 4, 2PM

Parks Committee  
Virtual

### October 4, afternoon (time TBD)

Information Forum with Candidates for District 10 City Council  
details and link to be provided at [www.nwaca.org](http://www.nwaca.org)  
Virtual

### October 12, evening (time TBD)

Information Forum on the Project Connection Bond  
details and link to be provided at [www.nwaca.org](http://www.nwaca.org)  
Virtual

### October 13, 6:30PM-8:30PM

NWACA Board Meeting  
Virtual

### October 17, 9AM-Noon

Monthly park beautification in the park and on trails; sign up at  
<https://austinparks.givepulse.com/recurring/804438?event=Bull+Creek+Park+Cleanup>  
Bull Creek District Park

### October 27, 5PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees Joint Meeting  
Virtual

### November 1, 2PM

Parks Committee  
Virtual

### November 10, 6:30PM

NWACA Board Meeting  
Virtual

### November 15, 2PM

Tree, Environment, and Wildlife Committee  
Virtual

### November 24, 2PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees Joint Meeting  
Virtual

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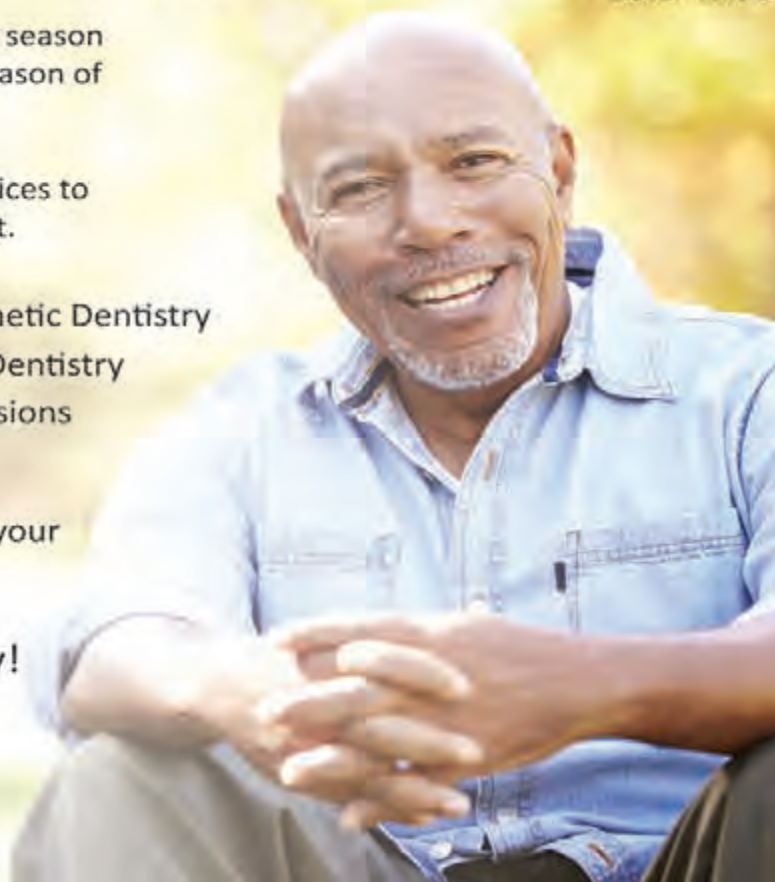
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*And all at once, summer collapsed into fall.*  
- Oscar Wilde



---

## Back to Virtual School - Teri Schock

Our neighborhood AISD schools started back on September 8th with students in a virtual classroom setting. Although it isn't perfect, so far, so good. Over the last few months students have been provided either Chromebooks or iPads; some choose to use their own personal equipment.

### Plan for September 8 – October 2

For the first four weeks of school, from September 8th through October 5th, learning will be fully remote. Surveys have been sent out to families regarding their options beginning October 5th.

Students start their day with a virtual advisory check-in which may last between 30 minutes to an hour. All students are required to be present in a Zoom call. During this call, students take instruction and are able to ask questions. There are 5-10 minutes of "break" between classes. See an example of a Murchison Middle Schooler's schedule in the graphic.

### Plan for October 5 – October 30

Families will choose on-campus learning or continued remote learning. For students who wish to return to the classroom, there is a phased return. Of course, this plan could change based on local health conditions.

### Organizations, Clubs and Athletics

Student organizations and clubs are meeting virtually or in small groups. Athletic training is continuing with Covid-19 precautions in place. Each campus will follow the most current protocols established by the UIL, TEA and AISD.

#### **AISD Safety Protocols for Athletic Activities**

- Staff and students must wear face coverings while inside locker rooms, meeting rooms, training rooms, and other areas where groups may congregate.
- Students are asked to bring a reusable water bottle to practice.
- Practice areas will be disinfected throughout and at the end of each day, and athletic areas will be frequently disinfected during the week.
- Athletics staff will monitor students before, during, and after practices/workouts to ensure effective use of school protocols.
- Students will provide their own water bottles, drinks, or prepackaged food and they will not be allowed to share these items.

#### **Visitors**

- Visitors will not be allowed to attend a practice unless an appointment is made with the coach in advance.
- Limited seating capacity will be implemented at athletic events, based on guidance from Austin Public Health regarding the number of spectators that will be allowed to attend both indoor and outdoor events.

#### *Rules for Athletics*

*Continued on Page 6*

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Continued from Page 5

Middle and high school campuses have been holding try-outs for various sports. Football and volleyball are back for the fall season, in addition to other sports, but some programs are allowing fewer students on the teams as a Covid-19 precaution. Another change due to the pandemic: indoor sports such as volleyball will be live-streamed instead of allowing parents and students to watch in the gym. (See guidance in the graphic.)

To find out more about how our local area schools are moving forward through the pandemic, consider following our schools on their Facebook pages at:

Facebook.com/AndersonHighSchool  
 Facebook.com/MurchisonMats  
 Facebook.com/HillElementary  
 Facebook.com/DossElementary  
 Facebook.com/HighlandParkElementary – Austin tx  
 Facebook.com/LamarMS  
 Facebook.com/McCallumH

## Setting Up A Workspace for Your Child – Sally Grayum

What is the best way to set up a workspace for a child at home? It depends on the child – their age and how they learn.

If they are auditory learners, headphones might help them focus when on Zoom calls or listening to lessons. Some students may prefer a quiet workspace, while other students need background noise. Consider using a white noise machine or playing soft background music for students who prefer a bit of sound.

For visual learners who are in 4th grade or under color-coded folders for each subject might be helpful. For those in 4th grade and above, an agenda might help them track assignments.

Children, adolescents, and even adults need an effective desk set to maintain a simple, functional, and peaceful space in which to focus. It is preferable to set up a workspace where it will be quiet, but also where there is natural light.

Continued on Page 8



### 2020-2021 Murchison Distance Learning Schedule

	Monday A Day	Tuesday B Day	Wednesday A Day	Thursday B Day	Friday C Day
8:25-8:55	Advisory (R)	Advisory (I)	Advisory (S)	Advisory (E)	Advisory (S)
8:55-9:00	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
9:00-10:00	1st Period	2nd Period	1st Period	2nd Period	Asynchronous Work - complete work in all classes (1-8); Office Hours: SS - LOTE
10:00-10:10	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
10:10-11:10	3rd Period	4th Period	3rd Period	4th Period	Asynchronous Work complete work in all classes (1-8); Office Hours: Math - PHE
11:10-12:10	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:10-1:10	Asynchronous Work	Asynchronous Work	Asynchronous Work	Asynchronous Work	Asynchronous Work - Students complete work in all classes (1-8)
1:10-2:10	5th Period	6th Period	5th Period	6th Period	Asynchronous Work - complete work in all classes (1-8); Office Hours: ELA - Design, Special Education
2:10-2:20	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
2:20-3:20	7th Period	8th Period	7th Period	8th Period	Asynchronous Work - complete work in all classes (1-8); Office Hours: Science - Arts
3:20-3:51	Asynchronous Work; Office hours	Asynchronous Work; Office hours	Asynchronous Instruction; Office hours	Asynchronous Work; Office hours	Asynchronous Work; Teacher Office hours

Murchison Schedule



# NORTHWEST HILLS AND WESTOVER HILLS MARKET REPORT UPDATE

These statistics are for single family homes compared to last year during the month of August.



Median Sales Price

**\$865,000**

**↑ 17%**  
FROM AUGUST 2019

Number of Sales

**23**

**↓ 26%**  
FROM AUGUST 2019

Median List Price/Sqft

**\$334**

**↑ 12%**  
FROM AUGUST 2019

5 Days Median on Market



**↓ 62%**  
FROM AUGUST 2019

Median Sold Price/Sqft

**\$324**

**↑ 12.5%**  
FROM AUGUST 2019

% of List Price Sold

**99.4%**

**↑ 1%**  
FROM AUGUST 2019

Total Sales Volume

**\$21,640,000**



**↓ 62%**  
FROM AUGUST 2019

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# NWACA News

*Continued from Page 6*

Exposure to natural sunlight wakes up our brain and helps us to mentally focus. Consider providing “fidget” items that students can use while engaged in online learning - small squishy balls, Play-Doh, or home-made ooblek may help students to pay attention during long Zoom sessions.

Here are some items you may consider, depending on your budget for organizing the workspace:

- A clear acrylic or plastic file storage container where the contents can be seen at a glance. Containers vary by size and can usually hold hanging files or regular file folders vertically. Wider containers can hold file folders in addition to 3 ring binder(s) and a legal pad for notes.

- A file folder or a 3-ring binder per student that includes passwords to online platforms, emails from school, app suggestions, teachers' Zoom office hours, agenda sheets, and/or college applications.

- Agenda Notebook or agenda weekly calendar (can be printed from the internet).

- Dry Erase board to post class times/schedule and to-do's, or to work out problems.

For further information, you may contact me at [sgrayum@OrganizeMeSally.com](mailto:sgrayum@OrganizeMeSally.com).



## Business Spotlight: Wunderkeks

-- Janice Green



The story of Wunderkeks begs to be told in snapshots.

Guatemala. Hans, a 4-year-old Guatemalan boy, develops a love for baking from his Austrian grandmother. Later as an adult, Hans piggybacks on his family's baking tradition at Christmas and takes a month vacation from his job to create a different cookie for each day of Advent. The resulting kudos from his 1,000-cookie give-away: “You should sell these!” Thus, the birth of Wunderkeks (tr. wonderful cakes) six years ago in Guatemala.

America. Enter Luis. First, a dazzling date; next, Hans' enthusiastic business partner; now, Hans' marriage partner. They immigrate to America in 2018 with the baking mission to continue “nurturing the inner child” with each divinely-inspired cookie. But where to settle – the East Coast? West Coast? Aha, Austin, Texas! Austin.

*Continued on Page 10*



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*Continued from Page 8*

Hit the ground running. Selling cookies at farmers markets, Fresh Plus, and Royal Blue Grocery. Baked 25,000 cookies in anticipation of SXSW. But SXSW is cancelled! Now what? Turned to social media, which leads to connections with influencers who help convert this potential disaster into a blessing and success.

Northwest Hills. Pivot to mail-order. Move into the former kitchen space of Kneaded Pleasures on Far West Boulevard, conveniently next-door to postal services.

Despite the challenge of the pandemic, they persevere and Wunderkeks now ships to all 50 states and worldwide. One thousand orders per day and counting.

You couldn't make up such a challenging, yet joyful, immigrant backstory-to-successful business venture like that which is Hans Schrei's and Luis Gramajo's. Their product has to be something special.

Hans is the prolific baker and perfectionist. Luis is the enthusiastic marketer leading the product branding. Max Pulisi, who is in charge of Wunderkeks' "Department of Dream Fulfillment," exudes contagious pride and enthusiasm for this company. Due to their talents and efforts, Wunderkeks specializes in The Best Chocolate Chip Cookie Ever, Life-Changing Snickerdoodles (obviously developed after they arrive in the US),

Grandma's Oatmeal Raisin Nut, Cranberry White Chocolate Chip Cookie, and The Everything Cookie. Don't forget the Fudgiest Brownie Ever.

Their secret? A finely honed crispy exterior combined with a gooey, chunky, chewy interior that runs circles around the world of cookie competition. Their online shop offers all kinds of cookie combos for any occasion, including care packages and bulk orders.

On Wunderkeks' agenda for the near future are DIY kits for the holidays and eventually some manner of storefront contact with our neighborhood where you can pick up orders or indulge on-site.

They are thrilled to have landed in our Hills and have graciously explained their presence to curious neighbors who stop by their site and ask what the heck is going on in one of our community's old gathering spots.

It is uplifting during these Covid times to know of a new and energetic venture taking root in our neighborhood, and one we can explore and do business with online now while we wait for the eventual lifting of the pandemic veil. Welcome, guys!

Info: Wunderkeks – [www.wunderkeks.com](http://www.wunderkeks.com), 3573 Far West Blvd, 512-521-4138; [info@wunderkeks.com](mailto:info@wunderkeks.com)

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IDEE KWAK'S

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CORNER

REGARD

Ruby-Emerald-Garnet-Amethyst-Ruby-Diamond, acrostically REGARD.

In the Victorian Era, a smitten suitor often gifted his chaperoned intended with a ring or pendant of these stones so, in coded message, she could keep his feelings close to her.

REGARD at 8127 Mesa Drive takes its name from this lovely tradition. Founded four years ago, the shop offers an array of jewelry from antique to new, including custom-designed.

This is art of a very different sort. The custom process starts with talking with one of the designers, either Daniel Allen or owner, Dan Schwieterman. Style and stones are discussed and then sketches are drawn for customer approval, with changes easily made. Once the design is finalized, a 3-D image is made, and then the piece is cast. Most projects take four to six weeks from start to finish.

While REGARD is considered Austin's finest place to have an entirely new piece of custom jewelry made, it's also a wonderful place to have old jewelry reworked. In fact, re-working accounts for 60% of their business.

You don't have to be in the market for an expensive piece to enjoy a visit to REGARD. Interesting masks are on sale and other items are available for as little as \$10.

There is also hanging art on display. Exhibits are organized by painters Martha Cole, Mozelle Marks, and Gail Sneden; much of the work on display their own. The shows are usually changed every six to eight weeks (though since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, only twice), and food and drinks are served at the openings. You can call the store or check the REGARD website for information about the next opening.

Dan Schwieterman was about eight years old when he started fiddling around with jewelry at his step-mother's store. Later at Ball State University he majored in Art with an emphasis on metalwork. He followed that with studies at San Francisco's Revere Academy where he became a Master Jeweler, hired immediately out of school by a jewelry store in Los Angeles.

It was in art school that Dan met his wife who switched majors to become a dental hygienist. Dan quips about them using some of the same tools, but hers being sterilized. In 2016 his wife's family ties brought the couple to Austin where they are now raising their four children.

Dan sources gems from all over the world. When he first thought about opening a store, one of his gem suppliers suggested Northwest Hills as a location. Ours is an area Dan loves, and his is an art form rarely seen. I'm excited to know it's done right here in our neighborhood.

For more information go to [regardjewelry.com](http://regardjewelry.com) or visit the store on Mesa Drive.

## History Interview: Evelyn Syrinek – Carol Jones



*Evelyn and Gene Syrinek*

Evelyn "Miss Evie" Syrinek recently celebrated her 87th birthday in the best way possible in the current coronavirus pandemic. Since we can't have the usual gatherings, her daughter, Debbie Clark, emailed neighbors from surrounding streets; after a delicious family dinner, Evelyn sat on her front porch on Edgefield Drive. Her neighbors drove by, honking, waving, and shouting happy birthday to her.

Evelyn and her late husband Eugene "Papa Gene" Syrinek moved to Austin in 1969, living on Edgefield Drive since 1994. Gene passed away in 2017; his family, community, neighbors, and church friends all remember him with great fondness.

Evelyn Beck and Eugene Syrinek were born and raised in Flatonia. Gene was several years older than Evelyn, so they started dating after she graduated from high school.

Evelyn's family had a dairy farm. She had a horse named Dolly and would sometimes ride her to fetch the cows. When it would snow, she would hitch Dolly up to a sled and ride around. The town did not have electricity until the late 1940s. She remembers how exciting it was, when she was a junior in high school, to have electric lights installed. It was amazing to flip a switch and suddenly have light. The family later got air-conditioning. Since their house was up on a breezy hill her father continued to keep the windows open to the southern breeze; that was what the family was accustomed to.

Flatonia was settled by Czech and German pioneers who spoke their native language for years. In the late 1800s to early 1900s, homeless children from large Eastern cities were sent by train to be adopted by farming families in the Midwest and Texas. Eugene's mother, Catherine, was one such child. She was sent on the "orphan train" from the New York Foundling Hospital to Flatonia.

*Continued on Page 11*



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*Continued from Page 10*

Her adoptive parents had been hoping for a baby. Instead, they found a 4-year-old girl with her name and age on a piece of paper pinned to her dress. Catherine spoke English, but not Czech. Her new parents spoke Czech, but not a word of English. They all did their very best to adjust. For years after Evelyn and Gene married in 1953, they traveled back to Flatonia every weekend to visit with their beloved parents. They also took Gene's mother to orphan train reunions over the years.

Gene served in the armed forces for two years, going overseas to Korea. After that, he continued his career with the telephone company. In his 38 years there, he served in 14 different positions, in various small towns around Texas. Among other things, he set up the telecommunications to the LBJ Ranch when Lyndon Johnson was President. For years, Gene and Evelyn longed to move to Austin. They finally did, in 1969.

Their first house in Austin was on Collinfield Drive, near Lanier High School. In those days, that area was way out in the country. Evelyn remembers that there was a dairy farm up the road from their house, and a pig farm just beyond that. Burnet Road, north of St. Louis Catholic Church, was mostly empty fields. You could buy fresh corn from a farmer up at the north end of Burnet Road.

The Syrineks were active in St. Louis Catholic Church, and they were devoted parents. Debbie remembers that her parents were always so supportive of everything that she and her brother did: coaching their sports teams, encouraging their music lessons, and attending all of their school events. Later, when Debbie started her music career, Evelyn and Gene traveled all over Texas to see their daughter perform in her band, Texas Fever. She has wonderful memories of seeing her parents dance.

Evelyn has fond memories of dancing with Gene to Debbie's band at the Silver Dollar on Burnet Road. She said the dance hall often had to turn people away when they reached full capacity. I remarked that it must be so fun to dance to your own daughter's performances. She said that yes, they were so proud of her. I asked Evelyn if she sang, too. "Oh no," she said. "You know what? I sing in church, and they all move out of my way!"

Gene Syrinek and Aubrey Howe were close friends for decades. (See the September 2020 issue for Aubrey's history). Aubrey helped take care of Gene in his later years, and he stays in touch with Evelyn.

Miss Evie loves living in Northwest Hills. It's quiet, and the neighbors are wonderful. We talked about the beautiful neighborhood trees, and how Gene did a lot to prevent oak wilt in the area. She pointed out that when you turn from Far West Boulevard onto Edgefield Drive, the mature trees meet overhead and form an archway, welcoming you home.

It was delightful to talk with Miss Evie! If you have memories to share, please contact [info@nwaca.org](mailto:info@nwaca.org).

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## Travis County's Other Pilot Knob – Richard Denney

"Pilot Knob" is a common name given to a peak, hill, or mountain used as a navigational landmark by early settlers. If European settlers used them for navigation you can bet the Native Americans did as well. Travis County's best-known Pilot Knob is no doubt the old volcano near McKinney Falls State Park. But there is another one in Travis County, about five miles north of our neighborhood, probably best-known today for the very large water tank that sits atop, Martin Hill Reservoir. Lit up at night it looks like a huge UFO landing! However, old maps show it as Pilot Knob. It was an important enough landmark that it was the only geographical peak called out on the map of "City of Austin and Vicinity" in 1839 with a road on the eastern edge of our neighborhood leading to it from Austin.

Near Pilot Knob is the Merrittown Cemetery, one of the few reminders of the community that grew up nearby. Merrittown was named for Texas Ranger Capt. Nelson Merrell, who settled there in 1837 and later operated a store and post office. From the City of Round Rock's FLICKR page:

*Captain Nelson Merrell (1810-1879) was a central figure in the settlement of Travis and Williamson Counties. He came to Texas a year after independence and served in a company of Rangers that helped capture the Flores- Córdova gang ... He began visiting Kenney Fort for hunting trips, and later purchased land from Kenney and built a hunting cabin on Chandler's Branch ... Although he controlled the fort, his home was on Walnut Creek near a stagecoach line, where he established a settlement still referred to as Merrelltown (near Wells Branch). While there he was also active in Austin, where he served as a Travis County commissioner, assisted the construction of Congress Avenue, and was director of the state lunatic asylum (sic)."*

"Flores- Córdova gang" is a reference to the Córdova Rebellion, a plot to rebel against the new Republic of Texas, discovered in 1838, rooted in unrest in Nacogdoches. One of the incidents in this was the "Flores Fight." Quoting the Handbook of Texas:

*"On May 18, 1839, a group of Texas Rangers defeated a party of Mexicans and Indians, including some Cherokees from [Chief] Bowl's village. On the body of Manuel Flores [killed in the fight], the group's leader, were found documents encouraging Indians to follow a campaign of harassment against Texans. Included were letters from Mexican officials addressed to Córdova and Bowl."*

Worth noting, this Manuel Flores is not the Manuel Flores, participant in the Texas Revolution and featured in the TV miniseries Texas Rising.

Following the "Flores Fight," west of today's Georgetown, it was atop Pilot Knob that Ranger forces rendezvoused on their way back to Austin. Pilot Know was a landmark on the road to Austin, as shown on the 1839 map of Austin and vicinity.

*Continued on Page 12*

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The Brushy Creek crossing of the Chisholm Trail in Round Rock, at the actual round rock, is just a few miles north of Pilot Knob. Driving south on I-35, the general route of the Chisholm Trail, Pilot Knob is visible for miles. Pilot Knob was surely a landmark for the cattle drives of the Chisholm Trail and its predecessors like the Shawnee Trail.

If you are out for a quick history day-trip, start at the Katherine Fleischer Park just off Merriltown Road and visit the Gault Homestead with its historic home and outbuildings, part of the community that was Merriltown. From there it's about a mile to the Merriltown Cemetery via Merriltown Road, where both Captain Nelson Merrell and John Gault are buried, and a great place to get a look at Travis County's other Pilot Knob.



*Map from 1896*



*Water Tower*

For more on the road and this topic in general visit <https://traviscountyhistorical.blogspot.com/2020/08/travis-countys-other-pilot-knob.html>

## Create Your Own Voting Plan – Sandy Dochen

This year's November 3rd general election will be here very soon; in actuality, your voting opportunity may have started already. Using the information below, you can create your own election voting plan.

October 5th was the last day to register to vote or to update your address. Assuming you're registered, what about early voting? Travis County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir reports that early voting with Covid-19 safety procedures worked well in the July primary run-off election, thanks to popsicle sticks used to tap on the voting machines and finger coverings to use the touch screens without any direct finger contact. The early voting period is from October 13th through October 30th. A complete list of 37 early voting locations throughout Travis County, can be found at the county clerk's web site: [https://countyclerk.traviscountytexas.gov/images/pdfs/polling\\_locations/11.03.20/early\\_voting\\_flyer.pdf](https://countyclerk.traviscountytexas.gov/images/pdfs/polling_locations/11.03.20/early_voting_flyer.pdf)

During early voting and on election day, you can monitor the lines at the polling places with this link: <https://countyclerk.traviscountytexas.gov/elections/wait-time-map.html>

Early voting locations will be open 7am to 7pm Monday through Saturday and 12-6pm on Sundays. The Ben Hur Shiner's Center on Rockwood Drive is considered a mega center and will remain open until 9pm on October 28th, 29th and 30th.

And, if you prefer voting by mail? Voters who requested a mail-in ballot previously should be receiving them any day now. If you are 65+, will be away from the county on election day, or have a disability that limits you from voting in person, you can still request a mail-in ballot, which must be returned by October 23rd. Request your ballot here: [https://countyclerk.traviscountytexas.gov/images/pre/pdf\\_tc\\_elections\\_ABBM\\_2018.pdf](https://countyclerk.traviscountytexas.gov/images/pre/pdf_tc_elections_ABBM_2018.pdf)

If you're concerned about the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) being overwhelmed by the volume of mail-in ballots, Dana DeBeauvoir has two good pieces of advice.

First, return your mail-in ballot ASAP. Even with heavy mailing volumes, USPS should be able to deliver your ballot within several days. It will be counted as long as it's postmarked by November 3rd (election day) and received by the county clerk by November 4th. Depending on how long it takes to complete election returns on November 3rd, a ballot received near the deadline may be counted as a provisional ballot. To minimize any delays, simply mail your ballot soon after you receive it; give yourself a 2-3 day deadline after receiving your ballot.

Second, as an alternative to mailing in your ballot, you can hand deliver it to any of these locations:

- 5501 Airport Boulevard, Austin, TX 78751 – Tax Office drive through payment lanes
- Travis County 700 Lavaca Parking Garage, Austin, TX 78701-Lavaca entrance

*Continued on Page 13*



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*Continued from Page 12*

- Travis County 700 Lavaca Parking Garage, Austin, TX 78701-Guadalupe entrance

- Travis County 1010 Lavaca Parking Lot, Austin, TX 78701-11th Street entrance

These locations are to be open these times:

- Thursday, October 1 – Monday, October 12: 8 AM-5 PM Monday-Friday

- Tuesday, October 13 – Sunday, November 1: 7 AM-7 PM Monday-Saturday, 12-6 PM Sunday

- Monday, November 2: 8 AM-5 PM

- Tuesday, November 3: 7 AM-7 PM

By showing your picture ID, you'll be able to drop off your ballot very quickly. Monitor the county clerk's office web site for updated information.

If you receive a mail-in ballot and decide that you'd rather vote in person, early or on election day, simply take your mail-in ballot with you to the voting location. You'll be asked to sign a form and surrender the mail-in ballot, and then you'll be able to vote in person.

While one could argue that Texas could use some updates to various voting procedures, our county clerk has provided multiple options for enabling us to vote this fall. There's nothing more important for us to do as citizens!

And, since several local races have multiple candidates vying against each other, mark your calendar for an anticipated December 15th run-off!

Some folks may think that we have too many elections. Others may think that each election is a privilege of our democracy. Whatever your opinion, we encourage you to do your part to uphold your freedom by creating your own voting plan for November and possibly, December.

## FAQ Regarding Public Safety

– Connie Lundgren and Joyce Statz

We know our neighbors have a lot of questions regarding the recently proposed changes to the Austin Police Department (APD). We posed a number of these to April Brown, a policy advisor in Councilmember Alter's office. She provided us with detailed answers and links to more information. (The details and links can be found in News and Announcements on the NWACA web site, [www.nwaca.org](http://www.nwaca.org))

Here, are brief summaries of April's responses; we invite you to dig deeper on the web site.

### **1. How did the effort to restructure the police budget (aka defunding the police department) get started?**

For several years, community advocates have suggested removing police officer vacancies that were not being filled and called

for investing in various social services to help prevent crime. Additional support for these ideas came during recent protests. However, the primary push was meant to address a set of reports in the last several years that detailed issues such as the department's mishandling of sexual assault cases, discriminatory practices, and culture of racism.

### **2. I've heard that \$150M was pulled from the APD. What's in that number?**

The \$150M can be divided into three portions; only one part has actually been removed from the 2020-2021 (FY21) budget. The other two portions are not funding cuts, but money for 1) functions currently within APD that may be removed (decoupled) from APD or 2) changes to operations.

- Immediate Reinvestment (\$21.5M) – primarily removing money previously allocated for unfilled vacancies, unused overtime (no SXSW, etc. this year and unclear for next year), and postponed cadet classes

- Decouple Fund (\$79.6M) – moving jobs/duties that don't require sworn officers, or that would benefit in effectiveness or transparency if removed from APD

- Reimagine Safety Fund (\$49.2M) – the use of these funds will be discussed over the next year or two; possibilities include things like creating a cadre of Park Rangers instead of having APD act as Park Police; this category is wide open for discussion

A document on the web site gives more detail about what is included in each of these three areas.

### **3. Why were the cadet classes postponed?**

The cadet classes were postponed following a December 2019 Council resolution that called for comprehensive audits due to long-term issues with APD operations and culture. The February 2020 class took place. The expectation at the time was that the audits would be completed, and improvements implemented, by June 2020 so as not to disrupt the flow of cadet classes. Completion of the audit is now anticipated at the end of 2020. Until the full report is received and the cadet curriculum is revised, cadet classes are on hold. After that, the cadet class budget will be reinstated.

### **4. What aspects of APD are being moved out of the Department and why?**

No functions have been moved yet. City staff, including the Law Department, are examining the following types of functions, evaluating their effectiveness or potential legal challenges:

- Those currently performed by civilian staff who are supervised by or report to sworn officers: Forensic Sciences Services (ex. Rape kit testing), Communications/9-1-1 Call Center, Support Services, Strategic Support, Community Partnerships, and Victim Services

- Those performed by sworn officers in Internal Affairs, Special Investigations Unit, Special Events

### **5. How many police officer positions have been vacant during FY 2019-2020?**

*Continued on Page 14*

*Continued from Page 13*

At the end of June, 2020, 157 positions were vacant, 62 of those for six months and 22 for one year. The City anticipates that the department will have 205 vacancies by October 1 (the start of the new fiscal year). APD is currently receiving money for the unfilled positions. The FY21 budget will go into effect then, which cuts 150 of the 205 vacancies. Also, in October, the February 2020 cadet class will graduate with an anticipated 47 cadets, decreasing APD's expected total vacancies to 16.

**6. How much money, affecting active policing, has already been removed from the FY 2021 budget?**

No existing officers were fired or cut, and all pay levels remain the same, with a 2% pay raise this year.

**7. How much more money, affecting active policing, might be removed from the FY 2021 budget?**

There are no proposals to cut or fire existing officers. If functions are moved from APD to other departments, sworn officers working in those jobs will remain in APD and be available for active policing.

## Austin Facility Open for Styrofoam, Paint, and More—by Appointment

—Joanie Arrott

Did you know the City's Recycle and Reuse Drop-off Center, located at 2514 Business Center Drive, recently reopened to resume its acceptance of hard to recycle items such as Styrofoam and plastic film, as well as household hazardous waste? However, they are accepting materials by appointment only.

The facility has been closed since March because of the pandemic, resulting in residents temporarily storing their materials while patiently waiting for operations to resume. City of Austin and Travis County residents can drop off many items to be recycled, reused, or safely discarded. A full list of accepted items can be found on their website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/recycle-reuse-drop-center>. While you're there, check out their Reuse Center for free items to reuse yourself.

### Plan Ahead

To schedule a drop-off time, email [RRDOC@austintexas.gov](mailto:RRDOC@austintexas.gov) or call (512) 974-4343. Here are some tips to make the trip worthwhile, not only for you but also city staff.

- They mostly likely will not be squeezing you in the same week you contact them. Neighbors that have already called to make appointments are booked in October, so plan accordingly.
- Once scheduled, tell your neighbors and gather things from them. It's likely they have small amounts of material that are waiting to be dropped off too. A full carload makes it an efficient trip for you, your neighbors, and the facility staff.

- Prevent unnecessary leaks or spills by checking all lids and containers for damage. Any compromised containers can be placed in a plastic tub or trash bag to prevent messes during travel.

- Using the link posted above, verify what the facility accepts and does not accept before heading that way. It's frustrating making that trek only to find out they can't accept everything you've loaded up.

## Save Money on Next Year's Water Bill

—Joanie Arrott

As we transition to the fall months, remember that another wastewater averaging cycle is about to begin. Not only is it important to understand how your water utility bill is calculated, but you can save money all of next year by managing your usage during the upcoming averaging cycle.

On your monthly utility bill, you'll notice line items for water service and wastewater service. Water service covers the inflow of city water to your property. Wastewater is the outflow of sewage from your property that will eventually end up in the sewer system. Think showers, dishwasher, washing machine, etc. Your water meter measures your monthly water use, but there is no meter on your wastewater line.

Instead, wastewater averaging is used to estimate the wastewater outflow from your property. The goal is to determine the volume of wastewater you will be billed each month next year. You will be billed wastewater volume charges based on your wastewater average or your water volume, whichever is lower.

Depending on your property location, you are assigned a monthly bill cycle number (see graphic) that determines the three-month window that will be used for wastewater averaging. Your household's water use during this three-month period is then averaged, and this is your wastewater average estimation for the next year.

Conserving water during the wastewater averaging period will lower the volume of wastewater you will be billed for each month for the next year. Check out these tips: <http://austintexas.gov/department/water-saving-tips>.

*Continued on Page 15*



During your Wastewater Averaging Period  
restrict outdoor water use and conserve  
water to save money throughout the year.

## Find your Wastewater Averaging Period

1. Locate your **Bill Cycle Number** on your current water bill
2. Use your Bill Cycle Number on the schedule to the right to determine your Wastewater Averaging Period



### Utility News

#### Read Dates

Next meter read date will be on or about 11/5/20.

Keep water use low this fall/winter & save year-round! Your wastewater averaging period is 12-06-2019 to 03-05-2020 and sets a cap on the volume of wastewater you will be billed each month for the next year. Visit [AustinWater.org](http://AustinWater.org) for more info.

Receiving benefits from a government assistance program? You may qualify for utility bill payment assistance. Call 512-494-9400.

Do you have too many recyclables and very little trash? Did you know you can request an additional recycling cart at no cost and downsize your trash cart to save money? Call 512-494-9400 to request carts.

The City of Austin is now in Conservation Stage water restrictions. This means more flexibility in watering schedules and car washing at home. To find your watering day and get all the facts on Conservation Stage, visit [WaterWiseAustin.org](http://WaterWiseAustin.org).

Outstanding utility bill balance? Set up monthly payment arrangements to keep your account in good standing. Call 512-494-9400 and a Customer Service Representative will assist you.

### Contact Information

View or Pay online: [www.coautilities.com](http://www.coautilities.com)

Customer Service: 512-494-9400  
or call toll free at 1-866-340-6465  
TDD: 512-477-3663  
Se Habla Español

To report an electrical OUTAGE call 512-322-9100 or visit [outagemap.austinenergy.com](http://outagemap.austinenergy.com). Please have your account number available.

Details and instructions with your payment.

P.O. Box 2267 Austin, TX 78768-2267

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[www.coautilities.com](http://www.coautilities.com)

Enter contributions and interest in Total Paid

Do Not Send Payment. Your Bill is Scheduled for Electronic Autopayment on 10/28/2019.

### Summary of Service

CUSTOMER: JOHN DOE  
Service Address: 123 Residential Blvd  
Account Number: 12345 67890  
Invoice Number: 123456789

Bill Print Date  
Due Date

### Previous Activity/Charges

Total Amount Due at Last Bill  
Payment received - Thank you

Previous Balance

### Current Activity/Charges

Water Service  
Wastewater Service  
Clean Community Service  
Solid Waste Services Drainage Service  
Street Service

Current Balance

If Payment is received after due date, a late fee will

### Total Amount Due

Do Not Send Payment. Your Bill  
Electronic Autopayment on

Continued On

## Wastewater Averaging Period 2020

Bill Cycle #	Beginning Date	Ending Date
12	11/14/2019	2/13/2020
13	11/15/2019	2/14/2020
14	11/16/2019	2/18/2020
15	11/18/2019	2/19/2020
16	11/19/2019	2/20/2020
17	11/20/2019	2/21/2020
18	11/21/2019	2/22/2020
19	11/22/2019	2/24/2020
20	11/25/2019	2/25/2020
1	11/27/2019	2/27/2020
2	12/2/2019	2/28/2020
3	12/3/2019	3/2/2020
4	12/4/2019	3/3/2020
5	12/5/2019	3/4/2020
6	12/6/2019	3/5/2020
7	12/7/2019	3/9/2020
8	12/9/2019	3/10/2020
9	12/10/2019	3/11/2020
10	12/11/2019	3/12/2020
11	12/12/2019	3/13/2020

### Total Amount Due:

Date Due:

Penalty After Date Due:

Total Due After 10/28/2019:

CAP Contribution: \$

Parks & Libraries Fund: \$

Public School Energy Asst.: \$

Total Paid: \$



Austin  
**WATER**

[AustinWater.org](http://AustinWater.org)



## Be Watchful – Joyce Statz

This month's Firewise article is very short. Observing the tragic fires on the west coast, we can appreciate the serious risk of wildfire devastation that we face in our neighborhood. Please be vigilant. Use the advice we've provided throughout the year:

- If you haven't yet done so, please sign up at [warncentraltexas.org](http://warncentraltexas.org), so that you get emergency notices for a wildfire
- Keep the area within 30 feet of your home free from dry grass, leaves, and other debris that provides kindling to embers from wildfire or any other fire
- Clean out your gutters, since they can be a vulnerable location for embers to land
- Have a "to go" kit ready, along with a posted list of reminders of what to take with you – perhaps attached to your refrigerator
- Have enough fuel in your car(s) to go somewhere safe if you should need to evacuate
- Ensure that loved ones know what to do – practice your exit, so you can leave quickly



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Constable	\$10	\$20	Other
Parks Fund	\$10	\$20	Other

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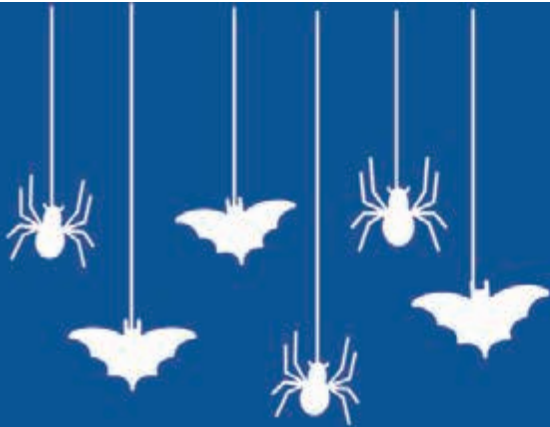
Please check a committee on which you would like to participate:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications     | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Membership             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime & Safety     | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree, Environment, and Wildlife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events             | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire Prevention             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History            | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning and Transportation       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Watch |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parks              |  |

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For more info email us at: **info@nwaca.org**





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**~Robin and Scott Smith**



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