



Volume 18, Number 01

January 2021

www.circlecranch.com

Circle C Newsletter: January 2021

Friday, January 1, 2021

New Year's Day – HOA Office Closed

Wednesday, January 20, 2021

6:30pm Candidate Meet & Greet

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

6:30pm Circle C HOA Board Meeting

CCHOA Board Meeting

The Circle C HOA Board of Directors will meet on Wednesday, January 27, at 6:30pm via ZOOM. Links to the ZOOM meetings and meeting agendas may be found on the website at www.circlecranch.com under the "Resource" tab. Homeowners must be logged onto the site to view agendas and find the link to the ZOOM meetings. Homeowners may sign up to speak at the meeting by calling the HOA manager at 512-288-8663 or emailing info@circlecranch.info.

Call for HOA Board Candidates

Do you know homeowners in Circle C that are smart, good with communication, and fun to be around? Please consider nominating them for the HOA Board of Directors. Two positions are open, and we are looking for smart, responsible volunteers willing to donate an hour of their time per week to serve on the board. Candidate forms may be found on our website at www.circlecranch.com under the "Resource" tab. For any questions or concerns, please call our Circle C HOA manager, Karen, at 512-288-8663 or email her at info@circlecranch.info.

Candidate Meet & Greet

The Circle C HOA will hold a virtual Candidate Meet & Greet for board member candidates on January 20th at 6:30pm. Check the Circle C HOA website for the ZOOM link to join the Candidate Meet & Greet. Questions will be taken directly from the "chat" option on ZOOM.

HOA Board Member Election & Annual Meeting

The HOA Board Member election will be held at the virtual Annual Meeting on March 10th. More information can be found on the website at www.circlecranch.com under the "Resource" tab. For any questions or concerns, please call our Circle C HOA manager, Karen, at 512-288-8663 or email her at info@circlecranch.info.

Electronic Voting

The Circle C HOA Board is pleased to offer electronic voting again this year. Those who have provided email addresses will receive an email invitation to vote. If you have not yet provided a valid email address, please visit the HOA website at www.circlecranch.com and click on the "Voter Registration" button. You will need a registration code which may be found on your Semi-Annual Billing Statement.

Voting by paper ballot is another option. Election ballots/ proxies are located on the back of the semi-annual statements and are due by March 8, 2021. For a replacement absentee ballot/proxy, please email info@circlecranch.info or call 512-288-8663.

Annual Report to the Membership

The 2020 Annual Report to the membership from the Board of Directors will be printed in the March 2021 newsletter. A copy will also be posted on our website and available at the HOA office during the month of March 2021.

Annual Assessments and an Increase in Dues

Annual assessments for 2021 will be mailed on the 1st of February and are due on March 1st. Ballots and proxies for the election of HOA Board Members will be printed on the back of the assessments, and the election will be held at the virtual Annual Meeting on March 10th. There are three available options to pay your assessments.

- Mail your check to PO Box 163541, Austin, TX 78716
- Make your payment using Bill Pay through your financial institution.
- Use the "On-line Payment" option through the Circle C HOA website. (There is a 2% convenience fee for this option)

Payments will NOT be accepted at the HOA Office or in the drop box outside the office. Please do not staple your check to your invoice. Please do not postdate your check. If you have questions regarding your assessment, please contact the financial office at 512-451-9901.

Due to costs related to aging infrastructures throughout Circle C—including pool, pumps, pool filters, irrigation repairs and replacements (part of the Escarpment Loop project), building repairs, and signage replacements—the Circle C HOA dues will increase 4.8% for 2021. The annual cap will thus change from \$706 to \$740.

Reduced Fees. Not Reduced Service.

I'm now offering **reduced listing fees** exclusively for my neighbors in Circle C. Because every dollar counts, and my goal is to make you money *and* save you money.

To do this, I invest deeply in your property. At **zero cost to the seller**, I provide:

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Conspiracy Theories and CC&R Votes

Sure, conspiracy theories can be great fun, and sometimes the theories turn out to be correct (as was the case with Richard Nixon), but we promise that there are no hidden meanings or agendas in the proposed amendments for our Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) for Circle C.

Right now, it is looking like the proposed amendments will not pass. This is due to lack of voting. When asked why more people are not voting, we were told that the “wording is confusing” or that the items should not have been bundled into three categories. We’ve published articles and wording explanations on our website and we’ve mentioned that the bundling was for ease of voting (three easy votes instead of nine separate ones). We’ve listened to feedback and requests for changes from our homeowners for years now and have done the best we could in presenting CC&R amendments that fairly represent homeowners.

For instance, there are several homeowners in Avana that thought they were purchasing homes in Circle C. They thought their homes were in Circle C because some of their neighbors—on the same streets—are in Circle C. Sadly, however, there are pockets in Avana called “the Rowell” that are not within Circle C boundaries. They have been asking for help in joining our community. Their neighbors—that do live in Circle C—have also asked for help in bringing in the rest of the Avana community into Circle C. Doing so would help bring in assessment fees that could contribute to needed repairs to our infrastructures. This would help to lessen increases in current homeowner assessments.

Other homeowners have asked why larger houses get more votes. Some have complained that developers sit on unfinished lots on their streets for far too long. We’ve tried to address all of these concerns in our amendment proposals.

Below is one more explanation of the amendment proposals. We hope that homeowners will read these and be inspired to vote. If there is still confusion or concerns, please feel free to call our HOA manager, Karen, at 512-288-8663 or email info@circlec ranch.info.

Item 1:

Article I. Section 1: **Adds the term “Development Lot” to the CC&Rs.** This defines a lot owned by a developer. Adding this term allows us the ability to use language later in the CC&Rs that determine how best to handle lots with unfinished projects for long periods of time. We would like to collect 25% of assessment dues for unfinished projects that sit over six months after a certificate of occupancy for residence is issued. This helps us to pay for expenses while trying to keep homeowner dues at a minimum.

Article I. Section 3: **Allows the Board to add up to 200 lots to our community within a 12-month period.** This was written for the Rowell in Avana where houses are not on Circle C property. We would like the ability to welcome these homeowners into our community.

Article II. Section 2: **Changes our voting to one vote per lot for homeowners** instead of a point system that gives more points to larger homes of higher value. Also, Development Lots that pay dues would have ¼ vote per lot.

Article III. Section 3: **Sets a uniform assessment rate** instead of the current system that bases amount on tax appraisal values. Development lots would also pay 25% of assessment rate.

Item 2:

Article V. Section 3 (k): **Changes the number of times per week homeowners may leave trash bins out to only one time per week** (not two, as is currently written). Bins may be brought to the street the day before pick-up and must return to screened or hidden spots (not visible from the streets) the day after pick-up.

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CCHOA NUMBERS

HOA Mgmt Officeinfo@circlec ranch.info or 512-288-8663
HOA Financial Officetgiles@mgilescpa.com or 512-451-9901
Aquatics Director director@ccswim.net or 512-288-4239
Newsletter Publisher
Peel, Inc. advertising@PEELinc.com or 512-263-9181

Circle C Amenities

Circle C Avaña Pool 512-292-1518
Circle C Café 512-288-6058
Circle C CDC 512-288-9792
Circle C Swim Center 512-288-6057
Circle C Community Center Pool 512-301-8259
Grey Rock Golf Course (*City Owned/Operated*) 512-288-4297
Grey Rock Tennis Club 512-301-8685
Circle C Grey Rock Pool 512-291-8398

CIRCLE C GATED COMMUNITIES

Enclave off Spruce Canyon (KB)
Spectrum Management 512-834-3900
Enclave off La Crosse (Streetman)
Plateau Property Management Rosalyn Peterson, 512-441-1041
Fairways Estates
Spectrum Management 512-834-3900
Park West
Goodwin Management Marilyn Childress 512-502-7509
Muirfield
Real Manage Tom Ramirez-Boldo, 866-473-2573
Avana Estates
Relevant Management Kim Todd, 512-580-4212

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Russ Hodes President
Natalie Placer McClure Vice President
Michael Chu Treasurer
Steve Urban Secretary

Kim Ackermann, Alton (A.E.) Martin, Jason Bram,
Board Members

Contact the Board at: directors@circlec ranch.info

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

City of Austin Solid Waste 512-974-1945
Dead Animal Collection 512-974-2000
Abandoned Vehicle 512-974-8119
Pothole Complaints 512-974-8750
Stop Signs 512-457-4885
Street Light Maintenance 311

Schools

Clayton Elementary 512-841-9200
Kiker Elementary 512-414-2584
Mills Elementary 512-841-2400
Bear Creek Elementary 512-414-0040
Cowan Elementary 512-841-2700
Bailey Middle 512-414-4990
Gorzycki Middle School 512-841-8600
Bowie High School 512-414-5247

UTILITY PROVIDERS

Electric Pedernales Elec. 512-219-2602
City of Austin. 512-494-9400
Texas Gas Service 800-700-2443
Water City of Austin 512-972-1000
MidTex Water Company 866-654-7992
Solid Waste City of Austin 512-974-1945
Post Office Oak Hill Station 800-275-8777

Around Circle C

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Article V. Section 1: **Defines “residential purposes” as using the house as “a place of abode”, and also removes original language that prevented people from working from home.**

Article V. Section 3 (b): **Clarifies that limited business use will be allowed in residential homes.** This is self-explanatory. How many of us work from home now?

Article V. Section 3 (m): **Allows recreational equipment (i.e., basketball nets) to be placed in the front yard.** Permanent ones would still require approval by the Architectural Committee, however.

Item 3:

Article VIII. Section 2: **Allows future amendments to be passed with 50% + 1 of votes or by HOA Board (to conform to current city or state laws).** Future amendments would be made by one of two ways: (1) by members (with fifty percent plus 1 of total eligible votes); or (2) by the Board of Directors as necessary to conform to current U.S., state, or local laws.

Remember that your HOA Board members are your neighbors. We are not tricksters trying to sneak in any extra amenities for ourselves. We are simply volunteers, voted into office by you to serve the community. We would love to see more of you at the board meetings and hear your suggestions. We really do listen. We really do care.

There are two positions open on the board and we would love to see more of our residents get involved. Join us on the board and work together with us. And in the meantime, please vote!

Follow-Up on the Circle C Mask-Making Team

'Tis the season of giving. Here in Circle C, we have a community of givers. The following story demonstrates the kind of people we have in our neighborhood. To all of you who contribute to helping others: a big thank you and a virtual hug. With masks on, of course.



To all of you who contribute to helping others: a big thank you and a virtual hug.

With masks on, of course.

The Backstory

Last May, the Circle C Newsletter featured a story about a team of Circle C Mask Makers that formed in March 2020 when thousands of healthcare workers were working without personal protective equipment (PPE), putting themselves and their own families at risk from infection. A nurse in Seattle proposed a nationwide “100 Million Mask Challenge” for Americans to provide homemade cloth masks for local healthcare workers.

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Ronda Johnson of Teamlukehopeforminds.org thanks Marcia for her generous donations with the sale of every home sold in Circle C Ranch!

Marcia has worked in the Circle C Ranch neighborhood since 1999 and has sold these homes:

5608 Beachmont Court
6809 Beatty Lane
11000 Bexley Lane
5711 Bexley Court
10225 Broom Flower Drive
7000 Colberg Court
9109 Colberg Drive
5201 Corrientes Cove
7105 Doswell Lane
10413 Foxglove Court
5764 Gorham Glen Lane
11420 Lafitte Lane
11009 Maelin Drive

6508 Nusser Lane
10620 Redmond Road
10512 Redmond Cove
10803 Redmond Cove
5914 Rickerhill Lane
6201 Skahan Lane
11227 South Bay Lane
6813 Tanaqua
6407 Tasajillo
6612 Toolwrith Lane
10105 Wildflower Lane

...and MANY more!!

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★★★★★ "As one of the original residents of Circle C Ranch, I hired Marcia to sell my large home on Skahan Lane. Marcia Pastrana worked hard to negotiate a contract in order to help us get into our new home. Marcia found our new home and did that deal too!" - Jennifer M.

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Circle C resident **Niki Nislar Ratliff** read an article about this challenge and posted it on the Circle C Facebook page.

Several of our residents immediately rose to the challenge by pulling out old, dusty sewing machines and fabric to sew makeshift masks. Those that could not sew offered to donate old sheets, clothes, or leftover fabric for material. The endeavor was mentioned on our neighborhood Facebook group and in just three days, a team of 80 volunteers had requests for over 800 masks and needed a strategist and coordinator. Resident **Aileen Chen** offered to organize the group and Niki gratefully accepted.



Doreen Landrum



Rita and Chris Noak



Meena Matai and Family



Niki Nislar Ratliff

Aileen divided the volunteers into three teams (materials, product development, and sewists), and created forms and trackers for managing mask requests/distribution and donations.

Resident **Doreen Landrum** offered to design a pattern so the mask-making process could be streamlined and residents **Rita and Chris Noak** managed the sourcing and prep of materials. By April the mask-making team had grown to 150 volunteers. Together, these Circle C residents worked to create, donate, and deliver over 700 masks in only 7 days!

The Update

That was where our newsletter article ended—but not where the venture stopped. The team members continued to grow, the movement continued to flourish, and the Circle C Mask Makers continued to produce. In May, the team offered masks to Circle C residents in need and that was when **Meena Matai** stepped in to coordinate communications. Aileen tells us that



by May, the team had made and delivered, “a staggering 4,000 masks to 200+ organizations—mostly to healthcare and essential workers—and to Circle C’s more vulnerable population”.

Every evening, each volunteer was thanked by name on the private Facebook page along with pictures of their masks. “You sacrificed your personal and family time to produce masks, prepare materials, coordinate pick-ups,” Aileen told them. “You raised your hand when we needed a production push, when you already had a lot on your plate.”

The gratitude was returned. Aileen often opened her front door to find little surprises like white orchids and homemade fig jam on her front porch. She also received countless thank you cards and handwritten notes.

An outpouring of pictures of healthcare workers in homemade-masks along with thank yous, several with the hashtag #HealthHeroes rolled in from various locations including Dell Children’s Trauma Surgery teams, Austin Oaks Hospital, Austin Emergency Center, St. David’s South Austin Medical Center, Texas Heart and Vascular, Texas Oncology Round Rock, Southwest Pediatrics, Hill Country Nursing and Rehabilitation, Resolutions Hospice, and Brookdale Beckett Meadows. The team also provided masks to Austin Resource Center for the homeless, Meals on Wheels, and SAFE Alliance.

One afternoon, Aileen’s daughter approached her mom to show the tiny mask she had made for the tooth fairy that would inevitably visit that evening. Her daughter wanted to ensure the tooth fairy would also be kept safe from the virus as well. “That was a proud parenting moment for me,” says Aileen.

Fundraising for the Central Texas Food Bank

Many Circle C residents, particularly recipients of the masks, donated money to the effort, and soon the team had nearly \$9,400 in donations. They needed approximately \$4,000 for materials and supplies, so the remaining \$5,400 was earmarked for the Central Texas Food Bank.

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Around Circle C

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First, however, these savvy women wanted to see if they could increase that amount. **Meena Matai**, a research engineer for Cirrus Logic, asked if they might be interested in helping match some of the donations. “Cirrus Logic has always been very supportive of the Austin community in general, so when I reached out to them, they were more than happy to match our group’s donations,” she explains. At that point in time, the Circle C Mask-Makers only had \$4,000 to donate and Cirrus Logic matched that, making the total \$8,000. Siete Family Foods, who had offered to match any donations made before May 31, 2020 to the Central Texas Food Bank, ended up matching the \$8,000 amount, bringing the total to \$16,000 in donations. As more donations trickled in, the mask-makers received another \$2,800. In the end, the Circle C Mask-Makers donated a grand total of almost \$19,000 to the Central Texas Food Bank. “As every dollar can help create eight meals, that translates to about 152,000 meals!” exclaims Aileen.

The Support for Each Other

The project provided hope and togetherness for the team members. “This initiative reminded me how positive and giving people can be, even amidst so much uncertainty,” Aileen tells us. When these hard-working givers grew tired, they leaned on each other and discovered comfort in the encouraging words of their newfound friends.

Resident Doreen Landrum wrote to the group:

“You brought a sense of community when we have been so isolated. You created a sense of control when we have been feeling so helpless. You fostered hope when we have been so worried. You encouraged us to add beauty and whimsy to ease the resentment we felt at wearing these. You reminded us that people can be good and kind and helpful when we’ve been frustrated at seeing the actions of others. You offered a task to do and a thing to produce when we were lamenting all the activities we were missing. And you presented an opportunity for us to focus on helping others when we were feeling disheartened by **all that we ourselves had lost.**”

From Strangers to Friends

By mid-July, the team had grown to 180 members and had created a total of over 6,500 masks in a total time period of only four months. “This mask project was something so many of us felt compelled to help with at a critical moment with an urgent need,” says Aileen.

The team decided July would be a good time to wrap things up. By then, masks were much more readily available, and it was time for the team members to get back to their own families.

Aileen addressed the group:

“Hi Team. How can four months feel so long and yet so fleeting? What a wonderful journey this project has been the past four months, and how much we have achieved!

Our group’s mission from the get-go was to provide cloth

masks to those who needed them and to curb community spread when Austin had a shortage of PPE. Now that PPE is more widely available and most of our volunteers need to take a break or stop all together, it seems time to dedicate our energy elsewhere.”

For those interested in continuing the movement, Aileen mentioned there were 160 or so remaining requests for masks. (These requests were completed in a mere three days!) Aileen also listed other ways to help out, such as sewing sternum heart pillows for the Heart Hospital or joining the national *MasksNow* project.

The ironic part? Even though this mask-making team was composed of strangers within a community working together on a common goal—to fight the spread of a dangerous virus—it was the virus that prevented the team members from getting to know each other in person. “Almost all communication was done through Facebook and Facebook Messenger,” Aileen confesses, “I actually have not met most of the volunteers! If I passed by some volunteers during walks around the neighborhood, it’s very likely we may not even recognize each other.” She is quick to add, “We will change that as soon as it’s safe to have larger gatherings.”

Speaking of Gratitude

The initiative and efforts of Doreen, Niki, and Rita made this project possible. Aileen wanted to ensure that all of the helpers receive the proper credit. Every single person—the sewists, the people who prepped materials, and those who ran errands—was crucial to the success of the cause. A special shoutout goes to the following who continuously contributed: **Lisa Andrews, Kathy Bartfield, LaShelle Cargil, Hara Cootes, Diane Dalton, Sybil Momi** (and her friends from outside the community), **Linda Dismuke, Nancy Elton, Michelle Gaines, Lillianne Goeders, Cheryl Grant, Shelly Haines, Anita Howe, Li Huang, Diana Hubbard, Shilpa Kerkar, Chrissie Laird, Deborah Marcus, Marion Olguin, Olga Ovcharenko, Lisa Peters, Gwen Price, Wanda Ramiller, Sarah Samarchi, Sanyogita Tate, Elvia Trautman, Yousra Wafa, Mariah Watkins, Lisa Williams**, and so many others. Many residents also helped by generously contributing monetary donations or materials. Some donated their most precious fabrics to help keep strangers safe. All of these people deserve a thank you for their individual contributions toward a common goal of helping others.

“What an amazing experience this was!” proclaims Aileen Chen. “The way that people in our community came together in times of need—not just with this mask initiative but in the myriad of ways that we frequently read about on the Circle C Residents Facebook page and in our newsletters—and I’m sure so much more is happening without recognition—shows what a giving and conscientious community this is.”

We couldn’t agree more Aileen.

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Around Circle C



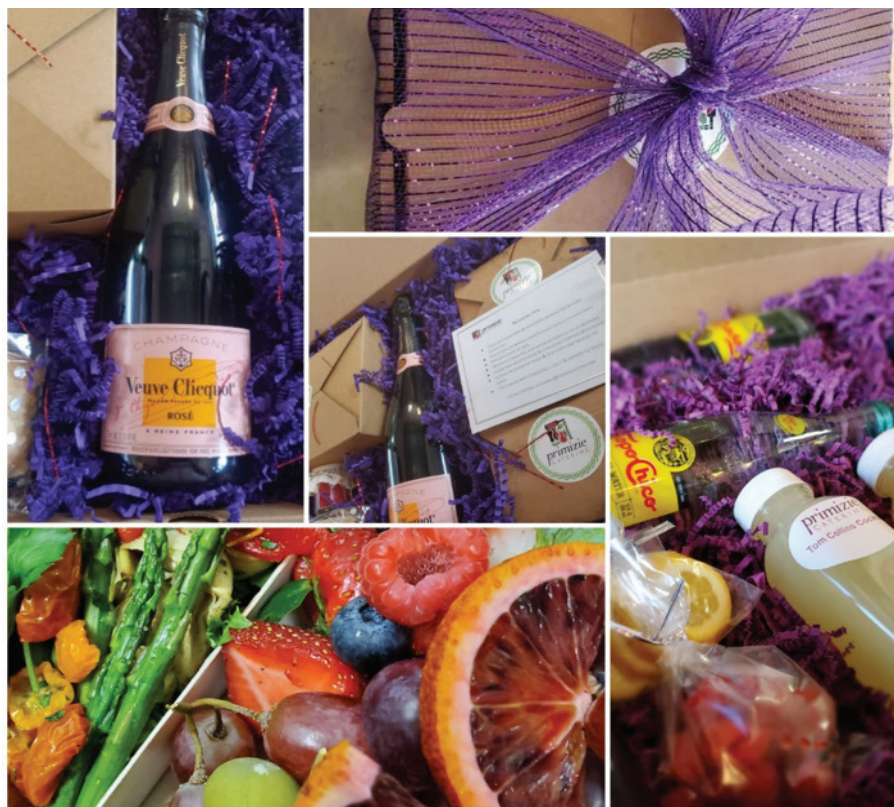
Circle C Cafe
Hours: Monday - Friday 11am—7pm

Phone: 512.288.6058

Email: Café@circleCcatering.com

JANUARY 2021

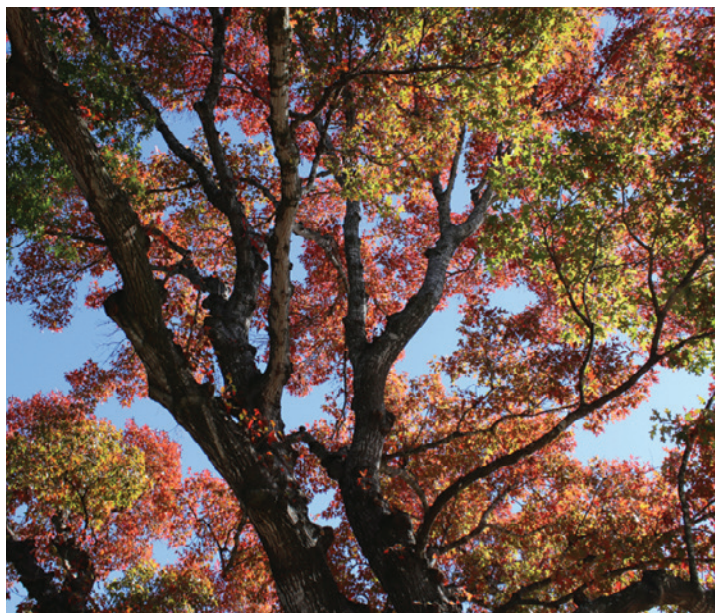
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sh					1 CLOSED	2 CLOSED
3 CLOSED	4 Shrimp Scampi w/ Linguini + Salad	5 GF Pomegranate Chicken Roasted Potatoes Veggies	6 Beef Stroganoff Egg Noodles + Salad	7 GF Grilled Chicken Citrus Beurre Blanc Rice Pilaf + Roasted Veggies	8 Chicken Fried Steak Mashed Potatoes + Veggies	9 CLOSED
10 CLOSED	11 GF Green Chili Chicken Enchiladas + Green Rice and Black Beans	12 GF Deep Eddy Lemon Chicken w /fig Polenta + Veggies	13 GF Harissa Salmon Winter Quinoa + Veggies	14 Chicken Parm Pasta + Salad	15 Pot Roast + Mashed Potatoes and Veggies	16 CLOSED
17 CLOSED	18 Chicken Piccata Pasta + Veggies	19 Meatloaf w/ charred tomato sauce + veg Mashed Potatoes	20 GF Chicken Veracruz w/ veggies over white rice	21 GF Bacon Wrapped Pork Tenderloin + Polenta + Veggies	22 Chicken Fried Chicken Mashed Potatoes Veggies	23 CLOSED
24 CLOSED	25 Spinach + Mushroom Lasagna Salad and Garlic Bread	26 GF Chicken Coq Au Vin Root Veg + Risotto	27 GF Shrimp Creole Dirty Rice + Salad	28 GF Chicken Florentine Roasted Veggies + Roasted Potatoes	29 Beef Tenderloin + Truffle Mac + Green Beans	30 CLOSED
31	Café is Open Mon—Fri from 11am—7pm for Curbside Pick-up. Dinner Specials are served from 5pm—7pm		Email your order for the day week or month Café@CircleCcatering.com Include: Full Name Number of Meals Date + Menu Item Vehicle Description We encourage pre payment w/ CC or Venmo @primizieatx			



Let's be Valentines! Be on the lookout for Valentines boxes coming to Circle C Cafe.

WILDFLOWER NOTES

Here's what's likely to be blooming, fruiting or setting seed in Central Texas this time of year. Look for these native plants around town and perhaps in your own backyard!



SHUMARD'S OAK (*QUERCUS SHUMARDII*)

Writing this in mid-December, the canopies of Shumard's oaks in Austin are just starting to blush along their most exposed areas, like massive, sun-kissed shoulders. In January, their deep scarlet leaves may mostly be shed, but there's still much beauty to behold. The wonderfully furrowed, streaked gray bark of *Quercus shumardii* is lovely in itself, but these trees also strike attractive figures, boasting thick, often horizontal branches and a tendency toward knots (shall we call them beauty marks?). Those bends and bumps make great resting spots for squirrels and birds, which feed on the acorns. Horace's duskywing butterflies have Shumard's oaks to thank for sustenance, as well (they're a larval host for the species' caterpillars). When warmer months roll back around and leaves have returned, humans will be thanking these oaks, too, for supplying that most crucial Texan resource: shade and lots of it!

LEATHERSTEM (*JATROPHA DIOICA*)

Though certainly small in stature compared to Shumard's oaks, this West Texas native also looks gorgeous in the buff — without leaves or flowers, that is. A member of the spurge family (like candelilla or cardinal feather, also interesting-looking, drought-tolerant plants), leatherstem takes its name from its most striking feature: that smooth, reddish-brown bark. Small whitish flowers adorn stems from spring into summer, but that's just floral icing on the metaphoric cake. This plant makes a stunning, unexpected edition to rock or cactus gardens, offering a bit of visual variety and some dark lines among green leaves or paddles and light-reflecting stone. Some species distribution maps show *Jatropha dioica* as nearby as Bexar and Bandera counties, but your best bet for seeing it in Central Texas is at the Wildflower Center. Find one striking a handsome pose in our Theme Gardens.



Find these plants at the Wildflower Center and learn more about them at wildflower.org/plants-main.

Submitted by Amy McCullough, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Photography by Amy McCullough (Shumard's oak) and Sally and Andy Wasowski (leatherstem)

LAST CALL FOR FORTS!

Time is running out to see (or revisit) Fortlandia's current batch of fantastic forts. Enjoy this collection of creative structures in our Texas Arboretum while the winter weather is inviting and the warm sun is welcome. Fortlandia is open through Jan. 31, 2021. Entry is included with admission, and admission is always free for members! *Information and reservations at wildflower.org/fortlandia.*

Circle C Spotlight



Aspen Kissinger is a Circle C teenager currently living in Scotland where she attends the University of Edinburgh. She was lovely enough to share pictures with us and speak with us about growing up in Circle C and what her life is like now.

Q: How long have you lived in Circle C?

A: I've lived in the same house my entire life.

Q: What were some of your favorite experiences living here?

A: Growing up in Circle C was so special because it helped me have such a strong connection with the same community as I grew older. I live in a cul de sac, so as a kid every night we would go outside and all the other kids in houses nearby would come play. We would bike, play tag and hide-and-seek, and scooter while our moms were drinking beers and talking in my driveway. Now, when I drive to my house, I often have to slow down to avoid groups of kids playing in the same places I did years ago. I get to babysit and tutor many of the kids who live around me now, making me feel more connected even though I am not the one on the bike now.

Q: Do you have any special moments that stand out in your memories of Kiker?

A: I have fond memories there. Memories like learning to love reading, watching belly dancers, trying different foods at Cultures night, and realizing the Cafeteria lady knew each and everyone's name at school! The thing I liked most about Kiker was how close of a community it was. By fifth grade, I knew nearly all the kids in my class, and I knew dozens of teachers, parents, and administrators. It was a tight-knit school.

Last year I started going back to Kiker weekly to pick up a 3rd grader and drive her home for tutoring. Every Thursday I was there, I would recognize new things. I would see Mrs. Swint and Mrs. Schultz, I would see the bike rack where I used to leave my bike at each morning, and I would see the yellow vests I wore when I got to be crossing guard for the week. I would even see kids I knew from the summer swim team leaving Kiker, proving just how interconnected Circle C can be.

Q: You went to Gorzycki for middle school. How was that?

A: I went to Gorzycki middle school after getting denied acceptance to Kealing Middle School. Not getting into Kealing was one of the few events in my life that really impacted me. All of my friends got in and most ended up going, so it was a big deal for me that I didn't get in. My work ethic completely changed after that. My goal was to try my hardest in middle school and to get into LASA. And, I did that. For the next three years I became the type A person that I always could have been. I just didn't want it before then.

My mom uses the phrase "blessing in disguise" a lot and, for the most

part, I think it's just a way to rationalize something not going your way, but I really think going to Gorzycki was a blessing in disguise. Going to Gorzycki, was so much more convenient than Kealing and allowed me to continue a majority of the friendships I had from Kiker.

I have many bad and good things to say about Gorzycki. It provided incredible teachers, technology, a huge library that contributed to my success there. I became involved in dance and yearbook. I expanded my interests into new activities. My one critique of Gorzycki is how homogenous it is, and this goes along with Circle C as a whole. I think growing up in a place where every kid has the same skin color, socio-economic background, and cultural experiences as you can be inhibiting. The vast majority of Circle C is white, and minority students at GMS were rare. Living in a community like Circle C can make people unaware of communities and populations different from us. At GMS, everybody dresses similarly, values the same things, and has had similar backgrounds. I wish this was different.

Q: What was your inspiration to apply to LASA?

A: Frankly, I wanted to get revenge on Kealing for denying my acceptance in 5th grade. LASA has an amazing reputation and I knew I would fit in with all the nerds there. The one sad part was that my three best friends from middle school all went to different high schools. Twenty-five people from Gorzycki went to LASA, and I wasn't really friends with any of them. This concerned me but I never had trouble being in new places like this before and making friends, so the choice wasn't too hard.

Q: How did you get to and from home and LASA?

A: Most of the time during my freshman and sophomore year I rode the bus to school. My dad drove me to a stop nearly half a mile away from my house at 6:36 (we had it down) and I got on the bus to Kealing. At Kealing, half the kids would go into the middle school, and the other half of us would walk a block and wait to get on another bus to go to LASA. This was possibly the worst part of high school. Imagine being woken up from your first nap of the morning to get off a bus and sit at a cold, wet corner with 50 other kids, all waiting for a second bus to get to high school on time. When one of the second buses would come, every single kid would push their hardest to make it onto the bus. It was not the type of competition I was wanting each morning.

Junior and Senior year of high school I drove myself to school in "Marge", my blue Subaru Outback. I would often pick up friends on the way or drive a friend home as many people from LASA live in Circle C. I'm sure we've all seen the white circular stickers labelled "LASA" on one car or another.



Q: What are your experiences in working with children?

A: In middle and high school, I worked with the PALS program (Peer Assistance Leadership and Service) helping disabled students as well as students from lower-socioeconomic areas. On Tuesdays and

Thursdays at LASA, I drove to two different elementary schools to meet with the same kids each week. I worked with a Ugandan boy in Pre-K and a Hispanic boy in third grade. By the end of my time with them, it was very sad to say goodbye. We had created a bond together.

In my senior year of high school, I would drive to different kids houses after school, sometimes up to three a day, all in Circle C.

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I charged \$20 an hour and tutored math and reading from first grade levels to Algebra 2. Then I babysat on weekends. I made good money and learned how to manage my own time and income. I formed good relationships with many families and still sometimes keep in touch.



Q: Could you tell us about your artwork?

A: I started painting with my mom's old acrylic paints. In high school, I took an art class and learned how to grid my paintings and why you should never use black. I love drawing and other forms of artistic expressions, but painting is by far the most relaxing for me.

My paintings started with me trying to raise money for BLM charities and other local charities. I offered to paint pictures of anything people wanted for a \$5 or more donation. Most people wanted pictures of them with loved ones. Later, I realized that I could do the same for people I love. One of my favorite paintings is one of my grandma and grandpa in front of the sphinx.

Q: What artists inspire you and why?

My mom inspires me. I consider her to be one of the greatest artists in my life. She has been dabbling in art for as long as I remember and now has a small art studio. She is amazing at anything she touches. Now she is creating pottery. If you were to walk around our house, you would pass dozens of sculptures of animals with crowns and personified statutes. We like to joke about one of her self-portrait busts in our backyard. It always scares us when we look outside and think it's a person.



Q: You've traveled extensively. What are some of your favorite trips you've taken?

One of my favorites was Istanbul, Turkey. I was 12 years old and it was so different from any other place I had been. Istanbul is dense with a culture completely different from our own. The mosques were incredible and the grand bizarre was crammed with color and art.

Starting when I was 10 years old, my family has had a tradition of taking a month-long trip to somewhere different every summer. We started with France, Germany, Alaska, and then got more adventurous. In the past few years I have been to Russia, Kenya, and South Africa. One of the reasons I chose to go to school in Scotland is because we travelled here a few years back anticipating that I might go to school abroad. I chose to go to school in Europe partially because I wanted to continue travelling. It is much easier to travel from here where flights are cheaper and trains are everywhere.

Q: What places have you not seen yet that you would like to visit?

A: In Asia, I've only been to Turkey and Russia. I would like to go to Thailand, China, and other countries around central Asia.

Q: You are a runner as well. How did you discover running?

A: I played soccer for much of my youth so have always been good at running. Last year, my friends were training for a marathon, and I practiced with them. We ran around 15 miles a week from September through November. When COVID hit, I began running again. It got me out of my house when everything was locked down. Now that I'm in Scotland, I am running again. I run up a dormant volcano right by my flat and get to see views of the coast and the entire city of Edinburgh! This is much different than my normal run up Escarpment to HEB and back.



Q: Have any foreign places in particular resonated with you?

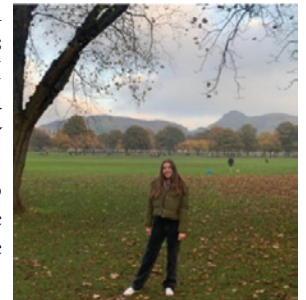
A: I don't think any foreign place has really resonated with me because of the fact that they are foreign. Even the place I chose to go to college in was foreign to me and did not really make me feel like I was in the right place until I actually got settled here and made friends. Every place feels a little bit different until I have people there to make it feel like home.

Q: Have you had any scary experiences in your travels?

A: I once rode an ostrich. They are faster than you would imagine. It was quite frightening.

Q: As an environmentalist, what areas are most important to you?

A: I don't think many people understand the severity of climate change. It even affects my decision to have a family one day. If I ever have kids, I will have to raise them on a dying planet. My mom always made me very cautious of packaging and being wasteful. Even though it was annoying as a kid to grab things out of the trash and put them in the recycling when my mom yelled at me, it made me cognizant of the items I use today.



A few years ago, I became pescatarian for both ethical and environmental reasons, and I haven't regretted it once. Not eating meat or even reducing consumption or red meat is one of the actions with the greatest impacts on the environment.

Q: What are your ideas on how best to help our environment?

Try eating less meat. Do vegetarian or pescatarian dinners a few times a week. Choose chicken over cow. Choosing oat milk or coconut milk instead of cow's milk is also helpful. Be aware of single use items you buy and the packaging/waste they bring. Stop buying cheap plastic toys. Stop buying goody bags with cheap items for kids' birthdays. Instead, buy items that can be reused. Thrifting is another thing I would recommend. Almost 50% of my clothes are from thrift shops. Besides being more affordable, buying used clothes helps to cut back on environmental and ethical consequences of fast fashion.

Q: You chose to attend college in Scotland. What led you to the University of Edinburgh?

I started looking abroad for schools a few years ago when my mom mentioned it might be a good option. I've always loved travelling and trying new things, so moving to a different country didn't feel like a big feat. The city of Edinburgh is known for being big, lively, and beautiful. The University of Edinburgh is a well-established university. They encourage international students, so it is not as hard to get into as an American.

The University of Edinburgh is the only international school I applied to. My final decision was between "CalPoly" (California Polytechnic State University) in San Luis Obispo, California and the University of Edinburgh.

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Circle C Spotlight

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Going abroad meant giving up the typical American college experience while going to California meant giving up going to an internationally recognized university in an amazing city. It was a difficult choice.

In the end, I chose Edinburgh. COVID-19 made this decision more difficult because I had to travel alone and had to quarantine for two weeks alone in a dorm room in a foreign country.

Q: Isn't it expensive to study abroad?

It's about 25K a year for tuition here. With traveling and boarding, the price becomes around 30-35K a year. This is much less than the cost of attending an out of state school in America. Scholarships for schools abroad aren't a thing, though.

Q: What are the benefits of studying in Scotland?



A: The biggest benefit is its location. I love Austin but wanted to go away for college to a completely new setting. Scotland is in Europe, so travelling to nearby countries is cheap and fast. During summers and on breaks, I have the option to travel with friends to many different European countries.

My university in particular has a great location in the city. The library and other central buildings are a 5-minute walk away. The history and relevance of Edinburgh drives in professors from all over the world as well as students. During my time here, I've met loads of Scottish, British, and Welsh people as well as Mongolian, Norwegian, Polish, and Japanese students.

Q: What are the disadvantages of studying in Scotland?

A: The main disadvantage of studying in Scotland, especially during coronavirus, is the distance from home. I won't be able to go home for Christmas this year because of the difficulty of travelling and quarantining two weeks when entering Texas and returning back to Scotland.

Another difficulty is the weather. The sky is gray a lot here and it rains almost every day. I have waterproof boots and lots of jackets, but the cold is still unfamiliar. I often catch myself wanting to go on runs and looking outside to see that it's pouring.

Q: Do they socially distance there and use masks?

Before I arrived, the UK was doing well COVID-wise. Masks were required inside public spaces, but most places were open for business. Since it has begun getting colder, the cases have gone up here, much like in the U.S. So, new restrictions have been put in place. Bars are closed and restaurants must close at 6. People aren't allowed in each other's household or in groups larger than 6. On the street, however, most people don't have masks on.

Q: Is there anything about being there that you would change if you could?

A: The typical freshman experience in the UK is getting a first week called "Freshers' Week". During this week students get to go to pubs and parties and meet new friends before classes start. Because of COVID this year, "Freshers' Week" was inhibited and not much partying was allowed. During this week, I was actually quarantining in my room like I had to do for the first two weeks after arriving.

I wish I could experience a real Freshers week. I also wish I could see my family for Christmas or they could visit me. All of my flat-mates are able to go home for a week or have their parents come visit them.

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I left in September of this year and most likely won't be returning home until May of next year.

Otherwise, I regret nothing about my decision to go here. I love the city and I have been able to form a nice social bubble and always be busy with one activity or another.

Q: What are some of the major differences of living there versus living here in the U.S.A.?

A: The humor here is the biggest difference. British people are much more open to making fun of one another for accents, differences, or just in general. This is all in good spirit. I think it's a difference in sensitivity, as Americans are careful to not offend anyone. British people are more open about joking with each other.

Critique of wealth is also a cultural difference I have noticed. "Tories" are the notoriously wealthy people in Britain (as well as a political party), and often get made fun of and criticized for their wealth.

The words and expressions they use here are a lot different than I imagined they would be. I've been here for nearly two months and I still pick up on new words or meanings every day. I have flat-mates from all parts of Great Britain, giving me a variation of different British slang that I am picking up on.



Q: How is the food different from here in the U.S.?

A: I can't speak too much to how restaurant food is different, as I haven't had many opportunities to fully eat out, so I end up cooking most of my food in the kitchen that I share with my flat-mates. Two American goods I have introduced here are pumpkin bread and snickerdoodles. Most of the food generally is the same, and their range of international food, with the exception of Mexican food, is phenomenal.

Q: Can you legally drink alcohol there? Do the kids hang out at bars?

A: The drinking age in the UK is 18, so I can legally drink here. College kids regularly go to pubs when they are open or drink at home. I used to imagine the American drinking culture to be much more extreme than anywhere else in the world but, after living in Britain, I have changed my stance. Most kids here grow up drinking from 13 or 14 years old with their parents and regularly drink with friends through their teenage years, so are very accustomed to the drinking lifestyle by the time they arrive at "uni" (the British word for college).

Q: Did you know anyone else going there before you went there? Did you meet any kids online beforehand?

A: I knew no one else going here beforehand but met one boy from San Antonio online who was coming here. He actually knew about LASA because the LASA quiz bowl team used to beat his high school's team regularly.

Q: What is your flat like?

A: We each have a room with our own bed, desk, storage, shower, and toilet. We all share a main room with a kitchen and living space. The flat is all girls. Although it holds 10 people, there are only 5 living here currently. Three rooms are unoccupied, and two rooms belong to girls who left to live at home since all of our classes are now online due to COVID. My flat-mates are incredibly nice and we all work very well together. We are from five different countries: Scotland, Britain, Singapore, Mongolia, and the US.

Q: What are your classes like?

A: My classes are all online. My lectures are all pre-recorded and I can watch them whenever I want. I have a few interactive parts of my course called tutorials, but they are online for now and most are



discussion boards where you respond to a prompt and comment on other people's responses.

I have three courses a semester, and most of my courses are graded heavily on a main essay or exam and little on coursework. Though I enjoy all my courses, it is really difficult to feel motivated and passionate about them when there is little interaction with your teachers and fellow students. Hopefully next year I will get to experience the true college experience where I will attend lectures and get to meet other students regularly. I am grateful for the flexibility that this year's schedule allows though. I can work whenever I feel like it and am able to plan things with my friends. This semester I am taking three courses: Sociology, Economic Principles, and International Development, Aid, and Humanitarianism. I can choose any courses within certain boundaries, and don't have to meet any requirements like taking specific math or English courses that many American schools may require. Next semester I am taking Sociology, Psychology of Music, and Cognitive Studies.

Q: What advice would you have for kids currently applying to universities?

A: I would encourage kids to apply to universities abroad! It's an option that not many students consider and the benefits of studying abroad are huge. Studying abroad means expanding your worldview and creating a network of global friends. I would encourage the University of Edinburgh even more because of the price and value of the school. For a world-renowned university, the price is average and American students can get into the school a lot more easily than students from the UK. Research the entry requirements for the university early and make sure you have those before your senior year of high school.

Q: Do you have a declared major? If so, what is it and why?

A: I'm majoring in sociology, the study of society, because I didn't really know what I wanted to do in college and I had to choose something. When I think of a dream job, it includes working with and helping the vulnerable: kids or homeless families. Sociology seemed like an interesting course that would equip me with skills to help me do that. One of the main differences between colleges in the US versus the UK is that in the UK you have to declare a major, or "course" as they call it, when you apply.

Q: Where do you see yourself in 5 or 10 years?

A: I have no concrete plans yet, but hopefully in 5 years I will be somewhere new. I want to live in as many places as I can and do as many different things as I can. I think it would be really cool to be a chef for a while for example. I wish to experience different things like that after college. I also might stay in academia and go to postgraduate school depending on how these four years at the university go.

Q: Do you have any goals in life? If so, what are they?

A: I want to be kind and share joy with others my entire life. I also want to give more than I take during my lifetime. Last, I want to continue to read books consistently throughout my life.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

A: Yes. If anybody would like to hear more about my experiences or would like to purchase a painting, feel free to email me at Aspen@Kissinger.com.

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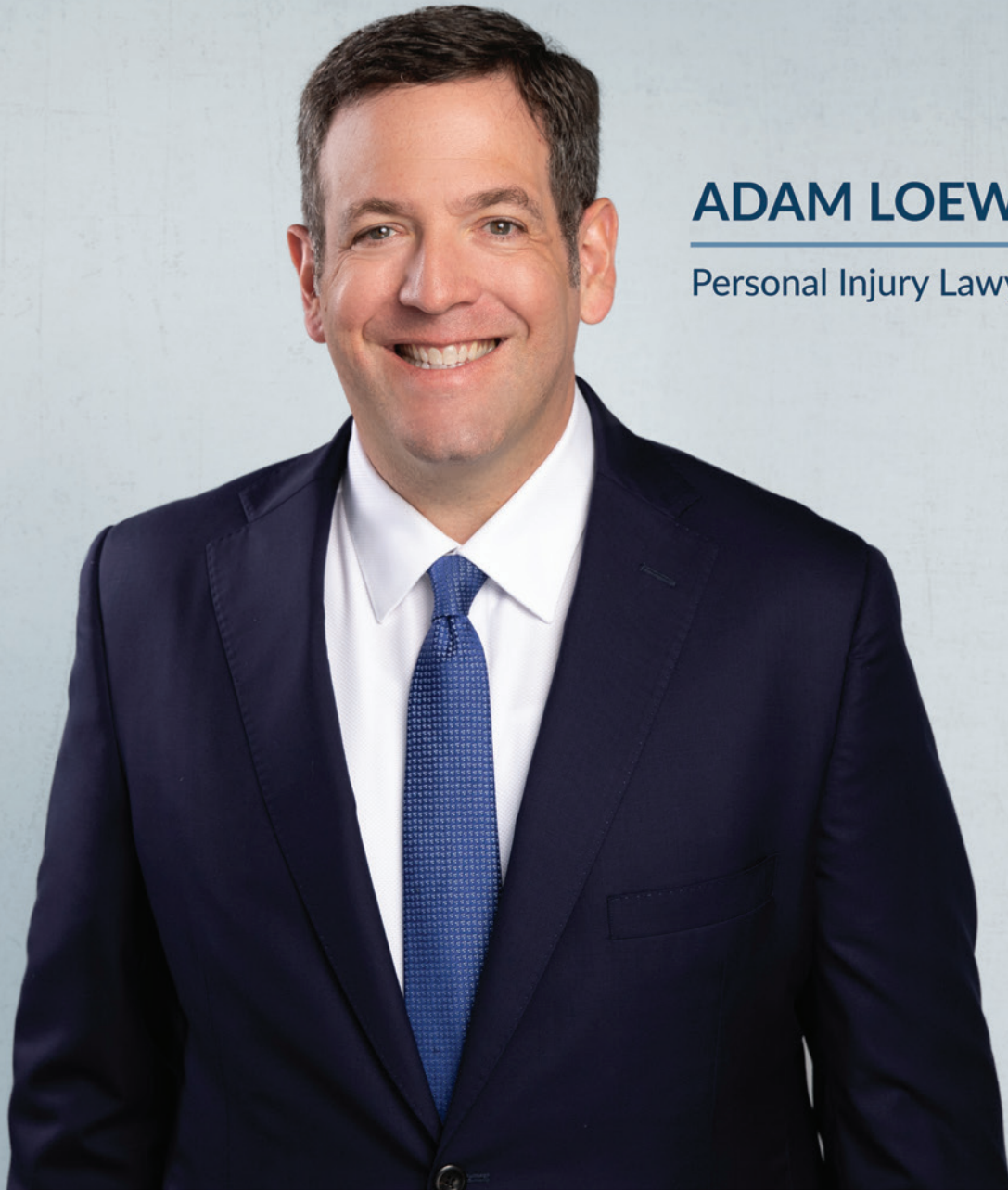
AQUATICS NEWS

Due to the continued increase in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and positivity rate, Austin Public Health has updated their guidelines and recommendations. Following these local health guidelines, the Swim Center will remain closed until the cases, hospitalizations and positivity rate come back down.

We are continuously monitoring the ongoing public health situation and will adjust our operations as needed to ensure the safety of our patrons, families, and team members. Please visit www.circlecranch.com

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1-story **"Active"** homes on market averages. Price \$755,444. 1 total homes on market now. Average price per foot \$268.46. Average days on market 3.

1-story **"Contract Pending"** homes on market averages. Price is \$589,000. 1 total homes under contract right now. Average price per foot \$199.39. DOM is 3.

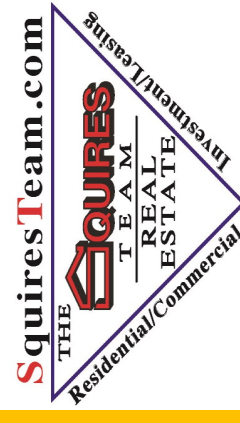
1-story **"Sold"** homes on market averages. Low price \$380,000. High price \$790,000. 103 total homes sold in 2020. Average price per foot \$222.82. Average days on market 24.

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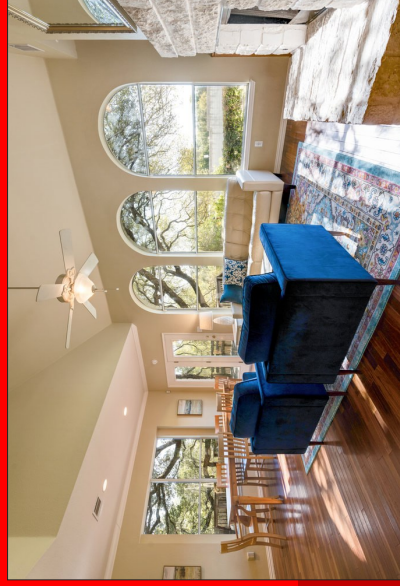
2-story **"Contract Pending"** homes on market averages. Low price \$529,000. High price \$659,000. 4 total homes under contract right now. Avg. price per foot \$223.03. Days on market is 8.

2-story **"Sold"** homes on market averages. Low price \$405,000. High price \$1,530,000. 224 total homes sold in 2020. Average price per foot \$200.15. Days on market 19.

**Circle C Ranch
Wildflower Park
10433 Snapdragon**



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