



From The Board

We Can Do This, Neighbors



Well, here we are in the home stretch of what can only be described as one long, hot, and very strange summer. At the time of publication, much remains uncertain. Neighborhood schools, colleges and universities, places of worship and employment, and favorite local businesses all share a degree of uncertainty as we move toward the fall.

However, what is certain is that this moment will pass and that we are blessed to ride out this summer here beneath the verdant oak canopy and among the most caring, thoughtful, and supportive neighbors around.

The experts say we still have some difficult weeks and months ahead of us. But the residents, businesses, and faith communities of Northwest Austin are proving each day that we've got what it takes to persevere.

The Westover Hills Church of Christ has been quietly but persistently rolling up its sleeves and pulling together food for people in need. As mentioned in last month's newsletter, neighbors are physically distancing even as they socially come together as never before, walking, running, riding, scooting, respecting safe distance, but waving, smiling, and starting conversations with neighbors they may not have known before.

Galaxy Café and many other neighborhood restaurants have reimagined the way they serve our community, enhancing the safety of their operations and dramatically scaling up curbside and delivery. Articles in this newsletter highlight some nearby businesses that can be safely supported.

Residents are going old school and picking up the phone to call that elderly neighbor they might not have seen out walking lately during the very hot weather, just to say hi, ask how they're doing, and see if they might need anything.

More and more young residents are beginning to understand that their actions may carry ramifications beyond their immediate circle. And, they're catching a post-cabin fever second wind to be smarter about their interactions. Take a minute to study the Texas Medical Association's Covid-19 risk assessment chart elsewhere in this newsletter to learn about activities we can do safely.

Green shoots of brighter days are beginning to creep toward the surface. While some of our cherished traditions of community gathering had to be put on hold, we've collectively been investing in the future of our community with projects such as the Loewy playground and the expanded Murchison community garden and mural.

Like the final scene of Star Wars, when Luke is zooming through that perilous channel, eyes on target, one that seemed to take so long to come clearly into view, we just need to hang in there a little longer. We need to keep checking on that vulnerable neighbor, contributing if we can to a food bank or fan drive, getting out into our leafy realm for a walk and a friendly wave. We can do this, together. And before too much longer, our beautiful community will emerge brighter, stronger, and more united than ever.

Key Contacts

Austin Citywide Information Center.....512-974-2000 or 311
Emergency, Police..... 911
Non-emergency (coyote sightings, compliance issues) 311
To check status, go to: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/myaustincodestatus>
APD District Representative,
Officer Darrell Grayson...512-974-5242
District 10 Councilmember, Alison Alter.....512-978-2110
Enroll in the District 10 monthly newsletter:
.....district10@austintexas.gov
.....www.district10austin.com

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

The NWACA Board meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, except December. Please visit our calendar at www.nwaca.org to see the specific time and location. If you wish to speak at a Board meeting, please send email a week before the meeting, so that we can put you on the agenda.

NWACA is bordered on the north by US Highway 183 (Research Boulevard), on the west by Loop 360, on the south by RM 2222, and on the east by Mopac (Loop 1)

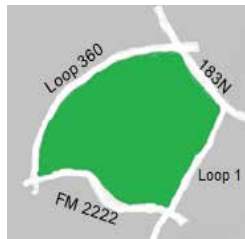
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New to the Neighborhood?



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 and visit our public Facebook page. Use the **Membership** button on the home page, or use the form at the end of this newsletter to become a member of NWACA. Members have access to the weekly **NWACA Notes** and the ability to join the NWACA closed Facebook group, to keep in touch with each other and with the latest news about NWACA.



ARE YOU A NWACA MEMBER?

Receiving the newsletter does not guarantee membership.
Not sure? Visit nwaca.org to confirm!

Here are 5 great reasons to join today!

GREAT NEIGHBORS = GREAT NEIGHBORHOOD
Together, we can continue to do great things for our neighborhood!

STAY INFORMED ABOUT ISSUES THAT AFFECT YOU
We are actively involved in our community and advocate for our residents.

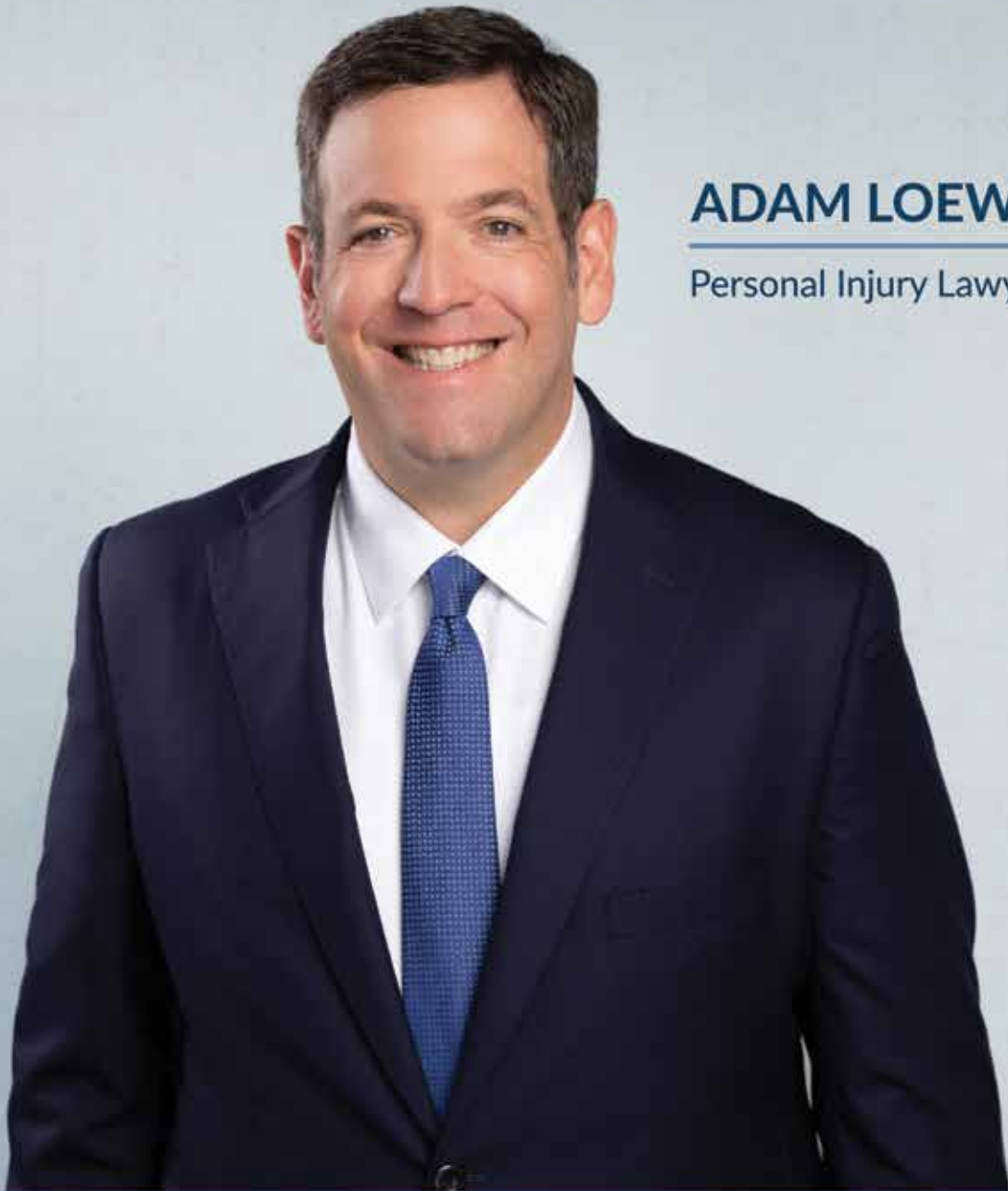
GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS
We encourage friendships among residents through our events - July 4th parade, National Night Out, Recycling Collection, Garage Sales, and more!

PROTECT AND IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY
Learn about fire safety, crime prevention, oak wilt, environmental concerns, park development, wildlife management, zoning/planning, and more!

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY
We are deeply invested in building strong relationships within our business network to positively impact our neighborhood.

Together we can make a difference!
JOIN TODAY @ NWACA.ORG/MEMBERS

Bicycle Accidents | Boating Accidents | Car Accidents | Dog Bites | Drunk Driving Accidents
Injuries to Children | Motorcycle Accidents | Slip and Falls | Truck Accidents | Wrongful Death



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NWACA Events Calendar

These events are as planned on August 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.

August 2, 2PM

Parks Committee
Likely Virtual

August 11, 6:30PM-8:30PM

NWACA Board Meeting
Likely Virtual

August 15, 9AM-Noon

Monthly park beautification in the park and on trails; sign up at:
<https://austinparks.givepulse.com/recurring/804436?event=Bull+Creek+Park+Cleanup>
Bull Creek District Park

August 25, 5PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees Joint Meeting
Likely Virtual

September 8, 6:30-8:30PM

NWACA Board Meeting
Galaxy Cafe

September 13, 2PM

Park's Committee
Likely Virtual

September 19, 9AM-Noon

Monthly park beautification in the park and on trails; sign up at:
<https://austinparks.givepulse.com/recurring/804437?event=Bull+Creek+Park+Cleanup>
Bull Creek District Creek

September 22, 5PM

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

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78731 Home Sales Update
June 2020 vs June 2019

Average Home Prices Increased **19%**

Median Days on Market **5**

Interested in moving? Call me to find out what homes are selling for near you or hear about upcoming listings before they hit the market.

*MLS Data from Austin Board of REALTORS® for 78731 homes sold in June 2019 vs June 2020

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IDEE KWAK'S

Writers' CORNER

Sharon Roy Finch

You've probably already seen Sharon Roy Finch's artwork: the 10-foot tall guitar "MusiCapital" at the baggage terminal of Austin Bergstrom

International Airport. Done in golden earth tones with images of a longhorn and the State Capitol on the front, the guitar is just one of the many large-scale public works she's done over the years.

While Sharon does landscapes and portraits of people, pets, and homes



professionally, she finds that in these times drawing our pups calms her and keeps her in her happy place. Her weekly altruistic offering, "Dog of the Week," graces a number of Facebook group pages, helping to brighten our days.

A Northwest Hills resident for the past 19 years, Sharon graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design, with

an emphasis on drawing and printmaking. She studied art in Rome, Italy, and subsequently became the staff illustrator and eventually art director for Insight Magazine in Washington, DC, where she lived for almost two decades. Along with her illustrations, her art direction and portraiture garnered her many prestigious awards including those from the Washington Editors Press, the Washington Art Directors Club, and New York's Society of Illustrators.

Master of many techniques, Sharon has developed a painting process of her own, developing works in three distinct stages, a potentially finished product resulting at the end of each of these. First, she creates a drawing, such as one of her dog portraits, rendered in pencil and charcoal. Often she adds graphite powder as well, her technique being both additive and subtractive. At the end of this first stage, Sharon treats her drawing with a clear spray which fixes her work (no smears or erasures) at the same time deepening and enhancing it.

For the second stage, a gel medium or cold wax is used to create texture and brush strokes over which sepia oil paint is applied by both brushing on and rubbing off. This darkens and enriches the piece giving it a warm, aged look. Crystal clear spray varnish sets this stage.

If the work is to be in full color, Sharon moves to the third stage. Applying many delicate layers of thinned oil paints, she builds tonal depths. Since the first two stages of the work are protected, she can explore shades of color, diminishing and heightening without disturbing her earlier creation. When she finally arrives at the finished image, she gives it a last seal of varnish.

Once you're safe to be out and about, the airport isn't the only place in Austin to see Sharon Roy Finch's three-stage art. Her colorful cow sculptures stand at the Hotel Derek in Houston and the Horseshoe Bay Resort in Marble Falls.

Meanwhile, you can enjoy her artwork at www.sharonroyfinch.com (which Sharon calls a work in progress) as well as following her weekly canines on NextDoor and the NWACA-Northwest Austin Civic Association and NWA Neighborhood Public Group Facebook pages.

History Interview: Gwena Cearley

-- Carol Jones



Gwena Cearley

Gwena Cearley was 15 years old in 1967 when her parents announced that they would be moving from Illinois to Austin. Her father worked for the Veterans Administration, and he was chosen to be Chief of Operations of the new data processing center.

Gwena was not excited about having to move away. She had lots of friends and activities in high school and didn't want to leave. All she knew about Texas were the stereotypes she had heard about. Would everyone ride horses to school and wear cowboy hats?

The family visited Austin over spring break that year to scout for their new home. Gwena was thrilled to see hills and lakes. Her parents looked at two different plots of land. One had lakefront access on Lake Austin, and the other was at the furthest edge of Far West Boulevard at Sungate Drive.

At the time, amazingly, the two lots were about the same price. Since the family had a boat and loved to waterski, the lakefront lot was very tempting. However, her brother had a 1963 Corvette Stingray and liked to drive fast. Her parents worried about him driving along RM 2222. Far West Boulevard seemed safer, so they bought the Sungate lot instead.

Her mother loved house design. It was very exciting to build their dream home at 7101 Sungate Drive, on the corner with a circle driveway. Gwena remembers that the kids' bathroom had a beautiful sunken tile tub. Her parents loved landscaping. They created a beautiful yard, with a pretty rock garden in the front corner. Their house was the furthest on Far West at the time since Mesa Drive had not been finished yet.

Her first job was selling concessions at the Paramount Theater downtown. It was great fun to sneak behind the movie screen where they could see the audience, but the audience couldn't see them. They felt very mischievous exploring the secret underground tunnel that connected the Paramount and State theaters.

At the University of Texas at Austin, Gwena was in the Longhorn Band, a fun group to belong to on such a huge campus. When she started there in 1969, girls wore skirts or dresses with pantyhose, not slacks. Gwena loved music and majored in harp pedagogy. Vincent DiNino, the UT band director, was a larger than life character. He loved that she played the harp. He would have put her on the football field if he could have. Gwena played the bell lyre in the marching band. She was the first woman to be named "Outstanding Freshman Band Member." It was an honor for her to play the harp at Dolph Briscoe's daughter's wedding at the Governor's Mansion.

Gwena remembers lots of great places in Austin that are gone now.

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NORTHWEST HILLS AND WESTOVER HILLS MARKET REPORT UPDATE

LISTINGS	This Month			Year-to-Date		
	June 2020	June 2019	Change	2020	2019	Change
Single Family Sales	24	31	-22.6%	107	136	-21.3%
Condo/Townhome Sales	14	17	-17.6%	74	101	-26.7%
Total Sales	38	48	-20.8%	181	237	-23.6%
Total Sales Volume	\$24,653,065	\$27,975,350	-11.9%	\$119,792,141	\$133,420,334	-10.2%

AVERAGE	This Month			Year-to-Date		
	June 2020	June 2019	Change	2020	2019	Change
List Price	\$898,429	\$856,538	4.9%	\$928,143	\$849,764	9.2%
List Price/Sqft	\$310	\$303	2.3%	\$318	\$299	6.4%
Sold Price	\$882,924	\$749,526	17.8%	\$893,355	\$776,981	15.0%
Sold Price/Sqft	\$334	\$298	12.1%	\$321	\$293	9.6%
Sold Price/Original List Price	98.70%	96.90%	1.9%	100.00%	97.50%	2.6%
Days on Market	20	36	-44.4%	25	39	-35.9%

MEDIAN	This Month			Year-to-Date		
	June 2020	June 2019	Change	2020	2019	Change
List Price	\$850,000	\$767,500	10.7%	\$850,000	\$749,000	13.5%
List Price/Sqft	\$309	\$290	6.6%	\$308	\$292	5.5%
Sold Price	\$799,500	\$695,900	14.9%	\$835,000	\$700,000	19.3%
Sold Price/Sqft	\$338	\$291	16.2%	\$316	\$286	10.5%
Days on Market	5	13	-61.5%	5	13	-61.5%

HIGHLIGHTS

- **YEAR-TO-DATE SALES** Volume is down 10.2% from the same period in 2019.
- **TOTAL SALES** in June 2020 are down 20.8% from June 2019.
- **AVERAGE SALES PRICE YTD** in 2020 is up 15% during the same period in 2019.
- **AVERAGE SOLD YTD Price/Sqft** is up 9.6% from the same period in 2019.
- **MEDIAN SOLD Price/Sqft** is up 16.2% from June 2019.

LET'S TALK

Your home has never been so important and now is a great time to buy or sell in Austin!

In a changing market, it's important to choose a real estate professional who has knowledge of your market and is someone you can trust. And, when it comes to service and commitment, Julie is known for dedicating herself to providing you the very best. She truly appreciates that buying or selling a home is one of life's most important decisions and takes great pride in being able to assist her clients seamlessly throughout the process. Julie's reputation for putting the client first and exceeding their expectations has resulted in her being a consistent top producer at Nest Properties Austin. The foundation of her career is her exceptionally loyal clientele, her personal referrals and repeat business. If you would like a personal, no-obligation consultation, call Julie today. 512.784.1990

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"History Interview...." Continued from Page 6



Gwena Cearley with harp

She hadn't grown up with Mexican food so she didn't think she would like it, but after her first meal at El Gallo she was hooked. Holiday House was a fun place to go on a date. Steak Island on Riverside (later the Magic Time Machine) was a popular spot. Sam Hill on the lake had a big deck for dancing where the boats would pull in. You could catch movies at the Chief Drive-In, Burnet Road Drive-In, the Fox, the Americana, and the Varsity on the Drag. Aquafest was a fun event in the summer for families.

In 1979, Gwena and her former husband Kerry Kennedy (see history interview in the July 2020 issue), partnered with friends to open The Ark Christian bookstore on Anderson Lane near Burnet Road. Back then, it was smart to create a business name that began with an "A," because placement in the yellow pages was important. The name "Ark" would show up near the top of the bookstore listing. The store was a great success. Their friends continued the business after Gwena and Kerry moved on to other things. Gwena retired from a career with the Texas Municipal League, and still lives in Northwest Hills in another home her parents built.

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

Business Spotlight: Supporting Our Neighborhood's Small Businesses

— Janice Green

The shuttering of local small businesses has begun in Austin. As a reminder of the variety and benefits of our neighborhood businesses, here are updates on three more we can support.

My Coding Place (MCP)— 512-593-2729, mycodingplace.com, 3616 Far West Boulevard, Suite 109.

Teaching students the art of coding (computer programming) is their mission. But in lieu of on-site classroom instruction, MCP has moved to a virtual format for remote learning. The pluses of virtual include its accessibility for students, even if they are on vacation or out-of-state, and insight provided for teachers into the child's environment – pets, siblings, parents. In June MCP sponsored small in-person summer camps that were a big hit. Masks and distancing were required, and students were assigned a computer or brought their own. Parents and children cooperated with the safety protocols.

Amy Pirzada, owner, is exploring the possibility of offering tutoring in other STEM topics (e.g., math) and continuing small group camps in the fall. Coding lab and robotics are not available in a virtual setting due to hardware requirements, but mobile devices and laptops have been loaned to families as needed. Students are enjoying photo editing and web design in small classes online, and a mobile app camp that moved to virtual by request was popular, despite the sudden change in format. Check the MCP website for current promotional discounts.

One 10-year-old virtual camp student was puzzled by Amy's background décor being the same as when he attended her class. She had to explain that they weren't meeting on site because MCP was not an "essential business."

Continued on Page 9



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"Business Spotlight" (Continued from Page 8)

His response: "But you teach children to code, and THAT's essential!" He is not the only one confused by the meaning of "essential."

Amy adds, "While it has been great connecting with students and teachers online, My Coding Place looks forward to working with kids in-person again."

Meditation Bar – 512-840-1640, meditationbar.com, 8108 Mesa Drive, Suite B103.

Tracy Sage King acquired Meditation Bar over a year ago. In March all classes were moved to an online format on Zoom. Helping clients make that shift was the easier part; creating excellent sound quality was a bigger challenge. Tracy delved into sound technology to create the beautiful high-quality sounds that accompany the varieties of meditation offered.

There is an assortment of meditation apps. However, these lack the more "intuitive aspect" that meditation teachers use for healing and wellness, which is receiving renewed emphasis at Meditation Bar. For instance, the class on resiliency focuses on tools to stimulate the vagus nerve system to create calm and peace in the body.

The misconception about meditation is that the goal is to stop the brain from thinking, and new practitioners of meditation can't make their brain "stop," so discouragement sets in. There are ways, explained Tracy, to move into a meditative/contemplative space that everyone can do. Physical, psychological, and emotional benefits are apparent even after a 30-minute session that down-regulates your nervous system and boosts your immune system — an outcome especially relevant now.

Children will soon return to school with all the uncertainty that goes along with that. Parents and teachers can benefit from moving out of crisis mode and into self-care through class and special event offerings at Meditation Bar. We all need a mental and physical break from social media and the overwhelming stimulus of all the juggling we must do in this pandemic climate.

Foodie Kids – 512-346-3333, foodie-kids.com, 3818 Far West Blvd, Suite 107.

Foodie Kids has provided a culinary center for youngsters for over 25 years. Due to the pandemic, they had to close their store and classroom for the first time, continuing classes virtually until June. They have reopened partially with limited services described by Bonnie Jay, owner.

On-site culinary camps were carefully crafted for 6 to 10 students with staff and students distancing and wearing masks, frequent temperature checks, and constant sanitizing. If children are not able to attend school, she hopes to offer fall cooking camps; otherwise, she is planning smaller after-school classes.

By appointment, you can shop the Foodie Kids store that has all that a young chef could need: lunch kits, apparel, child-proof kitchen equipment, and cookbooks. To-go baking items are available, such as cupcake decorating kits and birthday party cooking kits -- with instructions on how to host a party even if the attendees are limited to family members.

Bonnie appreciates how parents have supported all the precautions she has taken to protect her students' and customers' health and safety. She is grateful for our community's encouragement during this difficult time.

Remember our smaller establishments that offer our children enrichment, and, for the adults, a path toward a contemplative respite. Check their websites for more details about classes and events.

Indian Skirmish on Bull Creek?

– Richard Denney

Despite the known utilization by Native Americans of Bull Creek it was a bit of a surprise when in June of 2020 the Travis County Historical Commission was contacted about a boulder in the canyons of Bull Creek that purports to be the burial of someone killed in a skirmish with Indians. The weathered epitaph engraved on the boulder reads, as best one can tell (epitaph is carved all uppercase; uppercase letters in parens are what I think is there; lower case letters in parens are guesses):



Boulder Text

HERE LIE(S) BEN KELL(ER)
SHOT SIX INJINS FROM HIS (HORSE)
THERE WERE FORTY TO HIS (REAR)
OKT 5 1854 NOV 1(8) year

The boulder was discovered several years ago after a new subdivision was built; residents who saw the boulder then, before bits eroded off, think the name was "Keller." The boulder is large, not likely to have been brought in from somewhere else, or to have been placed over a burial. So, if there is a burial it is nearby.

"OKT" is of course short for Oktober in German, and Keller a common German name; we know Bull Creek was the home of German settlers in the 1850s. Or perhaps "OKT" is simply a phonetic misspelling, as is "INJINS".

Continued on Page 10



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"Indian Skirmish" (Continued from Page 9)

The skirmish does not appear to be in popular texts of the late 19th / early 20th century such as Wilbarger's Indian Depredations in Texas. But that is not surprising. In a report to Texas Governor O.M. Roberts in 1880, "Expeditions for Frontier Defense from 1855 to 1879," the report said much happened (skirmishes, raids) that was "never reported and of which there is no record anywhere."

Bull Creek School was a one room log cabin that sat at today's intersection of Loop 360 and 2222. The 1936 Defender (a yearbook for rural schools) says it was started in 1867 "during the time when Indians were prevalent." Romantic nostalgia? Maybe not. In 1936, children who attended school there in 1867 were likely alive; definitely, their children and grandchildren were. It is reasonable that the Defender is a recorded remembrance of the Bull Creek community of 1867.

Bull Creek remained remote into the last half of the 19th century as illustrated by the ability of Unionists to mount resistance there against the Austin-based Confederacy during the Civil War. There was an Indian skirmish at Defeat Hollow near Hudson Bend ca. 1870 that went unrecorded until the 1960s during interviews with longtime residents. My own family oral history recalls Indian activity near today's Volente, again ca. 1870. And Preece Ranch (River Place / Steiner Ranch) descendants have oral history of Indian activity, date unknown, but after 1859 when the ranch began. All these incidents, and the mystery boulder, occurred on the Old Burnet Road that ran from Austin along today's FM 2222, across Bull Creek, past Comanche Peak (next to the Oasis) on to Burnet, Texas, a favorite campsite of the Comanche on Hamilton Creek.

But who was Ben Keller? Thus far nothing has been found in news of the time, General Land Office records, County Clerk deed records, nor census. Part of the difficulty in doing this research are the dates, or rather lack thereof. The "OKT 5 1854" is quite visible; the second partial date "NOV 1(8 year)" went unnoticed until we did off-camera flash photographs of the boulder, a technique used for reading badly weathered headstones. Those photos revealed more letters in the epitaph, most significantly part of the second date. Unfortunately, the year, if any was given, was on rock that broke off; we have not yet found the missing piece. Without knowing the second year, if there was one, plus the location of the second date on the boulder (not immediately close to the first), leaves open the question of whether 1854 is the date of birth, or date of death.



boulder with researchers

The location of the boulder is being withheld at this time for its protection; a "notice of unverified cemetery" has been filed with the Texas Historic Commission and passed along to the regional archeologist. More as this story develops!

As I've said before, Bull Creek continues to yield secrets.

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

Gourmand's Corner: Covid-19 Impact Continues

— Chris Hajdu



There has been/will be great change in the food and drink scene in Austin pre-Covid-19, to Covid reopening, to reclosing, to wherever we will be when this article is in print.

One of the things I emphasize this month is that we need to support those businesses that we can, and that we feel comfortable supporting.

My family has taken advantage of a number of local curbside pickup options in the Austin area. These include Biderman's Deli, HopDoddy Burger Bar, Monito's Mexican Grill & Cantina, Franklin's Barbecue, The Peached Tortilla, Bartlett's Restaurant, Cover 3, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Jersey Mike's Subs, Wally's Burger Express, Lupe Tortilla Mexican Restaurant, ZuZu Handmade Mexican Food, Sap's Fine Thai Cuisine, Tso Chinese Delivery, and Tarka Indian Kitchen. I might be forgetting a few, but I can tell you that we have found it easy to order from each of these places by visiting their websites and determining the procedure, mechanism, and new rules about ordering. Many places allow you to pay online, then text or call when you arrive, so you don't even need to get out of your car. I've been very impressed with how restaurants have evolved in short order to support this new world.

Regarding dine-in experiences, we have generally avoided eating in restaurant dining rooms but have done it a handful of times. We found the experience to be somewhat different from the norm, but felt totally safe. We've eaten out (on a patio if available) at places such as Austin Beer Garden Brewing Corn (ABGB), Cover 3, and Bartlett's Restaurant, usually for a special occasion like Father's Day.

One thing we all can do during this strange time is to support our local restaurant establishments by following the rules set forth by the state and local health departments and our personal parameters for feeling safe. Local restaurants are doing a good job of working within current public health guidelines; they are definitely making sure they follow the rules, as it's in their best interests so that they are allowed to stay open.

I truly hope we keep most of the local gems alive and well. With that, I will say "Stay Safe," and I cannot wait until I can get back to offering up great tips on local food and beverages as this column was intended to do.

Austin Police Department (APD) Budget Proposal

- Connie Lundgren



As Austin begins to transform its police department, questions remain as to how this restructuring will

look and how it will affect our neighborhood. April Brown, Communications and Outreach Coordinator for Austin City Council Member Allison Alter's office, provided some information.

She said that the current APD budget (FY 2019-2020) will remain as is. However, an estimated \$11.3 million in the APD forecast for FY 2020-2021, which begins in October, is proposed to be reallocated to social services. The graphic shows a summary of City Manager, Spencer Cronk's budget proposal and does include new public safety programs and services.

Officer Darrell Grayson, our APD Baker Sector District Representative, said he agrees with shifting some responsibilities away from uniformed officers, such as non-violent mental health calls, run-aways with no medical issues, and parking issues not involving a traffic hazard. Officer Grayson also said he considered it important to create more district representative positions to enhance community engagement. "Austin Police Officers are still actively patrolling while some nonpriority calls are being handled online or by phone" he stated.

Deliberation on the budget will begin August 12, with adoption expected in September.

You can do a web search for City of Austin Budget 2020 to find the City's budget web page to learn more and monitor progress, which is where we found the graphic on page 12.

Continued on Page 12

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Reimagining Public Safety

Key Changes in the FY 2020-21 Proposed Budget



\$11.3 million reduction to the Austin Police Department's Forecast Budget

- Eliminated 100 vacant police officer positions from the forecast budget for a total reduction of \$9.2 million
- Delayed the July 2020 cadet class resulting in an estimated \$1.5 million reduction
- Delayed scheduled replacement of duty weapons resulting in a \$400,000 reduction
- Transferred Austin Center for Events staff to the Development Services Department for a reduction of \$200,000

Reallocation of \$11.3 million to fund alternative public safety strategies and public health services

- \$3.0 million to enhance the work of the Office of Police Oversight and the Equity Office, rewrite the Austin Police Department's General Orders, and conduct and implement audits
- \$2.7 million to improve mental health first response by expanding the Integral Care-EMCOT contract for clinical staff and telehealth services, increasing community outreach to underserved communities, and adding 7 new positions to the Community Health Paramedic program
- \$2.3 million reallocation within the Austin Police Department budget to replace the department's 15-year old records management system, which will allow for more-efficient records keeping
- \$1.1 million to increase the capacity of mental health services, family violence programs, and immigrant legal services provided by Austin Public Health
- \$1.0 million transfer to the Housing Trust Fund to support key affordable housing goals, including preserving and creating reasonably priced housing within the city of Austin
- \$900,000 reallocated within the Austin Police Department's budget to fund targeted training related to trauma-informed response, unconscious bias, and racial and cultural sensitivity, as well as training to safely administer Naloxone to someone experiencing a drug overdose
- \$300,000 to support the newly formed Civil Rights Office, which is tasked with enforcement of City ordinances and federal statutes prohibiting discrimination

Next steps: Reimagining public safety programs & services

- Emergency call center & police dispatch
- Forensics lab
- Vehicle licensing
- Nuisance abatement
- Park Patrol, Lake Patrol, & Airport Police
- Administrative & management services
- Crisis intervention & mental health response
- Officer wellness
- Internal affairs
- Protective services
- Victim services
- Officer training
- Governance



No Time for Native Landscaping? Sow Your Lawn

- Maura Powers

Manicured lawns can support disappearing bees and other pollinators with just a few tweaks, researchers at the University of Minnesota have shown. In the 1950s, lawns were seeded with clover in order to return nitrogen to the soil to keep the turfgrass healthy. But since then, turfgrass without any nutrient supporting plants has become the norm and it is maintained using costly fertilizer, pesticide, and water. Because grass does not flower, it offers no nutrients to pollinators. If you decide to help bees, the pesticides must go.

The Minnesota study showed that low-growing native plants can be mixed in with turfgrass to support not only the lawn, but pollinators, while maintaining the well-manicured look.

There are several low-growing ground covers and perennials that can be integrated into your lawn as you like. They can be mowed at the 3-inch level and still provide you with beautiful flowers. Their water requirement is much less than turfgrass. A representative list is below.

Successful sowing of your lawn does involve a bit more than tossing seeds on it, so be sure to do a little research before you invest in seeds. A great resource is the City of Austin Native and Adapted Landscape Plants pamphlet.

Here are some recommended additions to your turf grass.



*Wright's Purple
Skullcap*

Perennials

Wright's Purple Skullcap (*Scutellaria wrightii*) – grows 6-10 inches in sun and part shade, purple flowers in spring through summer, low water usage, native, drought and heat tolerant, can cut back by one-half after bloom if needed to keep compact.

Herbaceous groundcovers

Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*) is a medicinal and edible. Grows 1-2 feet tall, but blooms at 2 inches in May through September. Medium water use and benefits from some shade during the very hot afternoon sun in Texas. Now, it is commonly seen in lawns, but may be considered a weed by grass-only lawn perfectionists.



Selfheal



Creeping Germander

Creeping Germander (*Teucrium cossonii*) – grows 4-6 inches tall in sun, spring through fall blooms of pink and purple flowers, low water, low mounding form. Shear in mid- to late spring.

White Dutch Clover (*Trifolium repens*) – commonly known as the Shamrock), grows 4-8 inches tall. Tolerates low mowing and some drought. Blooms spring through fall. Avoid broadleaf weed control products as they will kill it.



White Dutch Clover



Ice Plant

Succulent groundcover

Iceplant (*Delosperma cooperi*) grows to 6," good in full sun, blooms spring through fall, very low water. Various colors: brunnthaleri (yellow), floribundum (pink), herbeau (white).

An advertisement for Peel Inc. featuring a large lightbulb graphic on a blue background. To the right of the lightbulb is a white silhouette of a head with a circular logo containing the letters 'PM'. Below the lightbulb, the text reads 'ADVERTISE YOUR NEXT IDEA WITH US!'. At the bottom, a dark blue banner contains the text 'Build a Stronger Network with Your Community!' and contact information: 'Email info@peelinc.com | www.peelinc.com'.

Now Available: Curbside Collection of Housewares and Textiles

– Joanie Arrott

As of June 22nd, 2020, Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) is partnering with Goodwill Central Texas to offer curbside pick-up of unwanted clothing, shoes, accessories, toys, linens, and housewares. This new collaboration will help reduce the volume of textile waste in local landfills (estimated at 6.6 million pounds each year) and provide safe disposal options for Austin residents in this era of Covid-19. Any materials that are in poor condition and cannot be resold in Goodwill retail or outlet stores will be baled and sold on the commodities market for recycling, thus you can include items that you know are beyond what Goodwill is able to sell (the types of things you used to recycle in the “green bags” that ARR picked up until about a year ago).

To schedule a curbside pick-up, call (512) 637-7196 or visit <https://goodwillcentraltexas.vonigo.com/External/>. Staff will mail collection bags to the designated address. The donated materials need to be set out by 6:30 a.m. on the scheduled pick-up day.

Important Guidelines:

- When scheduling the pick-up, notify staff of any barriers to entering the property such as gates or fences.
- Do not set out items infested with pests. Items in all conditions are accepted, except for those infested with bed bugs or other parasites.
- Place all items for pick-up in the provided collection bags. If items will not fit in the bags, place them in boxes or bags labeled “Goodwill.”
- Collection bags can be placed on the curb, on the porch, or in the garage. If residents are present during the collection, Goodwill staff can collect from anywhere on the ground floor of the residence.
- This service is available to City of Austin residents only. A full list of local reuse organizations that accept donations can be found at the Austin Reuse Directory: <https://theaustincommon.com/austin-reuse-directory/>. Many of these organizations offer home pick-up services.

More information about proper recycling, reuse, and composting can be found on the city’s website: <http://austintexas.gov/what-do-i-do>.

Understanding City Code: Work Exempt from Building Permits

– Alan Carson



For some time now, I have wanted to paint my mailbox burnt orange, but I kept putting it off I thought I had to obtain a permit from the City to do so. It turns out that a permit is not required! Austin’s Development Services Department has a website that you can access for details on such exemptions. Just search for *Austin Work Exempt from Building Permits* in your web browser. The website lists 46 items for residential building, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical work that do not need permits. The website covers commercial work as well.

Painting, papering, and tiling; installing carpeting, cabinets, and counter tops; and similar residential building work are exempt. If you would like to place a storage shed in your yard, and it won’t be used as a dwelling, no permit is required if it meets the listed requirements. A prefabricated swimming pool, as well as playground equipment (including a swing) are also exempt. You can fence in your yard without a permit, as long as the fence is not over eight feet high. Likewise, asphalt shingles may be installed to replace existing asphalt shingles. There is a total of 20 items on the list, and other building work may be exempt as determined by the City’s building official.

There are ten types of mechanical work that do not require a permit, including installation of portable heating, ventilation, and cooling appliances. Exempt plumbing jobs are stopping a leak, clearing a stoppage, and repairing or replacing fixtures. Regarding electrical work, you can replace components for approved equipment or appliances, switches, receptacles, luminaires (light fixtures), and ceiling fans. One project that obviously does not require a permit is hanging temporary holiday decorative lighting. Can you imagine the City having to issue tens of thousands of permits each December?

The website contains far more information than could be included in this article so please check it for further information to avoid a problem with the City. If you have any questions concerning permits, call 3-1-1.

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

Defensible Space is Essential

— Joyce Statz



While this topic has been addressed in the past, it's worth repeating. A significant way, perhaps the best way, to protect your home from wildfire damage is to ensure it has defensible

space around it. And, in case you're not able to evacuate during a wildfire, that defensible space could save your life.

What is meant by defensible space? It's the preparation of a home and the space surrounding it, so that the property can withstand ember attacks. It also minimizes the likelihood of flames or surface fire to touch the home or any attachments to the home (decks, porches, etc.) since flammable brush, grass, and debris have been removed. Defensible space protects the property and it enables firefighters to navigate the property easily during a wildfire.

Defensible space comes in three layers. The definition of the three layers and their distance from a home are:

- Immediate Zone – 0 to 5 feet from the furthest attached exterior point of the home. This needs to be a non-combustible area. Guidance includes use of stone mulch next to the walls, low-growing, non-volatile plants and shrubs, and the absence of any burnable debris in gutters and other places embers might gather.

Continued on Page 16

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"Defensible Space..." Continued from Page 15

• Intermediate Zone – 5 to 30 feet from the furthest exterior point of the home. Here, the landscaping should include breaks that obstruct the flow of ground fires – things like paths or non-combustible borders. Landscaping should be kept mowed and clear of dead plant material.

• Extended Zone – 30 feet to 100 feet or further. Landscaping should be kept clear of dead and down material, with regular removal of litter and debris. Here and in the Intermediate Zone, it's important to remove ladder fuels – those small trees and shrubs that grow beneath larger trees, where they could create a path for fire to move from the ground up the tree and into the canopy, creating a very dangerous fire. In our neighborhood, we often see large oak trees with stands of small yaupon or Texas mountain laurel forming such ladder fuel; it's best to remove those saplings to minimize the risk to the landscape, the oak canopy, and eventually the neighborhood.

Each homeowner can play a part in safeguarding their lives and property by establishing and maintaining the defensible zone around their home. As we all play our part, we also reduce the wildfire risk to our whole community.

To understand how seriously some are dealing with defensible space, review the article about California communities monitoring defensible spaces in their neighborhoods at <https://tinyurl.com/CALdefspace>



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My husband and I highly recommend Dawn, and we will happily give her information to our friends and would most definitely work with her again in the future. We are very happy with our new home!"

- Megan and Scott



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