



# nwacaNEWS

NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

NOVEMBER 2020

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 11

## *Giving Thanks.*

The NWACA board wants to thank you, our neighbors, for all you do to make our area of Austin special. For the most part, these strange times have brought out the best in people, with neighbors helping one another and really demonstrating resilience, creativity, dedication, and a sense of community.

It is in this context that we're glad to tell you about the NWACA Special Projects Reserve Fund and announce that the NWACA board is inviting applications for special projects funding. In the past, the fund has supported projects like the Loewy Playground.



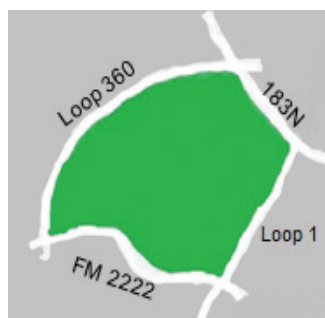
Maybe you know of a scout or scout troop that has a great idea for park or trail improvement. Perhaps you've thought of a creative way to support needy members of our community or you have an idea for a public safety enhancement. Inside these pages, you can read about the Special Projects Reserve Fund and application process. Any group or individual can apply for funding.

It's November – traditionally, a time for giving thanks and giving of oneself. It's also National Homeless Youth Awareness Month. Moreover, the week before Thanksgiving is Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. This month's newsletter contains information about assisting neighbors in need.

*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/departments/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

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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

The NWACA board is thankful for your involvement. There are so many ways to help. For instance, thanks to those who support our local businesses. In this month's newsletter, we've included an article about PostNet on Far West Boulevard, the best of all 700 PostNet stores in North American.

We'd like to thank everyone who makes our neighborhood more beautiful. For those of you who think your yard could use a bit more shade, did you know that now is the best time of year to plant trees in Texas? We've provided more information herein. We'll be thankful to you and for the new trees when it gets hot again next summer.

Thanks to the folks that attended our virtual District 10 candidate and Project Connect forums in October. At the time of this writing, early voting has just begun. A record 97% of Travis County's eligible 850,000 voters are registered to vote in the November 3rd election. Travis County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir is reporting a record turnout at early voting locations. She says that nearly 9,000 voters have already hand delivered mail-in ballots, a new option this year before Election Day. We applaud your strong civic engagement and ask that you keep an eye out for information in case of a runoff election for District 10 City Council on December 15.

The NWACA board knows that there is a lot to be thankful for. If you know of instances of giving or helpfulness that we should highlight in the December newsletter, please let us know. Or, if you have an idea for making the neighborhood better, we'd love to hear it. Contact us at [info@nwaca.org](mailto:info@nwaca.org)



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- Hemispheric Continuum
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- SUNCT/SUNA
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- Occipital Neuralgia
- Trigeminal Neuralgia
- Many Other Conditions



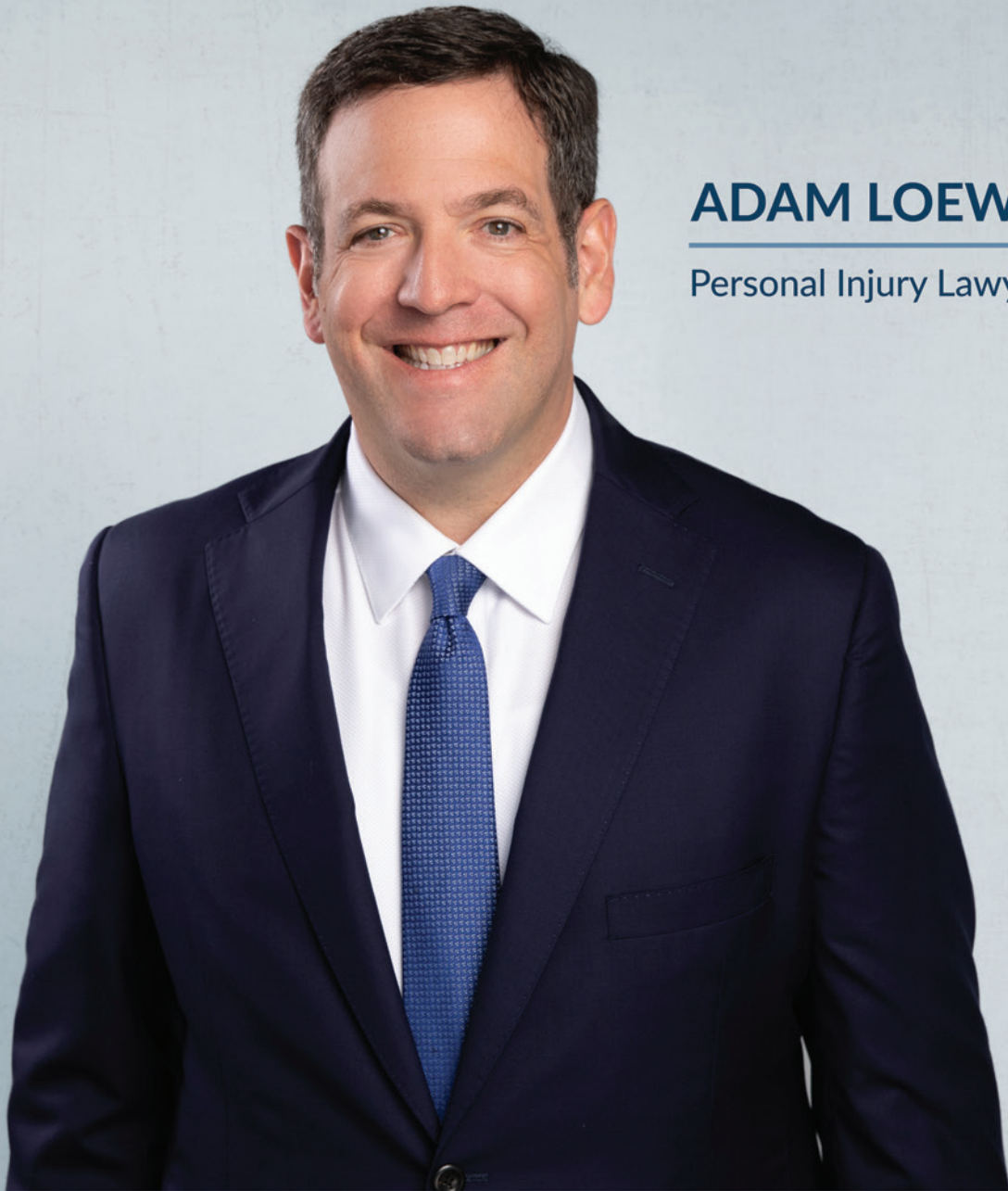


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# NWACA News

## NWACA Events Calendar

These events are as planned on October 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.

**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, 5PM**

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees  
Joint Meeting

*Virtual*

## NWACA Project Reserve Fund Inviting Applications

— NWACA Board

The Project Reserve Fund was established by the NWACA Board to help fund special projects that have a community benefit for neighborhood residents and are publicly accessible.

During recent years, NWACA funded the purchase of five recycling containers for use at our local parks, contributed funds for the development of a new soccer field behind Doss Elementary, helped refurbish the Anderson High School Gym, provided part of the funding for the pilot Constable patrol project, and contributed to the Loewy Playground funding. Most recently, the Project Reserve Fund helped with the Murchison Middle School Common Space improvements.

Any group or individual can apply for Project Reserve funds; just download an application online at [www.nwaca.org](http://www.nwaca.org) using the link in the Hot Topics list.

Applications for the current round of projects will be accepted until December 15, 2020, and selected applicants will be encouraged to present their projects at the January 2021 NWACA Board meeting.

*Continued on Page 5*

## SHOAL CREEK DENTAL CARE

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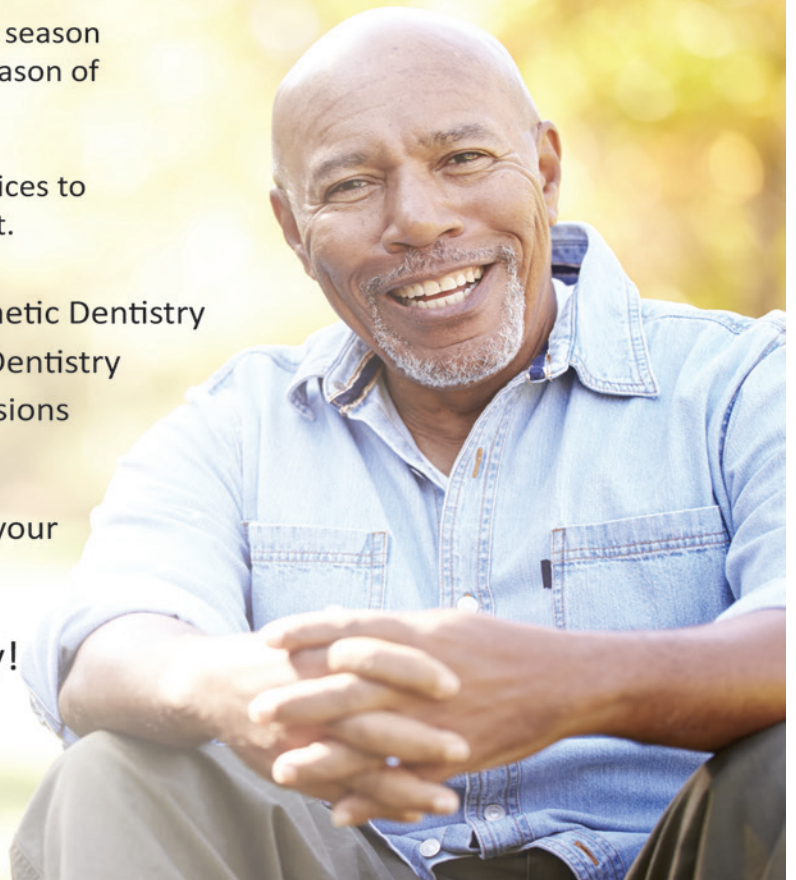
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512.453.8181  
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***And all at once, summer collapsed into fall.***  
— Oscar Wilde





*Continued from Page 4*

Submit applications, drawings, pictures, and estimated project costs to [info@nwaca.org](mailto:info@nwaca.org) or by U.S. mail to: NWACA, P.O. Box 26654, Austin, TX 78755. Applicants will be notified of their acceptance and funds can be distributed as early as the month following project selection. The number of projects funded is at the discretion of the Board. If you have questions about the program, email [info@nwaca.org](mailto:info@nwaca.org)

Some applicants may choose to submit an idea in concert with the City of Austin Neighborhood Partnering Program (see details at <http://www.austintexas.gov/neighborhoodpartnering>). Such applications must be submitted by October 1st or June 1st for their cost-sharing funding cycle. Other applicants may choose to team with the Austin Parks Foundation (see details at <http://austinparks.org/tag/grants/>). Applications for different types of grants have different deadlines.

The Project Reserve Fund is just one of many ways that NWACA serves our community. Funding is available because of the careful management of NWACA funds. Please help us to continue our work by maintaining your NWACA membership.

## Doss Elementary School Open House – Teri Schock

On October 9th, Doss Elementary School held an open house to show off its new building. Since it was a virtual open house, it was recorded. You can take the tour at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/DossOpen>

A treehouse theme flows through the design, with very flexible furniture and spaces that support individual learning styles. Take a look!



*Doss Treehouse Design*



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## Homelessness and Hunger Awareness – Joyce Statz



November is a time to acknowledge and assist children and families experiencing homelessness. In 2007, Congress designated November as National Homeless Youth Awareness Month. The week before Thanksgiving, November 15-22, is Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week.

Here are some local programs through which you might assist people in need.

- Westover Hills Church of Christ

Food Pantry – Westover Church at 8332 Mesa Drive has been running a food pantry since March, providing groceries and dry goods for hungry families impacted by the pandemic. Much of the food comes from the Central Texas Food Bank, which requires a modest payment for produce and canned goods. The church welcomes monetary donations, as well as donations of items that are scarce at the food bank: pancake mix, canned chili, boxed dinners (hamburger helper, for example), and paper towels. Bring donations to the church office (on the side facing Anderson High) and ring the doorbell: 8-5 Monday-Thursday and 8-noon on Friday.

- The Other Ones Foundation (TOOF) – For homeless neighbors in Austin, TOOF provides a range of services including its Workforce First Program (<https://toofound.org/opportunity/>); showers at various locations (<https://toofound.org/mobile-hygiene-clinic/>); a range of services at Camp Esperanza (the land provided by the State of Texas for homeless individuals); and a range of support services to help the homeless get to permanent housing. To learn how you can help, visit their web site <https://toofound.org/>

- Street Youth Ministry – This organization, founded by NWACA neighbor Terry Cole, works with homeless young adults in the University of Texas area. While providing access to food, clothing, and gear, they really do a lot of guidance counseling. See their web site for current needs: <https://www.streetyouthministry.org/>



For your children, watch for my postings of storybook readings and musical distractions on the NWACA Facebook page.

During the first half year of our pandemic lifestyle my shriveled concentration forced my reading away from books to shorter forms, poetry and stories. But now I find my focus gradually lengthening, perhaps because of protracted political angst (hard to believe there's a benefit), perhaps just acclimation.

With this season of thankfulness, gift giving, and resolve, let's share books with each other and perhaps join or form book clubs.

Book clubs will be the topic of next month's Writer's Corner. If you belong to one and would like it included, please contact me at [ikk@austin.rr.com](mailto:ikk@austin.rr.com)

Meanwhile, happy reading!



*Books labeled KWAK are from my lending library for piano students*

A logo for Peggy Little, REALTOR. It includes a photo of Peggy Little, a house icon with "PEGGY POWER! SOLD" text, and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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# NORTHWEST HILLS AND WESTOVER HILLS MARKET REPORT UPDATE

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



Median Sales Price

**\$860,000**



**24%**

FROM SEPTEMBER 2019

Number of Sales

**24**

**↑ 20%**

FROM SEPT 2019

Median List Price/Sqft

**\$328**

**↑ 16%**

FROM SEPT 2019

9 Days Median on Market



**↑ 29%**

FROM SEPT 2019

Median Sold Price/Sqft

**\$330**

**↑ 12%**

FROM SEPT 2019

% of List Price Sold

**98%**

**↓ 1%**

FROM SEPT 2019

Total Sales Volume

**\$22,825,765**



**↑ 59%**

FROM SEPT 2019

Neighbors and Essential Workers

We Humbly & Gratefully  
*thank you*  
for your support of our community!

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## Business Spotlight: Postnet

- Janice Green



David Petty

If you think of PostNet (Postal Network) only as a place to mail packages, you are in for an awakening. And before you finish reading this, you'll understand why David Petty's store on Far West Boulevard is ranked #1 out of 700 North American PostNet locations.

David and his father first opened PostNet on Mesa Drive (near Randall's) in 2001, and in 2003 their store opened on Far West, where both locations were later consolidated. Employees are familiar friendly faces due to slow turnover that speaks to David's management style.

Let's start with the obvious – their shipping services linked with FedEx, UPS, DHL and USPS. Packaging materials are available, but they also will do the packing for you – especially important when you want to ship a stained glass project or a family heirloom. But there's more: If you've been hit by porch pirates and want a safer place to receive your online orders or confidential business shipments, PostNet can be your receiving address and staff will secure the items until you retrieve them.

In addition, PostNet is our local printer of all things printable. Do you

need a yard sign to announce your child's graduation, to acknowledge Breast Cancer Month, to express an election viewpoint, or simply to say something that is on your mind while suffering from the housebound stir-crazies during the pandemic? PostNet prints custom orders and offers ready-made signs. Books, booklets, brochures, pamphlets, blueprints, flyers, invitations, custom greeting cards, and just about any printing job imaginable, PostNet does it. And if you need creative input on your printing projects, there are three graphic designers on staff to help you. No need to struggle designing your own business logo, cards, banners, or stationery.

In the arena of gift-giving, they stock boxes and packaging supplies, and they offer canvas printing of your favorite photographs, custom photo books, and cards. If you need a good laugh, comb through the greeting cards on display.

While our PostNet meets printing needs for customers across the U.S., they also provide our neighborhood something special. If you have lost your pet, they will print 50 colored and 100 black/white free fliers to aid you in reuniting with your lost loved one.

Additionally, they can laminate your social security cards, Medicare cards and other important documents that disintegrate after years of use. Need a passport photo? No problem. They provide notary service, too.

How have they coped during the pandemic? "April was our worst month ever, but things began improving in July," David responded. After losing one of their largest national print customers due to a Covid-19 closing, they turned to innovative business generation – for example, contacting restaurants about printing their temporary to-go menus.

Our PostNet is so much more than a shipper. It is our 'hood's award-winning, multifaceted printing and design hub, deserving of our consideration when such needs arise.

Contact Info: 3571 Far West Boulevard, (512) 231-1321, email: tx157@tx157@postnet.com

website: <http://postnet.com/tx157>



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# UT Austin's Texas Archeological Research Lab

— Richard Denney



Forensic reconstruction of Leanderthal Lady, from the Wilson-Leonard Site

You probably know about UT's JJ Pickle Research Campus located on Burnet Road, less than a mile north of the neighborhood. But did you know it's home to UT Austin's Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL), a nationally recognized research facility and the largest archeological repository in Texas? TARL's mission:

*..to collect, preserve, and curate archeological<sup>1</sup> specimens and records, train students, conduct archeological research, and disseminate information about Texas' archeological legacy.*

For any major archeological dig in Texas, it's likely that artifacts go to TARL for analysis and storage, just a hop, skip and a jump from Northwest Hills.

TARL's collection includes human remains as well as artifacts. Many excavations are from rescue archeology, an excavation done before construction or other land development on public lands. Much rescue archeology is done in advance of TxDOT road work, and it sometimes results in the location, study, and rescue of burials. One such burial was found during construction of Loop 360 on the edge of what is today

our neighborhood.

Since 1990, Federal law has provided for "repatriation and disposition of certain Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony" collected through archeological excavation. This law is known as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).

This year TARL was in the news when UT was asked for the return of certain remains. An article on the UT NEWS (9/30/20) website explained<sup>2</sup>:

*"The Miakan-Garza Band, a group that traces its ancestry to Coahuiltecans from Northern Mexico, requested remains in March 2016 through NAGPRA. TARL carefully considered the request but decided it did not have sufficient basis to repatriate the remains."*

While NAGPRA calls for the return of a tribe's ancestor's remains for reburial, it also calls for some evidence that the remains are indeed associated with that tribe. For very old burials, like "Leanderthal Lady," discovered ahead of TxDOT road construction in 1982 near Leander (hence the name), this can be a challenge. It is highly unlikely her "tribe" when buried 11,000 years ago was anything resembling a tribal nation in existence today. This was also the problem with the famous 9,000-year-old remains of "Kennewick Man" discovered in Washington state in 1996.

*Continued on Page 10*

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Continued from Page 9

In the case of the Miakan-Garza Band who claim Coahuiltecan ancestry there were other issues.

Coahuiltecan was, until recently, generally considered an extinct tribe, and is not a federally recognized tribal nation. Additionally, two tribes that are federally recognized, the Caddo Nation and the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, objected to the repatriation, saying there was no evidence the remains were Coahuiltecan; in prehistoric times Texas was the home to many, many Native American groups.

That was the state of things earlier this year when UT's Daily Texan reported "UT-Austin denies request for Indigenous remains from Miakan-Garza Band" (Aug. 30, 2020). The, KUT reported in September that "UT Austin is reversing its decision to deny a local indigenous group's request for three sets of Native American remains housed in the school's archeological research laboratory."<sup>3</sup>

While conflicts of interest between Native Americans and the archeology community are topics that usually make the news, there is also synergy. Science – archeology, anthropology, DNA, linguistics – are an aid to the recovery of the deep history of Native Americans. And there is cooperation. Once a year TARL, the Texas Military Department, TxDOT, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and others conduct government to government consultations with federally recognized tribal nations in Texas and the surrounding states of Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. The goal is to seek an agreement as to how to identify, consider, and manage properties that still belong to, or are historically significant to, those tribal nations. In 2017 I was fortunate to represent the Travis County Historical Commission at one such meeting that took place right here in the neighborhood.

While TARL is not open to the public except by special arrangement, there are sometimes volunteer opportunities, and TARL is the host of Texas Beyond History, an on-line public education service. To learn more about archeology and prehistory statewide and locally visit <https://texasbeyondhistory.net>

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

<sup>1</sup> And yes, in Texas it is generally spelled "archeology" not "archaeology!" It's a Texas thing!

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.utexas.edu/key-issues/repatriation-of-indigenous-remains/>

<sup>3</sup> September 28, 2020: "UT Reverses Decision Denying Indigenous Group's Request For Centuries-Old Remains".

## Let the Tree Planting Begin

– Joanie Arrott

Now is the time to plan, purchase, and plant your heart out. We're entering the best time of year to plant trees in Texas! Trees planted in fall and winter have more time to grow a strong root system that will allow them to obtain water during our region's hot, hot summers. During summer, trees can reduce air temperatures 2 to 9°F and keep surface temperatures 20 to 45°F cooler than unshaded areas.

Trees offer social, environmental, and economic benefits throughout their lifetime. But not all trees are equally well-suited for every planting site or in every climate. Tree selection and placement are two of the most important decisions a homeowner makes when landscaping a new home or replacing a tree. Many trees have the potential to outlive those who plant them, so the impact of this decision can last a lifetime.

Matching the tree to the site benefits both the tree and the homeowner. Faster growing trees species will provide shade more quickly but may have shorter life spans. Select a native, drought-tolerant species to thrive in our hotter climates but plan on watering it carefully in the first two years until it's well established. Avoid planting trees near utility lines, keeping a 20- to 40-foot buffer zone.

More information about tree selection, placement, and species native to Central Texas can be found at: <https://www.austintexas.gov/page/resources-trees> including links to two-minute videos on proper tree planting and wise tree selection.

**LOCATION**  
Plant your tree at least 20 feet from other trees or structures, don't plant near above or below ground utilities.

**DIG! DIG!**  
Dig a hole about 6 inches wide and the depth of the root ball. The root ball is the area containing the roots and soil. Keep the top of the root ball even with the ground and make sure the tree is placed on firm soil to prevent sinking. Keep the root collar clear of soil and mulch to prevent disease and root rot.

**FILL IT UP**  
Backfill the hole with the original soil and no additives. For additional nutrients, add compost on top of the ground under the mulch. Use your hand to tamp the soil until the hole is filled. Leftover soil should be placed in a ring that is about 1 foot from the tree.

**MULCH**  
Build a 4" tall mulch ring around the tree keeping the mulch at least 2 inches from the trunk. Mulch keeps the soil moist, adds nutrients, and improves soil structure.

**WATER**  
Sapling trees need about 2 1/2 gallons of water applied twice a week. Leave a hose on trickle for about 10 minutes two times a week. Water year round for two years.

**DON'T DO IT**  
Young trees grow stronger when they are able to sway with the wind. Remove all stakes and tape when planted.

**DIAL BEFORE YOU DIG**  
Call 1-800-344-8377 at least 72 hours prior to planting your tree to allow time for the utilities to be marked. The tree should be placed at least 5 feet away from underground utilities, sidewalks or driveways.

Call before you dig (TreeFolks)



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## Is Ball Moss in Live Oak Trees, OK or bad?

– Texas A&M Forest Service (submitted by Maura Powers)

Ball moss (*Tillandsia recurvata*) is a small epiphyte commonly found clinging to limbs of live oaks and other trees in southwest Texas. Ball moss is not a moss, but a true plant with flowers and seeds. It is a member of the Bromeliad family, which also contains Spanish moss and pineapple.

Epiphytes are plants that attach themselves to limbs, tree trunks, power lines, fences, and many other structures with pseudo-roots. Since epiphytes do not take nutrients and water from these aerial structures, they are not parasites.

**If ball moss is not a parasite, then why do the branches covered with it die?**

If you take careful notice, you will observe the majority of these dead limbs are in the interior of the tree's canopy. Ball moss prefers an environment with low sunlight intensity and high humidity. The interior canopy of trees (especially live oaks) provides an ideal environment for ball moss. These interior limbs die from a lack of sunlight; then the ball moss plants colonize these branches.

**Should I control ball moss?**

If the tree is heavily covered with ball moss (to the extent that the plants are covering the exterior of the canopy) or if you just cannot stand having something growing on your trees, control is recommended. If it is a light infestation and does not bother you, control is not necessary.

**How do I control ball moss?**

There are three methods: picking, pruning, or spraying. Each method alone may not provide adequate control. Using a combination of all three methods results in the most thorough treatment.

Picking involves physically pulling each plant off the tree. This can be very effective but is extremely tedious and labor intensive. It can also be quite dangerous without the use of a cherry picker. Please use caution and practice proper safety techniques if employing this method.

Pruning consists of cutting and removing the dead, interior limbs from the tree and/or lightly thinning the canopy. The majority of the ball moss is growing on the dead, interior limbs; therefore, by removing these limbs, you physically remove the majority of the ball moss. As mentioned above, ball moss prefers areas with low sunlight intensity. Light thinning of the canopy (if necessary) allows more sunlight to reach the interior of the tree, discouraging future infestation. When pruning oaks, make certain to paint all pruning cuts immediately to reduce the risk of oak wilt.

Spraying involves applying a chemical to the tree in a foliar spray. Kocide 101 provides adequate control. Do not exceed the recommended rates for this chemical. Higher concentrations of this chemical can actually damage the tree. The ball moss will shrivel up and die in 5 to 7 days but will remain in the tree until the wind or rain knocks it out. For this reason, it is recommended to prune out the deadwood first. In doing so, you remove the majority of the ball moss from the tree and practice proper tree maintenance at the same time. Neither picking, pruning, nor spraying will remove all of the ball moss from the tree, but these treatments can benefit the tree and certainly make you feel better.

*Reprinted with permission from Texas A&M Forest Service at <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/BallMoss/>, September 2020.*

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## Where's That Fire?

– Joyce Statz

In mid-September, neighbors on Loop 360 could see smoke that appeared to be in the wildland urban interface (WUI), but they couldn't tell exactly where it was nor could they see what was on fire. They later learned that it was a small structure fire, and it didn't spread into the WUI. After fielding their worried calls and doing some internet searches, we found a Twitter stream that was helpful, but it didn't give any status update.

Talking with the Austin Fire Department's (AFD) Wildfire Division, we were provided links that will help us better monitor fires going forward:

- Twitter stream @AFDincidents has an entry for each fire that is handled by AFD. This is automatically generated by their fire call system. It provides time, incident type, and location. The information is updated every 3 minutes.

- The web site <http://www.austintexas.gov/fact/default.cfm> also gets that same information.

- Twitter stream @AustinFireInfo has status entries provided by the shift commander of the crew responding to a fire. If a fire becomes a serious emergency, this Twitter stream will be regularly updated.

In the case of a fire that is in the WUI and could potentially affect a neighborhood (or other incidents like a large gas line break, active shooter, chemical fire etc.), the on-scene incident commander will

1. ask the AFD dispatch center to send warnings by reverse 911 call and through <https://warncentraltexas.org/> to all residents in the affected area, advising of the danger and recommended actions, and

2. ask on-scene law enforcement to commence any needed evacuations, those allowing fire personnel to continue dealing with the fire.

Since many of us no longer have landlines that are alerted through reverse 911, it's imperative that we be signed up with <https://warncentraltexas.org/> to get warnings on our cell phones or by email. If you haven't yet signed up, do it today!



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## All That Paper Keeps Piling Up!

— Sally Grayum

One of the most common questions I get as a professional organizer is how to handle all the paper we accumulate. The solution could include creating a peaceful, welcoming, functional space that you will want to maintain.

The first step is to set up an area for sorting mail over a shredder and recycle bin.

1. Get a paper shredder. Why spend the money on a shredder? Shredding paper on a consistent basis will immediately transform your space and save you the price of shredding bags full of paper in the long run.

2. Add a small trashcan for recycling.

3. Vertical file sorters, clear plastic systems, or acrylic systems are often more practical than inbox trays, which fill up fast. Create a system that contains your papers so that you won't make paper piles.

4. Set up your system where you can easily sort, recycle, and shred in one place.

5. Prevent paper pile up and shredder burnout. Do not let papers that require shredding to accumulate more than 2 days! I recommend keeping your "shred pile" on top of your shredder as a visual reminder that it is time to shred.

To prevent identity theft, shred the top half and/or any pages that contain personal information. Recycle everything else. Old credit cards can be shredded if the shredder is designed to shred them; don't leave the shredded plastic in the bin with the paper – it doesn't recycle.

Once you have determined how to handle all the paper, the second step is to complete the workspace. Evaluate how you want to "feel" and how you want your workspace to "function." It is important to create a welcoming environment that you will want to maintain. Consider the following:

1. Clean your desk surface once you have removed everything from the top, using a cleaner that smells good and makes you happy! This could be a commercial product or a homemade essential oil concoction stored in a spray bottle.

2. Thoughtfully consider the items you keep on your desk. It is important to ensure your workspace will be easy to maintain. "A cluttered space creates a cluttered mind and causes you to lose time."

3. Select objects that bring you joy and inspiration when you look at them, such souvenirs from a vacation you had with family or friends, or objects that represent a vacation you aspire to go on.

4. Choose scenic pictures for the desktop of your computer or mousepad.

5. Last, but not least, for a nice added touch, accessorize with something simple like a flower or plant clipping in a small vase.

If you would like to discuss these ideas further, please contact [sgrayum@OrganizeMeSally.com](mailto:sgrayum@OrganizeMeSally.com).



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## UNDERSTANDING CITY CODE: Why Do We Need Zoning?

– Alan Carson

People sometimes ask why zoning is necessary. Is it just a way to put more people on the city payroll?

Consider what happened in West, Texas, a town 18 miles north of Waco on April 17, 2013. A facility in West, which was used to store ammonium nitrate fertilizer caught fire and then exploded. The blast had an explosive yield of over 7 tons of TNT and damaged or destroyed 150 buildings and homes, valued at over \$100 million. Fifteen people died, over 160 were injured. The West Middle School was located next to the facility and was severely damaged. Fortunately, the fire and explosion occurred in the evening, so no students were present. Another building extensively damaged was a 150-unit apartment complex less than 100 feet from the facility. Much of the destruction would have been prevented if stricter zoning regulations had been in effect and enforced.

Several other examples show how the lack of zoning rules affects a neighborhood. For several years, I lived in another

country that either had few zoning rules or rules that were not enforced. One neighbor opened his garage on weekday evenings and all day on weekends to reveal a liquor store. Another neighbor built a brick oven in his yard and converted his front porch into a bakeshop. Auto repair in home garages was common, with cars awaiting repair parked in the front yard. These examples illustrate how lack of zoning enforcement can impact the value of a homeowner's property.

If you would like to become better informed about current zoning regulations in Austin, there is a 95-page document, "City of Austin Guide to Zoning," that explains the basics. Enter Austin Zoning Guide in your web browser; download it at no cost.

If you have a question or concern about a City code that we haven't yet covered, send us email at [nwacainfo@gmail.com](mailto:nwacainfo@gmail.com), and we'll have Mr. Carson check it out. It may become the topic of an upcoming article.

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*- Membership Committee*

NWACA thanks members who generously contributed to the 4th of July Parade Fund, the Park Fund, and the Constable Fund, between August 15, 2020 and October 15, 2020.

Donations to the 4th of July Parade Fund help NWACA to host the best 4th of July parade in Austin! The Park Fund helps us do events in our parks and revitalize parks in the NWACA area. The Constable Fund helps us provide the patrol activities of the Travis County Constable.

- Judy and Richard Greffe
- Janice Pierce and Don Greffe
- Brian and Ilene Novy
- Tom and LaVonne Rogers
- Marjeanne Rutt
- Lydia Travis
- Ed and Carolyn Weeren
- (and apologies to anyone whose donation we might have missed!)

## **Deer Rutting Season**

*- Wildlife Management Committee*



November through December is deer mating season in Texas, also known as “rutting season.” During this time, we all need to use extra caution; deer are paying attention to one another and not to humans and cars. You’ll probably see more mature male deer than usual, and at times females will be scurrying ahead of them. Be careful, as they may dart in front of walkers, runners, cyclists, and moving cars. Give them plenty of space. Keep dogs on a leash at a safe distance from the deer.

Given the frequency with which cars and deer collide, it would be prudent to check your auto insurance to ensure you have adequate “Collision – Other” coverage, which applies to such incidents. Recently, an encounter with a deer on Greystone Drive required more than \$3,000 in repairs, though the apparent damage was small!

If you’re a gardener with a medium or large agave plant within a deer’s reach, you might want to put a barrier around it during mating season. Male deer like to rub the velvet off their antlers using the agave spines, destroying the plant’s big wide leaves in the process.

To report an injured or dead deer, call 311. Be prepared to provide a precise address where the animal can be located.



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## Ammonium Nitrate Concerns

— Alan Carson

Texas City in 1947; West, Texas in 2013; and now Beirut, Lebanon. They have something in common -terrible loss of life and property involving ammonium nitrate. What are the chances of such a disaster in Austin?

Ammonium nitrate (AN) is primarily used as a fertilizer. In 2017, over a million tons were produced. It is composed of three gases, nitrogen, oxygen, and ammonia and is a stable material if stored and handled properly. The reason it can be hazardous is explained by a noted authority, Dr. Josh Bloom: "Those trapped gases are none too happy about being crammed together in a little molecule. No, sir, they want their freedom and it can take a very small nudge, physical or chemical, to grant them their wish." An example is when AN is exposed to burning material: the heat causes AN to release oxygen (of which it contains about 60% by weight), which accelerates the combustion, which releases more oxygen, which eventually results in an explosion. Under certain conditions, AN will explode without a flame because it produces heat as it decomposes. If there is a sufficient quantity of AN, it can generate enough heat to catch fire. When mixed with fuel oil, it becomes an industrial explosive, commonly used in quarries and mines. AN was used in 1995 to destroy the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

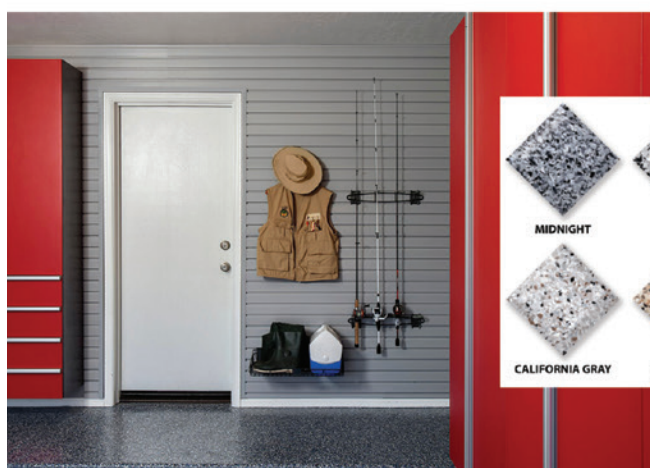
After the West disaster in 2013, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) prepared and issued NFPA 400, Hazardous Materials Code in 2018, which has been adopted by the State of Texas. The new code limits the allowable quantities of AN for storage to 1000 pounds, enough to fill a large blue recycling cart. The West explosion involved 30 tons of AN, or 60 times the current allowable quantity. The Beirut disaster involved 3,300 tons, which would fill 66 large truck trailers. The new code also requires that storage structures be non-combustible, and sprinklered, which would provide fire protection and cooling of the AN.

Could an explosion due to AN occur here? The chances are very remote, and it would have to be due to someone violating the code. An example would be a person storing large quantities of AN in a wooden shed that is struck by lightning.





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