



South Threadgill Wins Holiday Block Contest, Again!

By: Drew Harris



Noel on the Mueller Control Tower by Bart Jacob



2600 Zach Scott courtyard (photo by Drew Harris)

As we do every year, The Front Porch Flyer recognizes the Mueller neighborhood block (not just individual house) with the most holiday spirit. This contest encourages neighbors to work together to bring the biggest, brightest holiday cheer, for the joy of the entire Mueller neighborhood.

Despite this year's quarantine quietness in the neighborhood (or perhaps partly due to it), many blocks did a fantastic job decorating, making this year a tough contest to judge. The winners from the last two years on Camacho and Antone again made their blocks resplendent and cheery.

Across Berkman, the garden court at 2600 Zach Scott (who previously won in 2017) stepped up their game further. In addition to the lights already suspended across the garden court, some of the balconies were utterly festooned with bright colorful lights.

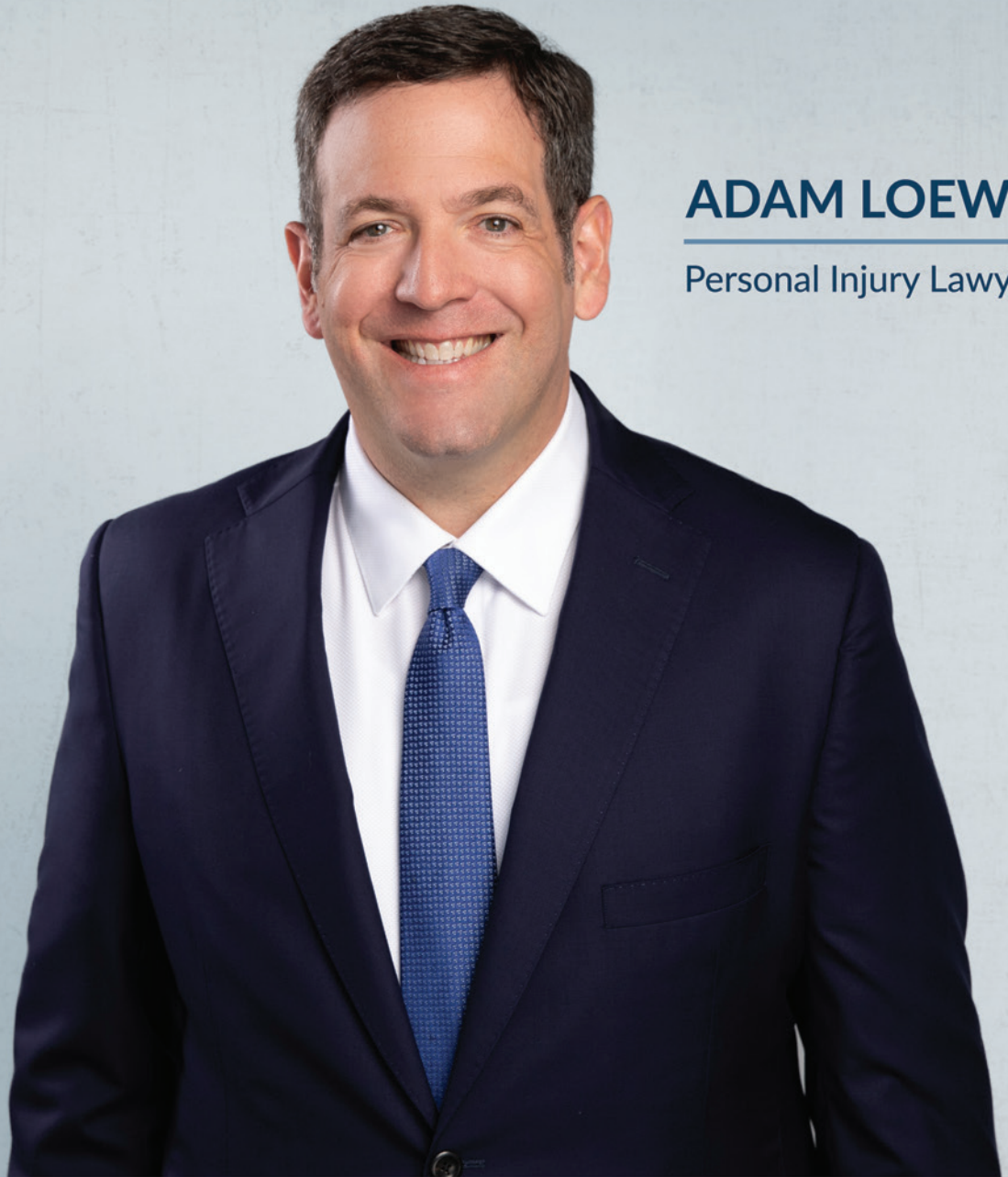
Herzog, a relatively new street just south of the H-E-B, made a stunning debut with impressive lights and yard decorations.



Upper Herzog (photo by Drew Harris)

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So having to pick a winner was a tough choice, but the prior 2016 block contest winners on Threadgill between McCloskey and Antone deserve the award this year! Both sides of the street were brightly lit and spirited, with huge inflatable decorations making kids feel like they were in wonderland.



Threadgill Street (photo by Emily Croce)



Santa Bear on Threadgill (photo by Emily Croce)

But tragedy struck this year (yeah so 2020). In early December some scrooge vandalized the giant inflatable Santa Bear that sits at Threadgill and Emma Long. Fortunately, the neighbors were able to get a replacement Santa Bear to share with the neighborhood. The Threadgill neighbors' efforts to not let some grinch ruin their vibrant Christmas display was definitely appreciated, and warrants recognition with this award!

So please join me in congratulating this block and its awesome neighbors for winning the 2020 Holiday Block Contest!

Past Mueller Holiday Block Winners

2019: Upper Camacho	2013: South Berkman
2018: 1900 block of Antone	2012: Gochman
2017: 2600 block of Zach Scott	2011: 4100 block of Threadgill
2016: South Threadgill	2010: Lawless
2015: 2000 block of Emma Long	2009: Lawless
2014: 2000 block of Antone	2008: Cal Rodgers

Letter from the Chair

Dear Neighbors,

I hope you had a safe and happy holiday season. With my term as Chair of the Mueller Neighborhood Association (MNA) coming to an end, I feel grateful to have had the opportunity to serve my community. I remember my first MNA meeting back in the fall of 2018 when I was recruited to run for a place on the Steering Committee and having only lived in Mueller for a couple of months. I'm glad I took advantage of the opportunity to get involved and give back to my neighborhood because I haven't looked back since.

I'm also incredibly proud of what we've accomplished on the 2020 Steering Committee. In addition to creating a standard style and format for the MNA's formal documents (think resolutions, letters of support, etc.), we've also embarked on major goals. Specifically, we've increased accessibility to our organization and have started conversations and set goals around building an equitable neighborhood.

Quarantining and social distancing have changed the ways we interact in our day-to-day lives.

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FRONT PORCH FLYER

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Believe it or not, the MNA was relatively new to meeting digitally, but we were able to adapt and, in the process, make our monthly meetings more accessible. Additionally, we've implemented a regular posting schedule on our social media pages and increased our footprint to Instagram. We want to make it convenient and easy for you to interact and engage with the MNA and stay up-to-date on what's happening in the neighborhood.

We are committed to building an equitable, inclusive, affirming community, and to do the work necessary to reach that goal. This year the Steering Committee and several neighborhood leaders participated in Dr. Joyce James' workshop, "A Groundwater Analysis of Racial Inequities," where we discussed and analyzed structural racism in historic and current context in a way that held us accountable for "turning the mirror inward" to examine systemic factors contributing to racial inequities. If we want a neighborhood that is safe and supportive of all communities, and especially our black community, then we (including the MNA) need to do the work to create that space.

I end my term proud of the work we've accomplished and the goals we've set to build a better community. I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to lead a dynamic organization. I also cannot thank my colleagues on the Steering Committee enough for all their hard work and leadership. I'm hopeful for the new year and look forward to seeing what 2021 has in store.

Take care,
John

Getting Together with Block 112

By Taylor Youngblood, Chair of the Block Captain Network

We know it's been difficult to connect with neighbors. We applaud all your efforts to reach out and stay in contact with your family, friends and neighbors. I want to share some great ideas that were recently shared with me.

Block 112 of our Mueller Block Captain Network, our only block with 3 co-captains, was busy last fall doing what they could to stay in touch with each other, check in, and to stay safe. Block 112 held a Doorstep Duet evening featuring local violin performers which was a fundraising opportunity that supported several local charities. They've gotten together socially distanced to have meals, movie screenings out of the garage, and even host a Halloween evening.

This block has been gathering outside in a socially distanced group about once a month to celebrate special occasions and new neighbors. They're sharing anniversary and birthday announcements, and really getting to know their neighbors. In their own words, "Considering, we are all relatively new to Mueller (oldest resident moved here in August 2019) I think we are doing a great job in connecting with one another." I agree!

We hope you draw inspiration from these ideas we share here in the Front Porch Flyer and we'd love to share more with you. From porch gatherings, music block parties, virtual bingo, zoom dinners, musical serenades and the like, I'm so blessed to call Mueller home and to witness such loving creativity.

If you would like to share your experiences being in the community in Mueller, please email fpf@muellerneighborhood.org. We love photos! If you'd like to know more about block captains and how you can get involved, co-chairs of 2-3 are welcome, please go to muellerneighborhood.org/block-captains/#. Renters and apartment dwellers are welcome and encouraged. We are still looking for captains for half of the apartment complexes and 40% of the residential blocks.



A Mueller Halloween provided by Block 112



Doorstep Duet provided by Block 112



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Top Things to Do for Wellness in the New Year

By Front Porch Flyer Staff

What a year 2020 has been, and as we kick off the new year, it's more important than ever to stay well and set our intentions for self-care. Lucky for us, there's so much that our community offers for fitness and wellness. Here's how we're keeping health a top priority in 2021.

Fresh air, green spaces

With eight signature parks, there's no shortage of green spaces, trails and ball courts in Mueller.

From sand volleyball courts and a dog run at Mary Elizabeth Branch Park, community pools at John Gaines Park and Ella Wooten Park, and multi-sport courts in Paggi Square, to public art and hike and bike trails in Lake Park, there's something for everyone. Latest to join the lineup is the one-acre Jessie Andrews Park, which opened last fall. The park boasts a central open lawn, shaded strolling paths, nature-inspired playscape, tables for games, and more. Plus, who can forget about our fabulous friend, Ocho, the towering octopus sculpture by artist Dixie Friend Gay? Whether you're stretching your legs and saying hello to neighbors while social distancing or beating the Texas heat in the summer at the interactive waterscape, Mueller offers an abundance of spaces to enjoy the great outdoors for years to come.

**Note: some facilities may be closed due to local COVID-19 guidelines*



Wellness in Mueller 1

Branch out on your workout

Same old workout starting to feel lackluster? Kick off the new year by challenging yourself to try something different at Mueller's various fitness studios. Lengthen and strengthen with barre3, get a total body reformer pilates workout at VBodies, elevate your heart rate at Orangetheory, customize your routine with TrainLifeFit, or get in touch with your inner zen at Yoga East Austin. Many of Mueller's studios offer options for various comfort levels, from in-studio classes, livestream/Zoom, outdoor sessions and/or personal training.



Wellness in Mueller 2

Restore and rejuvenate

When it comes to getting some R&R, there's no shortage of choices in our community, whether you're wanting to get the most out of a post-workout recovery or just looking for a way to treat yourself after the stressful holiday season. Restore Hyper Wellness has the latest and greatest with services ranging from cryotherapy and IV Drip Therapy to compression therapy and infrared sauna treatments. Get some "me time" with pampering massages and skin treatments at Massage Heights. Stand tall with consultations with professional Flexologists at StretchLab for increased mobility and alignment, or feel renewed with the team at RejuvaWell Whole Family Chiropractors.



Wellness in Mueller 3

Eat well, be well

Austin offers the luxury of having one of the best food scenes in the country and Mueller is a shining example with its diverse mix of local eateries and restaurants. Start the day with a delicious cup of joe at Halcyon or Golden Mylk Latte at Juiceland. Rebel Cheese remains the authority for vegan cheese plates, wines and other accoutrements, perfect for Meatless Monday, and when it comes to home cooking, there's no better time to support local and shop for produce and ingredients right at the source at the weekly Texas Farmers Market.



Wellness in Mueller 4

Patience 2021

Judith and Steve Katzman

We want this to be over. We're in a New Year. We've been adaptable enough and don't feel like we're asking too much. Pandemic fatigue kicked in long ago. While the vaccine is the light at the end of the tunnel, we are definitely still in the tunnel. We still need to be six feet apart. We still need to be patient.

We were already impatient before the pandemic, getting news from limited-character tweets, and rarely reading entire emails. A slow internet connection, a traffic jam, a customer service hold already made us crazy. Maybe we've lost touch with what patience really is.

Patience is not a passive state. It's a form of wisdom, demonstrating that we have a grasp of the facts and know we cannot force something into being. It also demonstrates that we've let go of a childish belief that life shouldn't be hard for us.

Patience is good for our health. At the end of our chromosomes are caps called telomeres, like the plastic ends of shoelaces. As cells divide, the telomeres get shorter and the person ages. But we can lengthen the telomeres (and slow aging) through managing our stress level. Research has been done specifically on the relationship between patience and telomeres. The cortisol released when we are impatient and the rise in blood pressure cause the telomeres to get shorter and we are less protected from aging and illness. The more you learn to take a few deep breaths, shift your focus and chill, the longer your telomeres. You age more slowly and your immune system becomes stronger.

Techniques for increasing patience involve exercises like tossing a deck of cards on the floor, picking them up slowly, and organizing them. Or trying to imagine a different story about what is going on when you feel impatient. Maybe the person slowing the traffic just got bad news. There are millions of stories and not everyone's is focused on ruining your day.

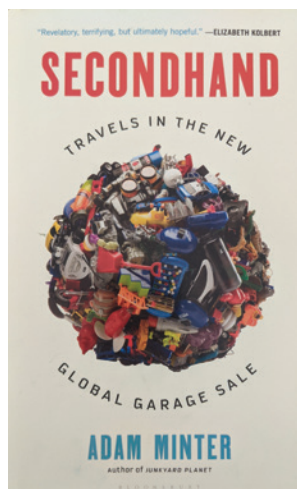
Another technique is to prepare for stressors you know are coming, like saving catalogues for when you'll be on hold with customer service.

We also build patience by spending more time in one of our neighborhood green spaces. We benefit from a walk in the park where after 15 minutes our blood pressure slows down and our cortisol levels lower. This small amount of time strengthens our immune systems and hopefully, we get younger.

Being patient is learned behavior. Patience requires practice. Practice being patient.

Secondhand: A Book Review and Ideas to Try

By Taylor Youngblood, Mueller Zero Waste Block Leader



Secondhand cover shot by Taylor Youngblood

In the world of zero waste, one of the big books is *Secondhand: Travels in the New Global Garage Sale* by Adam Minter. The book does a great job of balancing what's going on in the world - both inspiring you and describing the painful reality of the lifecycle of objects. Minter's book is full of fascinating statistics and information on furnishings and textiles, as well as terrific ideas for reducing our load on the planet. Two of Minter's biggest ideas can help us reduce the number of objects we crowd into our lives this new year.

First, rehome objects now. According to Minter, "The [secondhand process] is made even more difficult by changing tastes. 'Oh, my kids will take it.' No they won't. It's not their identity." When you read *Secondhand*, you'll find out that what you expect to happen to your belongings isn't always what happens.

If you have ever thought "I want the things to go to people who will use them," then while your items are still in good condition, repairable because they're still in production, or repair parts are still available, begin today to rehome the things you don't use or want. You'll have time now to get help and to find the most local and appropriate organization or individual who can use those items today, and not in the future when they might not be suitable.

- Mueller has its own Mueller Marketplace on Facebook to give, sell, or buy items.
- Parents of Mueller, also on Facebook, is a great resource for children's things.
- Mueller participates in the Buy Nothing Project, a local Facebook economy to give and receive favors, praise, and items.
- If you support local charities and businesses, those in need today can take your donations immediately instead of letting them sit in storage.
- You can also give away items using the Craigslist For Sale - Free section

Second, quality matters. If you find or buy quality products, they last longer, so you'll get your money's worth and they'll hold up for more use in the life stream of objects. Things that are not in good condition can't be sold to the second hand market."

When you buy something, consider the quality of material it's made from, how you can care for it to prolong its life, and how long it will last. When you do donate or sell something, package and transport it carefully to maintain its value. The more local its next home is, the less energy and additional items are needed to transport it.

If you get a chance to read *Secondhand*, you'll discover many more great ideas, and be intrigued and inspired. In the meantime, have a great green new year!

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Mueller Neighborhood Association Membership Form

To become a voting MNA member, a Mueller resident must complete this form and submit annual dues. New members must then wait 14 days before they may vote. Annual dues are \$5.00 per resident, 18 years or older. These funds are used to help pay for the Front Porch Flyer, MNA Grants, funding neighborhood events, and operating costs such as printing, record-keeping, and the MNA P.O. Box.

You may give your dues to your Block Captain, bring it to an MNA meeting, or mail it to: MNA, PO Box 49123, Austin, TX 78765.

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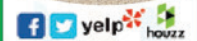
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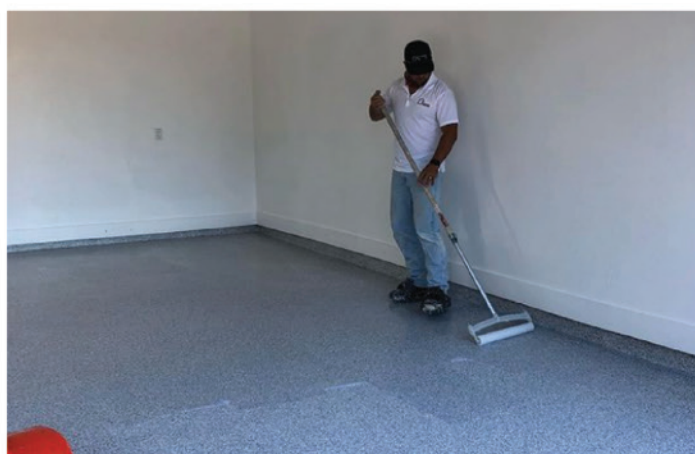
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