



nwacaNEWS

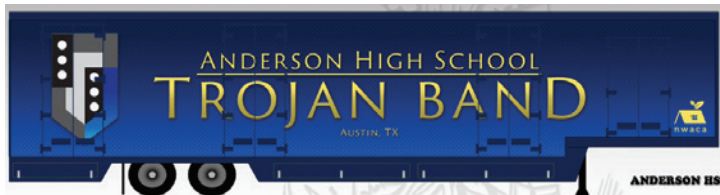
NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2021

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 04

The Promise of Spring

The NWACA Board of Directors is proud to announce a major, one-time gift of \$20,000 in support of a new Anderson High School Band trailer. Now, we challenge you to join in helping them secure the remaining funds needed to secure this much-needed new trailer. The old trailer, which looked good at a great distance, was more than three decades old, was falling apart at the seams, and was totaled after being hit by an errant car. The Band Director made a compelling presentation to the board outlining their critical need, the steps they have taken to raise funds through other sources, and the beneficial role that music generally and the band specifically has in the lives of its members and the broader community. This significant (and unusual) gift was uniquely possible this year because many normal NWACA activities have been sidelined while we work through the pandemic. Hopefully, the proliferation of available COVID-19 vaccines signifies the beginning of the end of this difficult period. You can learn more about the efforts to replace the Anderson Band's trailer at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edLUX4RL_L8. While the design of the new trailer wrap is not finalized, we're sharing an early rendering which includes the NWACA logo. (We're told the final version of the wrap will also include a flamingo.)



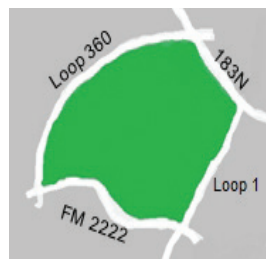
^ Proposed Anderson Band Trailer



^ Recent Anderson Band Trailer

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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

Key Contacts

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

2020-2022 NWACA Board of Directors

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o Jessica Halich	o Monique Wright
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Each of the Board members can be reached at:
info@nwaca.org

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)

Peel advertising

Please support the advertisers that make the NWACA News possible. If you are interested in advertising, please contact THE PEEL sales office at 512.263.9181 or advertising@peelinc.com. The advertising deadline is the 8th of the month prior to the issue.

"The Promise of Spring" Continued from Cover

Speaking of vaccine proliferation, many of the people who need it most may be the least adept at navigating online waiting lists. Help is available from Austin Vaccine Angels. Volunteers are ready to assist you, or someone whose health you help manage, connect with vaccine opportunities. Go to <https://tinyurl.com/helpfindcovidshot> and fill out the short form. Volunteers will help you make an appointment or make an appointment for you.

As we move into spring, remember the catchy and important phrase: "don't prune February to June". Following this simple advice will help protect the beautiful oak canopy that makes our area so special. Also, if the recent deep freeze caused broken oak limbs near your home, do your best to spray your trees' wounds with latex paint to prevent the spread of oak wilt.

We had some questions from neighbors about the rules regarding removal of large oak trees. It's an issue that's taken very seriously. See the details about Austin's tree ordinance at <https://www.austintexas.gov/page/tree-reviews-and-permitting>

Heads up! On May 1, the City of Austin will hold an election for eight propositions that cover a range of important issues. NWACA will offer an informational forum about key propositions prior to the early voting period which starts April 19. Watch for details in the weekly NWACA Notes, on our Facebook page, and at our web site, www.nwaca.org.

Finally, don't miss Janice Green's article, in this issue, about how a neighborhood watch fostered community, something very precious at this time. I'm sure you'll also enjoy the many other interesting articles. And a reminder: If you're not yet a NWACA member we invite you to join at <http://www.nwaca.org>.

NWACA Events Calendar

These events are as planned on March 15. As you consider participating in one of the events listed, please check first with the organizer.

April 13th, 6:30pm-8:00pm

NWACA Board Meeting
Virtual

April 17th, 9am-Noon

Monthly cleanup at Bull Creek District Park - sign up at
<https://austinparks.givepulse.com/event/225432>
Bull Creek District Park

April 20th, 7:00pm

Parks Committee
Virtual

April 27th, 5:00pm

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees Joint Meeting
Virtual

May 11th, 6:30pm-8:30pm

NWACA Board Meeting
Virtual

May 15th, 9:00am-Noon

Monthly cleanup at Bull Creek District Park - sign up at
<https://austinparks.givepulse.com/event/225432>
Bull Creek District Park

May 16th, 2:00pm

Tree, Environment, and Wildlife Committee
Virtual

May 18th, 7:00pm

Parks Committee
Virtual

May 25th, 5:00pm

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees Joint Meeting
Virtual

Hill Elementary School Update

— Teri Schock and Sarah O'Brien, 2017 Bond Communication Team

Since the groundbreaking in May 2020, significant progress has been made at the Hill Elementary School modernization site. Key portions of the project are on track to be completed by August 2021, with a new building addition that includes a new gym and additional studios. Site work including the bus loop, parking, and playground are scheduled to be completed in September.



As part of the 2017 Bond Program, the Hill campus modernization will allow the school to increase its capacity to 870 students and provide new opportunities for flexible and outdoor learning. Along with the district, the project team includes Parkhill Architects and Bartlett Cocke General Contractors.

Construction Progress Includes:

- Completed fire systems check
- Completed drywall installation
- Ongoing stone and cement installation
- Ongoing groundwork for walkway awnings
- Ongoing interior work, including work on the ceilings, windows, and painting

Take a look at these recent photos from the construction site, courtesy of Sarah O'Brien.

Some Texas Newspaper History

— Richard Denney

Ever heard of the Texas Press Association (TPA)? Founded in the 19th century, it is currently headquartered right here in the NWACA neighborhood. Today, local newspapers face challenges: subscriptions are down as readers turn to the internet for news; the pandemic has caused layoffs and furloughs, impacting even our local Austin American-Statesman.

Struggling newspapers is an old story (pardon the pun). Take the Civil War; here's the narrative from one of Austin's historical markers:

Among privations endured in Texas during the Civil War (1861-65) was the shortage of newspapers, which dwindled from 82 (combined circulation: 100,000) to fewer than 20 by early 1862. Many newspapermen had closed shop and enlisted at once, when the war began. Others were forced to quit for lack of ink and paper, available only through Mexico or the blockaded Gulf Coast. A good pre-war paper had four 5-column pages, but many wartime issues were limited to half a page, printed on bill forms, wallpaper, tissue, straw paper, or brown wrapping paper. State subsidies for paper making resulted in very little production. Citizens made ink substitutes, but in very small quantities.



Business Park Drive

To get news, editors copied months' old letters or clippings from soldiers or blockade runners. The "Texas Republican" (Marshall) led in coverage, as it had the use of army telegraph items. The "State Gazette" (Austin) kept a pony express rider at the Brenham railhead to bring in Houston papers only 18 hours old. The Houston "Telegraph" had a staffer with the army, and shared with the Galveston "News" the expenses of a courier to and from Virginia--who also carried family and Confederate mail when slipping through Federal lines to cross the Mississippi.

That historical marker is how I came to learn of the TPA. From the Handbook of Texas: "The purpose of the association is to provide members with a forum for discussing the legal and economic problems that face newspapers as businesses, to promote the welfare and rights of the Texas press, and to speak out on issues of public concern such as education and government ... In 1948 the association headquarters moved permanently to Austin, first to the Driskill Hotel and later to other locations in the capital city."

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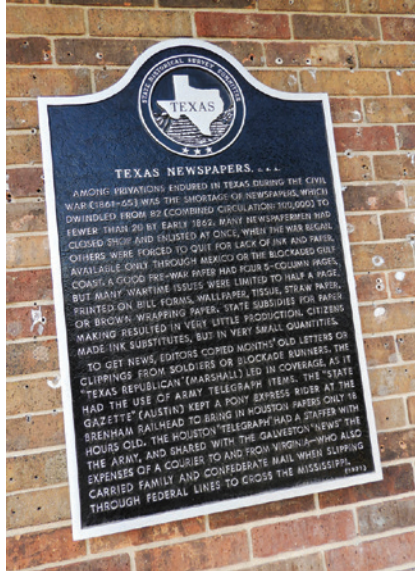
NWACA News

"Some Texas Newspaper History" Continued from Page 3

Circa 1970 the TPA relocated to a building at 718 West 5th Street in Austin with 30 full-time staff. The building itself had some history. It was a Dr. Pepper bottling plant in the early 1940s, then later a Calcasieu lumber yard, and finally City of Austin offices. In 1971 the above quoted historical marker was granted by the State Historical Survey Committee and was affixed to their building.



Newsboy in the Statesman Office



TPA Historical Marker

Fast forward to 2019 and that building had been bulldozed and was now (wait for it) a high-rise condo / business. Hard to believe. But where had the historical marker gone? Members of the Travis County Historical Commission visited the site of the missing marker, but the young man interviewed assured us the condo had always been there, we were mistaken about a marker. The marker was therefore marked MIA.

Fast forward again to 2021 when during February the neighborhood had the first of many power outages. I decided maybe it was time to think about a hotel nearby. Having stayed at the Hilton's DoubleTree at the east end of Mesa Drive during past emergencies I headed that direction, when lo and behold, a gleaming historical marker caught my eye affixed to the new headquarters building of the Texas Press Association at 8800 Business Park Drive. Michael Hodges, TPA Executive Director, says they moved to their new permanent location in 2017.

For more information on the TPA, and photos of the building and historical marker that were never on 5th street because "the condo has always been there," visit: <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=166797>

Here's a bit more about the statue of the newsboy in the photo. Sculptor Bridgette Mongeon made the statue. A limited edition of smaller, tabletop versions were made for fundraising. See more at <https://creativesculpture.com/newsboy-life-size-the-editions/>

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

IDEE KWAK'S Writer's CORNER J. Evan Parks

Given a kindergarten project to create a picture booklet, Evan surprised everyone with his noir mystery adventure. As he grew older, Evan's interests turned to inventing computer games for a while but, feeling less creative with code than words, he turned back to his first love. With his poems and stories published in his high school's literary journal, he decided to make writing his career.

Evan, a Tulsa native raised in Houston, came to Austin to pursue his degree and while at the University of Texas (UT), he began working with Texas Student Television. A station manned and regulated completely by students, UT's was the first of its kind to receive FCC approval.

Evan soon joined the station's team for "Down to Film", a zero-budget, wacky TV show about people who write a TV show. Already in its eleventh season when Evan began, "Down to Film" ran its 19th season in 2020, easily the longest-running series of its kind.

While still in school, Evan began working for the Writers League of Texas. Over the past three years, he turned an internship into a part-time and then full-time job. He is now Member Service Manager.



Sneak peek of zine story illustration

Published last year in the online zine, Dial Up, Evan is currently developing a sci-fi movie script in which the main character struggles with loneliness and keeping imaginary monsters at bay.

The young author has also produced in the new genre, video essay: <https://youtu.be/6DqAoXpDzII>.

Texas Student Television's main page is at <http://watchtstv.com/>. And the page for "Down to Film" is <http://watchtstv.com/df>.

Continued on Page 5

"Writer's Corner" Continued from Page 4

For a WLT interview of Evan, go to <https://writersleagueoftexas.wordpress.com/2020/11/12/meet-the-wlt-staff-j-evan-parks/>

How exciting to see the many interesting directions this writer's talents take him.

Here are some items unrelated to the main story, but so good, I had to share them:

"What an astonishing thing a book is. It's a flat object made from a tree with flexible parts on which are imprinted lots of funny dark squiggles.

"But one glance at it and you're inside the mind of another person, maybe someone dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia, an author is speaking clearly and silently inside your head, directly to you.

"Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people who never knew each other, citizens of different epochs.

"Books break the shackles of time. A book is proof that humans are capable of working magic."

Carl Sagan

And here is a magical list of book recommendations from Neil deGrasse Tyson:

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/radicalreads.com/neil-degrasse-tyson-favorite-books/%3famp>



Spotlight: Neighborhood Heroes

- Janice Green



"Always know your neighbors! You may need each other when you least expect it" – advice repeated countless times by my father. These were relevant words during the recent ice storm.

Sumac Drive is the one-block street I live on, with 18 homes cascading down a steep hill. Several years ago, we formed a NWACA Neighborhood Watch, which provided a good excuse to meet each other. Then we began having annual potluck social gatherings that provided an opportunity to update our hand-out roster of residents, welcome new arrivals, and chat about events significant to our "mini-hood." While we did not start living in each other's earlobes, we did develop a familiarity that went beyond a wave and howdy while walking our dogs.

Continued on Page 6



Brian's Real Estate Listing Activity in 78731

UNDER CONTRACT



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SOLD



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NWACA News

"Spotlight..." Continued from Page 5

Then the pandemic hit. A few Sumac households started gathering once or twice a week in one neighbor's driveway, following Covid-19 safety protocols. Our purpose? To counter isolation. Streaming recommendations flowed along with tales from our lives. We even managed to structure a "Covid-safe" baby shower to welcome our newest neighbor. After mama went into labor during one of these get-togethers, we all consider ourselves "hood-parents" to that baby boy. And we all grieved when one of us lost a parent to the virus. Bonding experiences, for sure.

So, it was no surprise that when the Ice Age decided to return to Austin, the ties that had been established amongst us "came home to roost."

One neighbor helped several households with broken pipes by using his water valve "key" – an item some of us didn't even know existed! When one gal's kitchen began to flood, you can't imagine the number of towels that another neighbor quickly gathered from others to help prevent more damage. A couple of residents without electricity had a sleep-over at another's home and were offered heat, hot water for showers, and oatmeal for breakfast.

Neighbors treated others to food and provided "flushing" water when some of us tired of melting snow for that purpose. A little-known fact: there is a 3 to 1 ratio of snow to its melted water equivalent. And all you need to do is fill the tank about half full for it to serve its purpose.

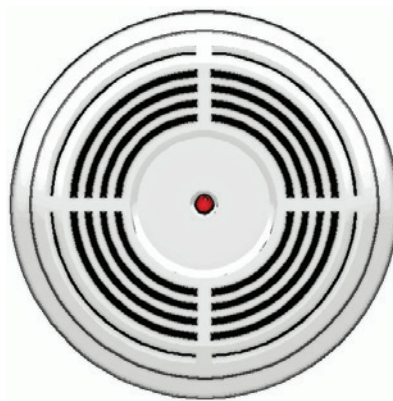
Then there was the elderly resident who was moved into her garage, thanks to the help of her next-door neighbor, so she could keep warm with an old Dearborn heater; meals were also provided by her neighbors. Cell phone charging was made available from another household. Several folks shared their brawn when it came to moving precarious broken cedar limbs.

This all was going on in just one block! Since the ice melted, more stories of random acts of kindness have surfaced from mini-hoods throughout Northwest Hills, and the media has reported many from throughout our city.

So, let's take a moment to reflect. Division and polarization did not define us. A lot of humanity did. And these ties with our neighbors only strengthen our connections in case we need each other again when we least expect it.

Safety Programs of the Austin Fire Department

– Connie Lundgren



After multiple fire fatalities last year within the City of Austin, the Austin Fire Department (AFD) initiated a program to install free smoke detectors in homes. Statistics show that approximately 95 percent of homes have smoke alarms. However, roughly one third of those don't work because the batteries are dead or missing, or the smoke alarm is too old, leaving

the homeowner with a false sense of security. AFD envisions having every home protected by at least one working smoke alarm.

AFD conducts home hazard assessments and installs new smoke detectors at no cost to residents. The only prerequisite is that you reside in a privately-owned home and have a genuine need for help.

Fire code requires a smoke detector in every bedroom and adjacent hallway. The smoke detectors installed by AFD have a life expectancy of 10 years, and their batteries never have to be changed. The awareness campaign for this service, known as "Put A Finger On It," teaches that every smoke alarm has a button and every resident has a finger. The test is to put a finger on the button to see if the alarm works!

Another AFD outreach program is the Red Angels' free in-home basic wellness check. Red Angels are fire fighters and licensed nurses from area medical facilities who go door-to-door offering free in-home health checks. They check your temperature, glucose level, blood pressure, respiration rate, and pulse. The information is documented on a card and left with the resident. AFD does not take any health information with them.

If you or someone you know would like to get on AFD's schedule, just call (512) 974-0290 or email red.angels@austintexas.gov



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NORTHWEST HILLS AND WESTOVER HILLS MARKET REPORT UPDATE

CLOSED SALES **14**



AVERAGE SALES PRICE

\$1,124,179

ACTIVE LISTINGS **7**



9

NEW LISTINGS

MONTHS OF
INVENTORY **.5**

SOLD PRICE TO
LIST PRICE RATIO

103%

MEDIAN
SALE PRICE
PER SQFT

\$347



MEDIAN DAYS
ON MARKET

5

SOURCE: ABOR MLS INCLUDING DATA FROM FEBRUARY 1-28, 2021 FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOMES. BASED ON NWACA BOUNDARIES: MOPAC/HWY 360/2222/HWY 183



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Cleaning up After the Storm

—Joyce Statz



Neighbors who lived in Austin ten years ago might remember that we had a cold spell, much like the one we just experienced, which left dead and down trees in our yards and green spaces. That was followed by a dry, hot summer which generated a tremendous amount of wildfire fuel. We also remember the ensuing Labor Day wildfires in Central Texas – the worst ever. Although the Bastrop fire was the most memorable, there were also destructive fires in Steiner Ranch, Pflugerville, Lockhart, Leander, Spicewood, Cimmarron Ranch, Union Chapel, and Delhi that 2011 Labor Day weekend. Altogether, more than 47,000 acres burned, and at least 1800 homes and other structures were destroyed.

Our 2021 storm has resulted in similar debris, and if weather patterns of the last several summers repeat, we face a similar risky mix of high winds, low humidity, and dry fuel.

We need to manage the one element that we can control – the material that will potentially become dry fuel.

- Remove all dead trees, limbs, hedges, and other dead plants from your landscape and the right of way in your property. If the debris is too much for the weekly trash pickup, call 3-1-1 and ask for a special storm-related pickup of the material. In the weeks right after the storm, Austin Water crews were collaborating with Austin Resource Recovery on debris pickup since there was so much of it. The need for their help is likely to continue because there is still much material to remove.

- Offer to help neighbors remove dead and down material if they are unable to manage it themselves.

- If you live in an HOA with a common area, work with HOA leadership to ensure that the common area is cleared of wildfire hazards.

- When you see dead trees, broken limbs, or other wildfire fuel in the City of Austin right of way (roadsides, medians, etc.) call 3-1-1 and ask to have it removed. Remember that if there is a wildfire, many of us will need to evacuate, and our exit paths must not be alleys of wildfire. The more of us who make the call to 3-1-1, the more likely that the Public Works Department will keep those rights of way clear.

- The NWACA Parks Committee is contacting the Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) so see what can be done about clearing debris from PARC trails. Watch for opportunities to help with this in the future.

In addition, keep in mind that wildfire embers comprise the greatest risk to homes; 80% of home ignitions during a wildfire are caused by embers. Regularly monitor and remove the ember targets around the home: any combustible material in the immediate zone of the house (zero to five feet), such as leaf litter in gutters, dead landscape material, debris near the foundation of the home, and flammable material on decks. Be especially vigilant during high fire danger times. (Fire danger levels can be seen on the chart at each of our fire stations, in the weather forecasts of some local TV stations, and always online at <https://twc.tamu.edu/tfd/>.)

Horticultural Curiosities: Freeze Damage

—Jon Plum



Frozen cambium causes bark to split

Freeze damage in Central Texas has been widespread and significant this year. It is obvious when you take a stroll through your garden and see damaged or dead succulents, perennials, and herbaceous plants. But what about woody and more established specimens? There may be hope on the horizon for many plants to spring back with the warmer weather. But keep on the lookout for signs of permanent damage.

The cambium and meristematic tissue in woody plants leads to new growth. If that tissue was damaged in the freeze, there may be consequences you don't see for some time. Cambium is the thin layer of "green" undifferentiated tissue allowing growth and enlargement of stems and trunks in woody plants. Meristem is similar and occurs at the tip ends of most plants where new leaves and flowers are born. If this tissue was damaged it may not be apparent until later in the spring.

Immediate signs of damage to cambium are "splits" in the bark. This photo of an olive tree in my garden perfectly demonstrates how freeze damage expanded the bark off the wood. Anything above this split will likely turn brown and crispy. Less obvious damage may exist in trees and shrubs with thicker bark and can result in scars on the trunks or kill the plant completely. Many species in the olive family, such as olive trees, viburnum, sweet olive and *Elaeagnus* are susceptible and will have been killed or have significant damage, even if they were protected. Some species of coniferous evergreens, such as Italian Cypress, pines, and cycads or "sago palms" will be lost. Many favorite Central Texas woody shrubs like rosemary, bottlebrush, evergreen sumac, figs, and hibiscus will die.

Palms are not true woody plants since the growth occurs only in the meristem. This makes them particularly susceptible to the cold. If the newer palm fronds closest to the center slip out easily when you pull on them, the palm is dead. If you see new growth pushing up in the center, even if it looks dead, the palm probably survived.

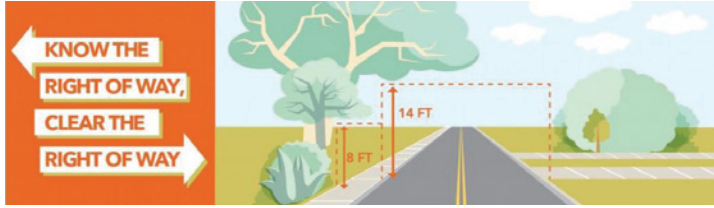
In some cases, the blanket of snow and ice may have provided some insulation to the colder night temperatures. While damage probably occurred to the exposed areas, the roots of many plants will have had some protection.

It is devastating to see dead trees, shrubs, and woody vines you have nurtured over time. My recommendation is to cut back tissue that is obviously dead. Dry and crispy or wet, gooey tissue will not produce healthy growth and should be removed. But if you see some green bark or healthy roots, give your woody plants a few months to see if they can rise like the phoenix when temperatures begin to soar. Don't be surprised to see scars or damage on the trunks of more established specimens by summer. Enjoy your time in the garden!



Snow can act as insulation

Understanding City Code: Public Right of Way (ROW) – Alan Carson



When I was nine years old, I found out what a public right of way is. I had an argument with a neighbor kid and I told him that he must never again walk on our sidewalk. My father, a civil engineer, heard me and explained that sidewalks are in the public right of way and everyone has the right to use them.

The ROW is the public-owned portion of land that includes streets, sidewalks, and grassy areas between pavement and property lines. ROW boundaries vary; if you would like to know where your ROW is, look at the construction joint in your driveway – the one parallel with and closest to the street. That is the outer edge of the ROW, as they are coincidental; most are ten feet wide. You can obtain the specifications for driveways, both residential and commercial, by searching the internet for City of Austin codes 433S-1 and 433S-2.

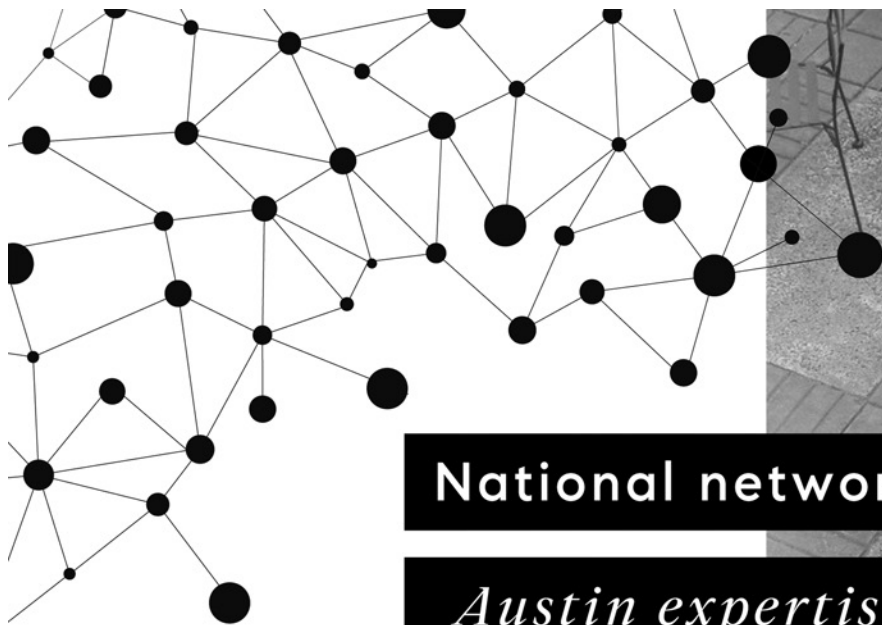
Who is responsible for maintaining the ROW? Simply put, the owner of the adjacent property is responsible. The City of Austin Public Works Department website at <https://austintexas.gov/page/right-way-maintenance-trees-and-vegetation> lists the requirements. The diagram depicts the key requirements.

The City took responsibility for sidewalks in the 1990's. Prior to that,

they were the responsibility of property owners; there was no duty or ordinance requiring landowners to install them. Before World War II, walking was the norm. That's why downtown Austin and older planned communities like Hyde Park have "pedestrian infrastructure." Then there was a period of time when people primarily used their cars to get from place to place and we thought we'd never need sidewalks again, so they weren't built. Now, when building a new structure, sidewalks are required, although there are exceptions. One can pay a fee in lieu of installing a sidewalk - \$7.50 per square foot (\$30 per linear foot for a 4-foot sidewalk). Another option is to obtain a waiver.

Walking my dog every day around our block, a half mile walk, I can see a reason there are no sidewalks in front of the 42 houses on the enclosing streets. This is a hilly area that was developed well before we moved here; some houses on one side of the street are ten feet below street level, while on the opposite side, some are fifteen feet above street level. To excavate and backfill the ROW to meet specifications, at least 17 protected trees would have to be removed (those with a diameter of 19 inches or larger) along with many more trees that are smaller in diameter. Several homes would require retaining walls to protect their property because of the resulting steep slopes, and driveways would be too steep to meet the maximum slopes as specified. My guess at the cost of sidewalks around our block would be a million dollars or more. Luckily, there are no schools, churches, parks, or bus stops anywhere near, so pedestrian traffic is very light; it's mainly people walking their dogs.

If you anticipate installing a sidewalk or driveway, the City of Austin has a website with the requirements, which can be found with a web search for Austin – Requirements for Driveway/Sidewalk Permits.



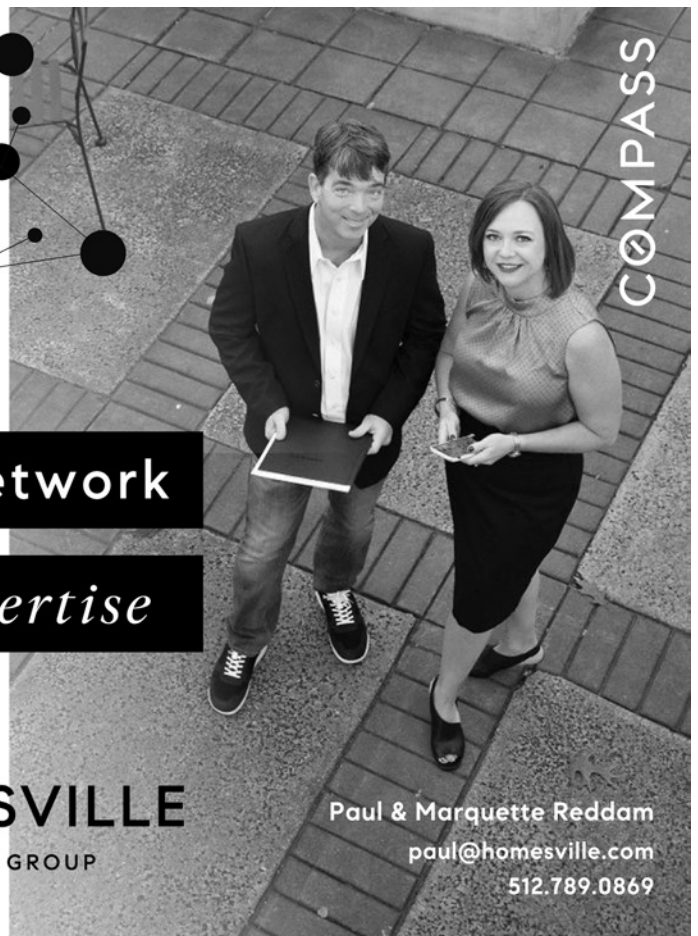
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Using the Recycling Center – *Louri O'Leary*

Beginning March 9, 2021, the Recycle and Reuse Drop-off Center reopened, by appointment only, following a temporary closure due to COVID-19 safety concerns. The center has resumed its acceptance of hard-to-recycle items such as Styrofoam and plastic film, as well as household hazardous waste. They accept most household chemicals and many other items that contain hazardous materials.

Safety guidelines

- Bring household waste products in original containers; do not mix.
- Bring items in 5-gallon (or smaller) containers.
- Put small containers upright in sturdy boxes.
- If something is leaking, put it in a container and absorb the spill with cat litter.

In addition, they accept any electronics, appliances, clothing and housewares that you want to dispose of. They also accept all single-stream recyclables, as well as plastic bags and film, Styrofoam (NO packing peanuts), and scrap metal. To see whether they accept an item, use the **What Do I Do With?** tool at <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/what-do-i-do-0> or see the list of **accepted and not accepted items** at <http://www.austintexas.gov/faq/what-items-are-accepted-recycle-reuse-drop-center#overlay-context=department/austin-resource-recovery/faq>

There is a fee to drop off tires. The fee depends on the size of the tire:

- 19 in. or smaller – \$6 each
- 20 in. or larger – \$7 each

Drop-off of tree limbs, brush, leaves, and yard trimmings is free for Austin residents, but others pay \$7 per cubic yard. The center does not accept brush from commercial contractors. They do not accept treated or painted lumber, particle board, or construction materials. Large truck or trailer loads will not be accepted after 4:45 p.m.

This service is available to residents of Austin and Travis County, but not to businesses. Businesses can call 512-974-4335 to learn how they can dispose of hazardous waste.

To get an appointment for a drop-off, go online and complete the form at

<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/recycle-reuse-drop-center>.

Austin Resource Recovery provides a wide range of services designed to transform waste into resources while keeping the community clean. Their goal is to reach Zero Waste by 2040, which means reducing the amount of trash sent to landfills by 90 percent.

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Special Thanks to Members

- Membership Committee

NWACA thanks members who generously contributed to the 4th of July Parade Fund, the Park Fund, and the Constable Fund, between February 15, 2021 and March 15, 2021.

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

- Stanley and Jeanne Cavitt
- Chris and Linda Dimick
- Susan Gentz
- John and Cindy Howland
- Bill and Linda Jakobeit
- Debra Judd
- Mike Keenan
- Ed and Judith Parken
- Ann Trentin
- Chris and Blythe Wilson
- (and apologies to anyone whose donation we might have missed!)

Catalytic Converters a Target for Thieves

- NWACA Crime Prevention Committee

Unless your vehicle is an electric vehicle, it may be the target of a nation-wide trend of catalytic converter theft. The Austin Police Department reports that from 2019 to 2020, the number of reported thefts of these devices rose from 27 to 584. The vehicles most often targeted were Toyota Prius, Honda Element, Ford Econoline, Chevrolet Express, and Toyota Tundra. Thieves cut off the catalytic converter and sell it to a metal recycler for \$50 to \$300 apiece. Resellers value the precious metals used in the devices – palladium, which now sells for about \$2,300 per ounce, and rhodium, selling at more than \$26,000 per ounce.

Several prevention tactics to employ:

- If you must park on the street, park in well-lit areas with heavy traffic.
- If you have a garage, park the vehicle inside.
- Weld the catalytic converter to the frame, to make it more difficult to steal.
- Engrave the VIN of your vehicle into the catalytic converter so that it can be traced to you.
- Calibrate your car alarm to sound if vibration is detected.

Report a theft incident to ireportaustin.com or by calling 3-1-1.

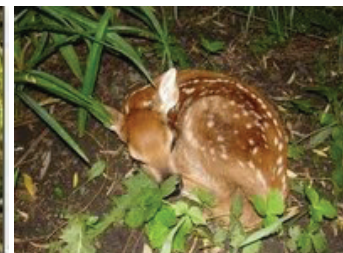
A full article appeared in the March 15, 2021 issue of the Austin American-Statesman, and you can find many related reports by searching for "Catalytic Converter Theft" on the internet.

Watch Out for Wildlife with Their Young Ones

- Tree, Environment, and Wildlife Committee



Coyote with pup



Fawn

It's springtime in Northwest Austin, so we'll soon be seeing does with their young fawns in the neighborhood. Please be careful as you drive, since the young ones move a bit unpredictably. In addition, be wary of getting near the mother deer while out walking or running, since they may become defensive to protect their babies. Finally, if a doe leaves a fawn in your yard, please don't touch or move the fawn. The mother deer will be back to retrieve it.

If you find a fawn that is sick, injured, or in an unsafe area, call Austin Wildlife Rescue at 512-472-WILD (512-472-9453)

Now is also the time to be aware of coyote pup rearing season.

- Coyotes breed in February and March; pups are born about 60 days later.

- During this time, territorial male coyotes do not tolerate other canines in their territory. Many conflicts between coyotes and domestic dogs result from this territorial behavior.

- An average coyote litter contains 4 or 5 pups, born in dens. In urban environments, dens can be in storm drains, under storage drains, in holes dug in vacant lots, parks, golf courses, or any other dark, dry place.

- Coyote pups are cared for, fed, and protected by both parents. The pups mature quickly and can eat meat and move about well by the time they are a month old.

- Food requirements of the nursing females and the growing young remain high until late summer. As people and their pets spend more time outdoors during this time, the possibility of a coyote encounter increases.

- It is not unusual to observe a family of coyotes traveling through urbanized areas.

- If food is deliberately or inadvertently provided by people, the pups quickly learn not to fear humans and develop a dependency on easy food sources.

As a reminder, evaluate what food attractants you may be inadvertently providing. Pick ripe fruit from trees and off the ground, secure garbage and compost bins, don't feed pets outdoors, don't throw food scraps for wildlife, keep bird feeders from overflowing, and eliminate artificial water sources. In addition, close off crawl spaces under porches, decks, and sheds!

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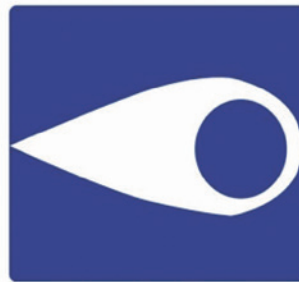
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Insects and the BIG FREEZE

— Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service

With most of Texas seeing freezing temperatures in February, I've been getting numerous questions on what it will do to the insect populations this year. Since we haven't experienced such cold temperatures along with ice and snow for a long time, the short answer is that we just don't know and will have to wait and see. I have a feeling that the majority of insects (and other arthropods) will be just fine because they have ways of surviving winter's cold temperatures.

Just like "snowbirds" that drive their RVs to Texas or Florida to spend the winter, there are certain groups of insects that migrate to new areas to spend the winter where temperatures are not as cold. A great example of this is the Monarch butterfly.

Another example that can be put into "human relation" terms would be insects that use cryoprotectants (anti-freeze compounds). The most commonly used compound that insects use for this purpose is ethylene glycol, which is the same compound that is in antifreeze that humans put into vehicles. Ethylene glycol allows the insect's body tissues to supercool and remain above the freezing point.

Freeze tolerance is another modification that some insects

use to survive winter temperatures. With this method, freezing causes water to be forced out of living cells and the fluid around the cells freeze. These insects also empty their digestive tract to get rid of any food that contains water which could freeze and cause the digestive system to burst. Freeze tolerance is easier for smaller insects because they have less fluid in their body because of their small size.

Some insects may gather together to create collective heat. Honeybees do this inside the hive during the winter to keep warm.

Other insects seek areas of shelter in areas where it is not so cold. An example is ladybugs that move indoors during colder months of the year. These insects move into homes through cracks and crevices or other areas that are not well sealed when it gets cold. This can lead them indoors to become nuisance pests.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com



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

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