



# nwaca NEWS

NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 2021

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 10

## *NWACA Welcomes Four New Board Members*

### **Neighborhood Garage Sale, Electronics Collection Event Set for Fall**

The NWACA Board is proud to welcome four new board members; they bring a range of backgrounds and experience as well as enthusiasm to serve our neighborhood.

Chris Currens is a longtime resident of Westover Hills. He has worked on major project planning initiatives in his work at the State Preservation Board. Some of those projects involved the Austin Transportation Department and Capital Metro, so he'll be an excellent contributor to the NWACA Transportation Committee. He's also eager to contribute to the Civic Engagement and Wildfire Prevention committees.

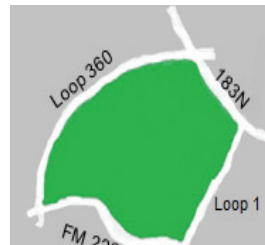
Mick Koffend is a CPA, with extensive computer and database knowledge. He has experience in fundraising and has served on numerous boards and professional organizations. Already a Neighborhood Watch captain for his block, Mick is keen to serve on the Crime and Safety Committee.

Dana Winer, who has a degree in communications, brings skills ranging from process design and project planning to editing to serving on other non-profit organization boards. Dana is looking forward to involvement on the Civic Engagement and Communications Committees as well as helping with special events.

Julie Rawlings re-joins the board, bringing NWACA-specific experience in communications, editing, and managing our Facebook page. She also has a depth of experience with leadership and board organization. Julie will be focusing her efforts on the Communications committee.

The board also is pleased to announce that we have scheduled the NWACA neighborhood garage sales for the morning of Saturday, October 23. Details about the garage sales are in this issue; those interested in hosting a sale need to register by October 20th to be included in the free advertising of the sales. We will hold an Electronics Collection Event on a date in November yet to be determined; as in the past, we'll also be accepting Styrofoam at this event, always a highly valued feature! Both events are outdoors and should be able to be done with appropriate social distancing. The NWACA board advises participants to keep an eye on public health advisories at the time of the events and exercise any appropriate precautions, such as wearing masks or using hand sanitizer.

## **New to the Neighborhood? Welcome to NWACA!**



If this is your first copy of our newsletter, welcome to the NWACA neighborhood! The map shows our boundaries – Mopac, RM 2222, Loop 360, and US Highway 183 (Research Boulevard). There are about 13,500 households who are your neighbors and are happy you're here!

This newsletter is one way to know what's happening in NWACA, but there's much more. Check out the quick link **For New Neighbors** on the home page at [www.nwaca.org](http://www.nwaca.org) and visit our public Facebook page. Use the **Membership** button on the home page, or use the form at the end of this newsletter to become a member of NWACA. Members have access to the weekly **NWACA Notes** and the ability to join the NWACA closed Facebook group, to keep in touch with each other and with the latest news about NWACA.



### **ARE YOU A NWACA MEMBER?**

Receiving the newsletter does not guarantee membership.  
Not sure? Visit [nwaca.org](http://nwaca.org) to confirm!

*Here are 5 great reasons to join today!*

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

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

#### **GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS**

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

#### **PROTECT AND IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY**

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

#### **SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

We are deeply invested in building strong relationships within our business network to positively impact our neighborhood.

*Together we can make a difference!*  
JOIN TODAY @ [NWACA.ORG/MEMBERS](http://NWACA.ORG/MEMBERS)

Bicycle Accidents

Boating Accidents

Car Accidents

Dog Bites

Drunk Driving Accidents

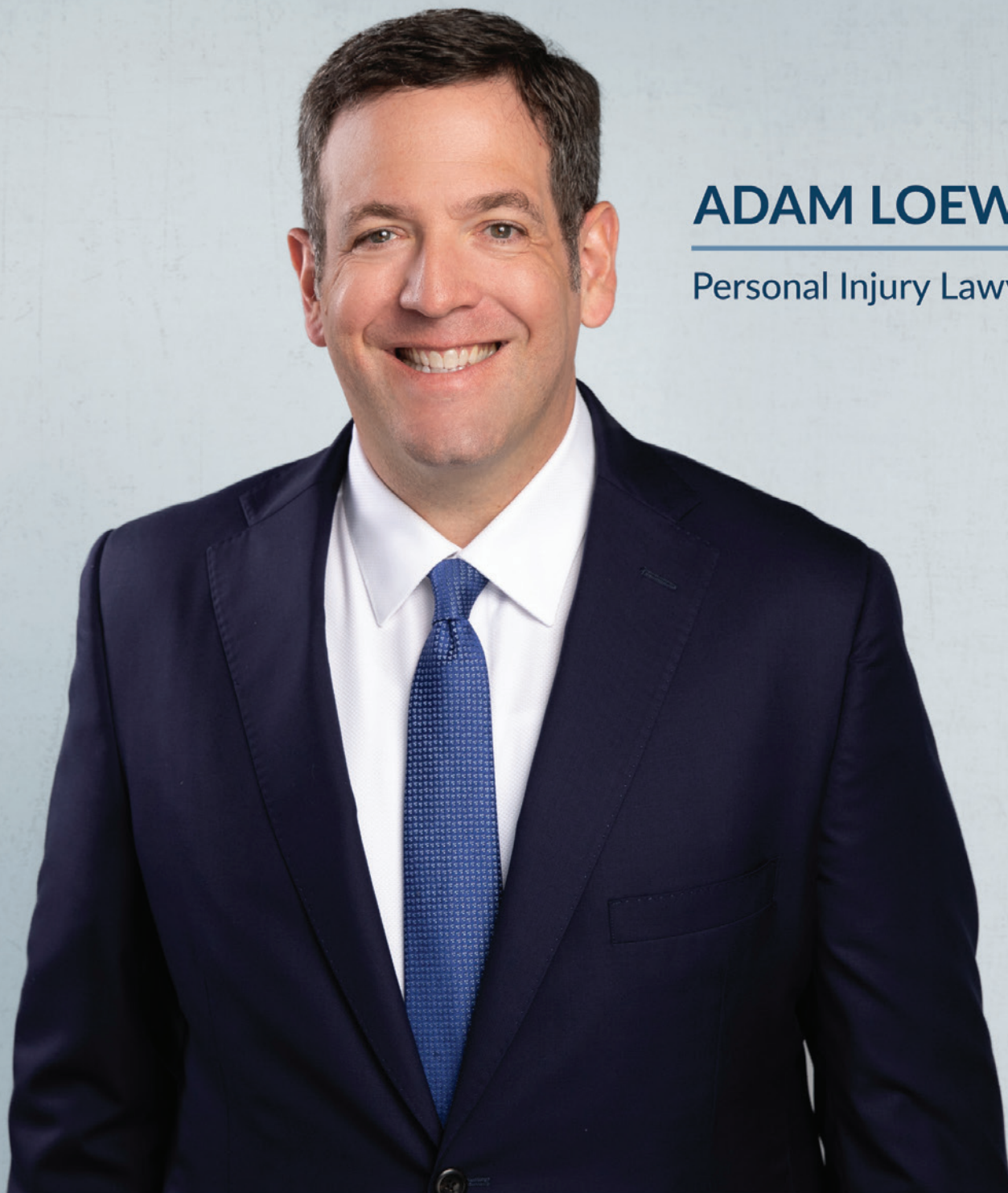
Injuries to Children

Motorcycle Accidents

Slip and Falls

Truck Accidents

Wrongful Death



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

## 2020-2022 NWACA Board of Directors

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| o Charlie Galvin | o Teri Schock     |
| o Richard Grayum | o Joyce Statz     |
| o Jessica Halich | o Anita Tulsiani  |
| o Mick Koffend   | o Dana Winer      |
| o Ben Luckens    |                   |

Each of the Board members can be reached at:

[info@nwaca.org](mailto:info@nwaca.org)

The NWACA Board meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, except December. Please visit our calendar at [www.nwaca.org](http://www.nwaca.org) to see the specific time and location. If you wish to speak at a Board meeting, please send email a week before the meeting, so that we can put you on the agenda.

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

## Peel advertising

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



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

### October 5th, 7:00-9:00pm

(State of Texas) National Night Out  
 Neighborhood areas

### October 13th, 6:30pm

Election Forum for November 2 elections; see Zoom  
 registration link at [www.nwaca.org](http://www.nwaca.org)  
 Virtual

### October 16th, 9:00am

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

### October 19th, 7:00pm

Parks Committee  
 TBD, likely virtual

### October 20th

NWACA Board Meeting  
 TBD, likely virtual

### October 20th

Registration for Neighborhood Garage Sales closes  
 NWACA web site

### October 23rd, 8:00am-noon

Annual NWACA Garage Sales  
 Throughout NWACA neighborhood

### October 26th, 5:00pm

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees Joint Meeting  
 TBD, likely virtual

### November 6th, 9:00am-noon

It's My Park Day – venue to be determined – watch for details in NWACA  
 Notes and at [www.nwaca.org](http://www.nwaca.org)

### November 14th, 2:00pm

Tree, Environment, and Wildlife Committee  
 Virtual

### November 16th, 7:00pm

Parks Committee  
 Virtual

### November 17th, 6:30-8:30pm

NWACA Board Meeting  
 Virtual

### November 23rd, 5:00pm

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees Joint Meeting  
 Virtual

### November TBD

Batteries, Electronics, Dental, Styrofoam Waste Collection event for members  
 Mesa Parking Lot, St. Matthew's 8134 Mesa Drive

## Hill Elementary Construction Update

- Teri Schock and Sarah O'Brien, AISD 2017 Bond Communications Team

Hill Elementary School's modernized classroom studios, gymnasium, and bus loop opened for students on the first day of school, August 17th. Work continues on the new outdoors spaces, which include playgrounds, a basketball court, and landscaping. Construction on these projects should not interfere with student learning and are expected to be complete in October 2021. Austin ISD looks forward to hosting a grand opening celebration for Hill Elementary when it is safe to gather as a community for large celebrations.

Photos are courtesy of AISD 2017 Bond Communications Team



*Hill Exterior*



*Hill Gym*



*Hill Hallway*

## NWACA Sponsored Garage Sales October 23, 2021

- NWACA Board



This year's NWACA-sponsored garage sales will be held on October 23 from 8 am to 12 noon. The event is for NWACA members only, so if you're not a member, please go to [www.nwaca.org](http://www.nwaca.org) to join today! Participation is easy: we do the advertising for you, bringing customers to your garage.

Register on the NWACA web site from September 15 through October 20; see the link under "Hot Topics" on the home page at [www.nwaca.org](http://www.nwaca.org). We will post the neighborhood sales locations on the NWACA web site and place notices in the Austin American-Statesman, on Craigslist, and on the NWACA Facebook page. NWACA provides participants with yard signs; we also deploy signs around the neighborhood. Like past years, we anticipate supporting 40 to 60 garage sales and since we weren't able to do them last year, we expect lot of great offerings this year. Good luck as you clean out your closets! The old adage "one person's junk is another person's treasure" definitely applies.

## Business Spotlight: Studio 103: Yoga With Shanin'

- Janice Green



In August Shanin' Smith opened her yoga studio, Yoga With Shanin' (YWS), amidst the beautiful old live oaks in the Greystone Square Shopping Center on Greystone Drive. Moreover, she is making her teaching space, named Studio 103, available for other independent teachers and creative artists to use for group fitness instruction, photography, gatherings, and exhibitions. Shanin's business model is that Studio 103 be an inclusive and affordable venue.

For twenty-five years Shanin' was a "stay-at-home Mom" of two sons and an active volunteer. To help cope with arthritis, an auto-immune disorder, and chronic pain, plus a later-life divorce, Shanin' turned to yoga. As her practice deepened, she found hope and renewal. With teachers, friends, and students encouraging her from the wings, she completed 500+ hours of teacher certification training. After 5 years of teaching public classes and all the challenges brought by the pandemic, she's following her entrepreneurial spirit.

Shanin' offers public, private, and corporate instruction via online live-streaming and in-person classes (following mask, ventilation, and spacing protocols). She has a special affinity for working with beginning or older students who often say, "I can't do yoga because ...". Many of her classes are gentle movements suited to a more "experienced" body, but one that may be inexperienced in yoga. Students learn to listen to and adjust their bodies while progressing toward their goals which may be as simple as zipping the back of a dress or touching toes.

*Continued on Page 5*



*Continued from Page 4*

Shanin' welcomes the challenge of skeptics who have not tried yoga or who have been turned off by classes not matching their needs.

YWS classes offer a gentle approach to yoga: Slow and Steady; Foundations (a rotating focus on balance, flexibility, and strength); Stretch; and Unwind (combo of stretch and slow/steady at the end of the workday). Shanin' also leads a 20-minute weekly session featuring breath work coupled with movement while seated in a chair – her response to the needs of clients with special limitations.

Her style of instruction is notable in three respects. First, Shanin's posture and position cues are common-sense descriptions that less experienced yogis can follow. Second, her classes have a congenial, supportive, and non-competitive atmosphere as described in the student testimonials captured on her easily navigated website. Third, she has an eclectic music palette that adds a unique and fun background to her classes – where else but in music-conscious Austin!

Studio 103 is spacious and glows with filtered natural light. All the usual amenities and necessities are there – storage cubbies, mini-kitchen, changing room, and inviting conversation area. To see it yourself, check out her studio tour at [Studio103atx.com](http://Studio103atx.com).

Engendering hope is Shanin's mission – derived from her own life experiences and health challenges that benefitted from yoga. Shanin' Smith models hope for others seeking mental and physical well-being at any stage of life.

Contact: [www.yogawithshanin.com](http://www.yogawithshanin.com); 512-222-3659; 3435 Greystone Drive, Suite 103; email: [shanin@yogawithshanin.com](mailto:shanin@yogawithshanin.com)



### Writers' League of Texas Book Awards

The state of Texas has a long tradition of serving both as a setting and an inspiration for great storytelling. Honoring that tradition, the Writers' League of Texas (WLT) Book Awards were established in 1991. (The original name, Violet Crown Awards, was changed in 2008.)

Each year WLT recognizes and celebrates exceptional Texas writers who have authored books published in the past year. The contest is open to self-published and traditionally-published authors alike, with a winner and runners-up in each of five categories: General Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, Middle Grade/Young Adult, and Picture Book. Each winner receives a \$1,000 cash prize and a commemorative award. In 2017 an additional award, the Discovery Prize, was established for books published by independent presses and university presses. The winner in each of the categories receives \$250.

This year's works were submitted from January 4, 2021, through March 31, 2021, with judging completed in August. The winners were scheduled to be celebrated during the WLT Agents and Editors Conference last month, but will have to wait just a little longer.

*Continued on Page 6*



## 78731 Real Estate Market Update



Based on MLS Data collected by the Austin Board of REALTORS®, the median sold price for 78731 single-family homes rose significantly from \$800,000 in July 2020 to \$1,179,534 in July 2021. Year over year, the average days on market dropped from 24 to 8 days and the supply of homes for sale on the market went down from 39 to 30 home sales.



### Brian Copland

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**Just Sold**



# NWACA News

*Continued from Page 6*

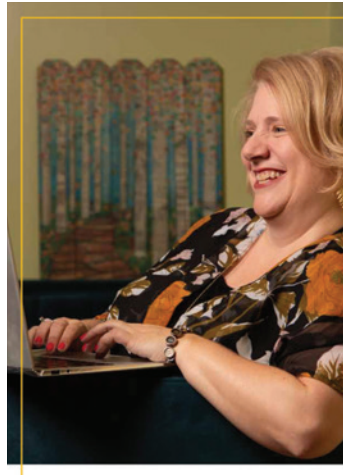
In lieu of the conference's in-person event, there will be a virtual awards ceremony to honor them during the Texas Book Festival, October 25-31. <https://www.texasbookfestival.org>

Becka Oliver, WLT Executive Director, recently explained to me that the winners honored later this month are called the 2020 winners because that was the year their books were published. Among them, our neighbor Richard Santos, author of *Trust Me*, won an honorable mention.

In all, 30 authors will be honored and, of them, nine are Austinites. They include Amanda Eyre Ward for *Jetsetters*, Tom Philpott for *Perilous Bounty*, Chad Bennett for *Your New Feeling* is the *Artifact of a Bygone Era*, K.A. Holt for *BenBee and the Teacher Griefer*, Mari Mancusi for *Dragon Ops*, Cory Putnam Oakes for *The Second-Best Haunted Hotel on Mercer Street*, Christina Soontornvat for *A Wish in the Dark*, and Bethany Hegedus for *Huddle Up! Cuddle Up!*

Congratulations to the 2020 winners; best of luck to authors now in publication, who hope to win next year; and happy reading to all of us!

A congratulatory call out to Adam Ostrar. You may remember reading about his albums, *River of Bricks* and *Brawls in the Briar* in this column in May 2018. Now, Keeled Scales has reissued Adam's 2019 record *The Worried Coat* which sold out on its first issue. The LP came out October 1st and two singles *Kansas City* and *Take It Back* are now streaming again. Available only on Bandcamp and the Keeled Scales Website, this was a limited run of 100 copies, so grab one sooner rather than later!



*Bethany Hegedus*



*Amanda Eyre Ward*



*Adam Ostrar*

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# MARKET UPDATE



**\$1,296,727**  
AVERAGE SALES PRICE



**\$1,034,073**  
AVERAGE LIST PRICE



**\$24,637,808**  
SALES VOLUME



**7**  
DAYS ON MARKET



**\$417**  
AVG LIST PRICE PER SQFT



**19**  
CLOSED SALES



**\$463**  
AVG SALE PRICE PER SF



**\$1,200,000**  
MEDIAN SALES PRICE



**NORTHWEST HILLS AND  
WESTOVER HILLS**

SOURCE: ABOR MLS INCLUDING DATA FROM AUGUST 1-31, 2021 FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOMES, BASED ON TWCRA BOUNDARIES: MOPAC HWY 360/2222 HWY 183

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As a long time resident of Austin, Julie has intimate knowledge of our neighborhood and a proven record of selling homes. She truly appreciates that buying or selling a home is one of life's most important decisions and she dedicates herself to providing the very best to her clients! If you're looking to buy or sell, Julie welcomes the opportunity to visit with you about your needs.

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## Horticultural Curiosities: Butterflies!

- Jon Plum

Butterflies are a delight in the garden and a whimsical part of summer and fall. They are also key players in our ecosystem. Here are a few guidelines and tips for landscaping your garden to increase and support butterfly populations in Central Texas.

Butterflies are attracted to plants to “host” and “nectar” plants. You might remember the butterfly life cycle. Adult butterflies lay eggs on host plants. Larvae (caterpillars) emerge and feed on the host plants until they store enough energy to form a pupa (chrysalis) inside which they transform into adult butterflies. Nectar plants attract adult butterflies. They feed on the nectar produced by flowers, thereby helping to pollinate some plants. Many host plants are species specific. Caterpillars eat some host plants and concentrate alkaloids and other chemicals produced by the plants, making them an unsavory meal for predators. This strategy has allowed colorful species of butterflies to proliferate in their environment.

### Some good nectar plants

Lantana and Verbena species

Gregg's Mist Flower, *Eupatorium greggii*

Frostweed, *Verbesina virginica*

Pentas, *Pentas lanceolata*

Texas Sage, *Salvia greggii*

Buttonbush, *Cephalanthus occidentalis*

Flame Acanthus, *Anisacanthus quadrifidus*

Coral Honeysuckle, *Lonicera sempervirens*

Blackfoot Daisy, *Melampodium leucanthum*

Mexican Sunflower, *Tithonia rotundifolia*

Butterfly Bush, *Buddleja marrubiiifolia*

### Host plants and butterflies they attract

Hop Ash (*Ptelea trifoliata*): Giant Swallowtail

Passionvine (*Passiflora incarnata*, *P. lutea*): Gulf Fritillary

Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*): Eastern Black Swallowtail

Rue (*Ruta graveolens*): Eastern Black Swallowtail and Giant Swallowtail

Milkweed (*Asclepias* sp.): Monarch and Queen

Hackberry (*Celtis* sp.): Hackberry, Snout, and Tawny Emperor

Pipevine (*Aristolochia* sp.): Pipevine Swallowtail

Frogfruit (*Phyla nodiflora*): Buckeye, Phaon Crescentspot

Sennas (*Senna* sp.): Giant Cloudless Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Sleepy Orange

False nettle (*Boehmeria cylindrica*): Red Admiral, Question Mark, Eastern Comma

False Indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*): Dogface, Silver-spotted Skipper, Gray Hairstreak

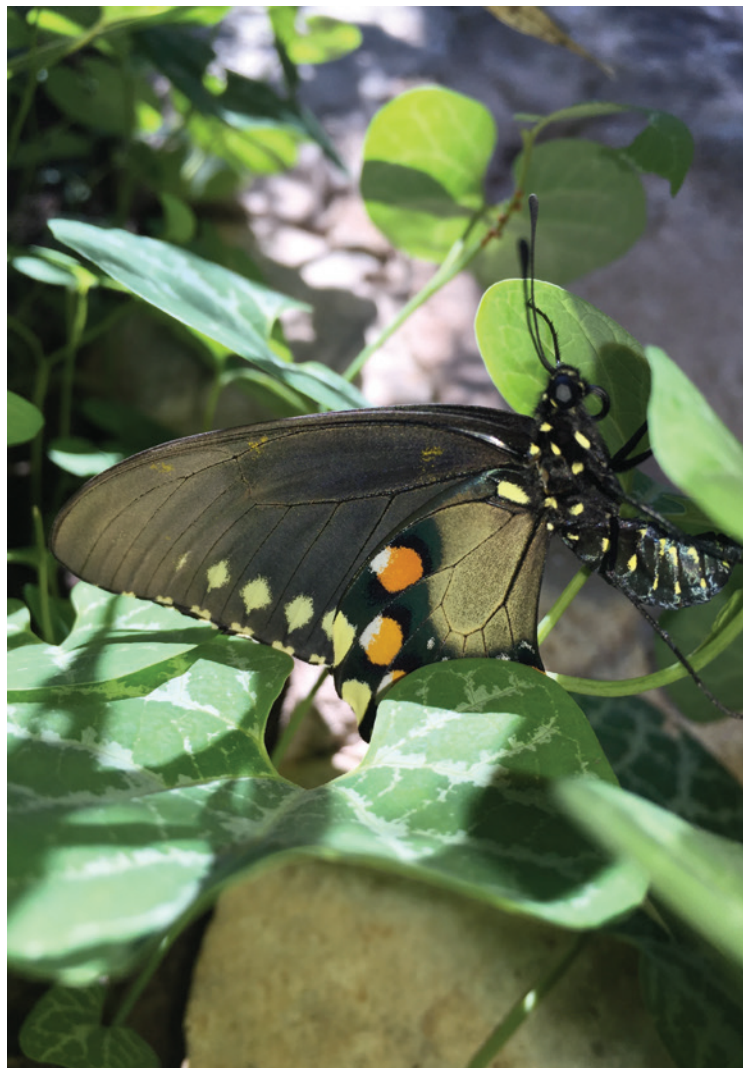
Clammyweed (*Polanisia dodecandra*): Great Southern White, Checkered White

Some butterfly species migrate. Monarchs are one of the best known and most understood of the migrating butterflies; their migration paths, life cycles, and habits have been studied extensively.

Butterflies and insecticides don't mix well so it is best to be careful even with organic garden products. Gardens most attractive to butterflies are all natural! Good luck creating a pollinator's paradise in your back yard.



*Pipevine Swallowtail caterpillars*



*Pipevine Swallowtail laying eggs on host plant*



# Healthy Creeks in Northwest Austin – Maura Powers

Creeks, often privately owned, can enrich our neighborhood. However, most of them have trash in them.

Our creeks feed into the Colorado River<sup>1</sup>, the Central Texas lake system, and ultimately, the Gulf of Mexico. During a rain, trash washes into storm drains and then straight to the creeks. Much of this trash ends up on the creek banks of private homeowners and stays there until the next rainfall, when it washes further downstream.

Trash, especially plastic, is an eyesore and a threat to the proper functioning of the creek and the vitality of the environment. If you see large amounts of debris clogging a storm drain, call 311 and report it to the city for removal.

Healthy creeks require some maintenance. The first tiny step toward maintaining a creek on your property is to pick up trash once a month or pay someone else, such as a lawn service, to do so. The benefits start with your property's improved appearance and extend to the Gulf's health.

Keep Austin Beautiful, a local environmental non-profit group, provides helpful information on erosion control and creek sustainability. The group has an Adopt-a-Creek program for public creeks; our neighborhood's Bull Creek and Laurel Oaks Creek have been adopted by volunteers. (For more information, see <https://keepaustinbeautiful.com>.)

The large privately owned creeks in Northwest Austin are mapped in the Apple Maps application. They are Dry Creek<sup>2</sup>, Turkey Creek<sup>3</sup>, and Walnut Creek<sup>4</sup>. Neighbors living on or near these creeks are encouraged to communicate via NWACA's Facebook page to organize creek cleaning days.

<sup>1</sup>Fun fact: it is the longest river with both its source and its mouth within Texas. Clay, Comer; Kleiner, Diana J. (1999-02-15). "Colorado River".

<sup>2</sup>Dry Creek starts at Knollwood and Shadow Valley Drives, crosses under FM 2222 and eventually empties out into the Colorado River.

<sup>3</sup>Turkey Creek starts near Edgerton Street and goes along Turkey Creek Drive before emptying into the Colorado River.

<sup>4</sup>Walnut Creek starts at McNeil Drive and runs parallel to Parmer Lane until it goes under Mopac and heads further east.



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## November Election Forum on October 13

— Joyce Statz

On Wednesday, October 13, starting at 6:30 p.m., NWACA will join other neighborhood associations in our area to host an election forum for the November 2, 2021 election. The forum will be online using Zoom, with registration required to minimize the risk of interruptions to the meeting. A registration link will be posted to [www.nwaca.org](http://www.nwaca.org) several weeks before the forum.

At the forum, we will hear from speakers, pro and con, regarding City of Austin Proposition A on local law enforcement. Proposition A language is as follows:

*Shall a petitioned ordinance be approved to enhance public safety and police oversight, transparency and accountability by adding new chapter 2-16 to establish minimum standards for the police department to ensure effective public safety and protect residents and visitors to Austin, and prescribing minimal requirements for achieving the same, at an estimated cost of \$271.5 million - \$598.8 million over five years?*

The Proposition is a citizen-driven ballot initiative that asks the City of Austin to:

- establish minimum police staffing and require there to be at least two police officers for every 1,000 residents of Austin;
- add an additional 40 hours of police training each year on topics such as active shooter scenarios, critical thinking, and defensive tactics; and
- provide police with additional compensation for being proficient in non-English languages, enrolling in cadet mentoring programs, and being recognized for honorable conduct.

Forum speakers will address the rationale for Proposition A, how it is likely to be implemented, and the expected costs of implementation. There will also be information about other items that will appear on the ballot, including the proposed constitutional amendments (see other article in this newsletter), and the City of Austin Proposition B:

*Shall the City Council be authorized to convey or lease approximately 9 acres of parkland currently used as the Central Maintenance Complex (CMC) located at 2525 S. Lakeshore Blvd. through a public bidding process, where the total value of the bid is equal to or greater than the appraised fair market value of CMC, in exchange for at a minimum: 1) at least 48 acres of waterfront land contiguous to an existing City park; and 2) the cost or construction of a new maintenance facility for the Parks and Recreation Department on other city-owned land; and 3) partial or full funding for the removal of Fiesta Gardens' existing maintenance facility and restoration of that land to parkland?*

Please monitor the NWACA web site for the registration link. We look forward to seeing you at the forum.



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# Constitutional Amendments in the November Election – Louri O'Leary

On November 2, 2021, (and early voting dates prior to election day), a Constitutional Amendment Election will take place in Texas. Be sure to check your county election website for voting information and locations. For Travis county, useful links are <https://votetravis.com> and <https://countyclerk.traviscountytexas.gov/elections.html>

All registered voters (must be registered 30 days before any election) will have the opportunity to vote on eight propositions. Those approved by a majority vote will be added to the Texas Constitution as amendments.

## **Proposition 1 (HJR 143)**

"The constitutional amendment authorizing the professional sports team charitable foundations of organizations sanctioned by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association or the Women's Professional Rodeo Association to conduct charitable raffles at rodeo venues."

## **Proposition 2 (HJR 99)**

"The constitutional amendment authorizing a county to finance the development or redevelopment of transportation or infrastructure in unproductive, underdeveloped, or blighted areas in the county."

## **Proposition 3 (SJR 27)**

"The constitutional amendment to prohibit this state or a political subdivision of this state from prohibiting or limiting religious services of religious organizations."

## **Proposition 4 (SJR 47)**

"The constitutional amendment changing the eligibility requirements for a justice of the supreme court, a judge of the court of criminal appeals, a justice of a court of appeals, and a district judge."

## **Proposition 5 (HJR 165)**

"The constitutional amendment providing additional powers to the State Commission on Judicial Conduct with respect to candidates for judicial office."

## **Proposition 6 (SJR 19)**

"The constitutional amendment establishing a right for residents of certain facilities to designate an essential caregiver for in-person visitation."

## **Proposition 7 (HJR 125)**

"The constitutional amendment to allow the surviving spouse of a person who is disabled to receive a limitation on the school district ad valorem taxes on the spouse's residence homestead if the spouse is 55 years of age or older at the time of the person's death."

## **Proposition 8 (SJR 35)**

"The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the market value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a member of the armed services of the United States who is killed or fatally injured in the line of duty."

For more information and resources for voting in Texas, visit [VoteTexas.gov](http://VoteTexas.gov) or [www.sos.state.tx.us](http://www.sos.state.tx.us)

First Day of Early Voting by Personal Appearance	Monday, October 18, 2021
Last Day to Apply for Ballot by Mail	Friday, October 22, 2021
<b>(Received, not Postmarked)</b>	
Last Day of Early Voting by Personal Appearance	Friday, October 29, 2021
Election Day	Tuesday, November 2, 2021

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## Understanding City Codes: Land Use, Zoning, And Overlay Zoning

— Alan Carson

The terms land use, zoning, and overlay zoning are related but different. City of Austin documents define land use as how land— residential, commercial, industrial, and open space - is generally used.

Zoning establishes the types of uses permitted on a parcel of land, setting standards for building height, setback, floor to area ratio, landscaping, and impervious cover limits. Zoning implements the comprehensive plan (Imagine Austin). Austin has 16 residential zoning districts, 13 commercial districts, four industrial districts, and five special purpose districts in the land use plan currently in effect. (The current land use plan was approved in 1986. It has been amended many times and attempts to update it over the past several years for the CodeNEXT project have stalled.) You can see the zoning of a particular property by searching for “City of Austin Zoning Profile Report” in your web browser and entering its address.

Overlay Zoning is a regulatory tool that creates a special zoning district within an existing base zone(s) and identifies special provisions in addition to those in the underlying base zone. An example is the Capitol View Corridor Combining District, which limits the height of structures within selected corridors to permit publicly accessible views of the Texas State Capitol. There are 13 of these combining (overlay) districts.

Conditional Overlays are combined with base zoning districts on specific properties to further restrict a zoning classification or land use. A conditional overlay can provide flexible and adaptable use or site development regulations by requiring standards tailored to individual properties.

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

## 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 July 15, 2021 and September 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.

- Craig and Sylvia Casper
- Kim Cook
- Walter and Ingrid Hennigan
- Cassandra Knobloch
- (and apologies to anyone whose donation we might have missed!)

## Oh, Those Cedars Are Nasty! Or Are They? — Joyce Statz



For those in Austin who suffer from “cedar fever,” there’s no question that our local Ashe juniper trees, aka “cedar” trees, are nasty! But are they also a menace to our neighborhoods as wildfire fuel, as so many homeowners believe?

Should we be removing every one of them on our property?

Before you take such drastic measures, consider the following:<sup>1</sup>

- In Central Texas, we need trees that provide shade to cool homes, paved areas, and landscape plants. We also leverage that shade to minimize undergrowth of weeds and grasses that can form fuel for ground fires.
- Ashe junipers are well-adapted to our climate and can grow on dry caliche that is so abundant in our area, providing good shade once they are mature and lower limbs have been removed.
- Current research shows that Ashe juniper do not consume more water than other native trees; it is a myth that their deep roots suck up groundwater. Roots are no deeper than those of other trees, and their water storage capacity is limited.
- Decomposition of Ashe juniper needles increases soil fertility and water holding capacity, which reduces erosion and improves water quality. The evergreen canopy and accumulated leaf litter help reduce the impact of our high rainfall events.
- Fire risk models in the mixed Ashe juniper and oak woodlands of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve indicate that these are low wildfire risk areas, and active canopy fires are potentially very rare. They are the lowest risk when compared to grasslands and shrub/savannah mixes.<sup>2</sup> Diversity of species reduces fire spread and lowers the probability of burn – in contrast, the Bastrop Complex fire of 2011 was in a homogenous woodland, as are many of the fires in the western United States.
- Mature Ashe juniper in moderate to dense stands tend to be fire-resistant, and thus can be an effective fire break, as long as the leaf moisture is moderate to high and sustained winds are below 20 miles per hour. Small trees in grasslands, though, are very vulnerable, since the thin bark is easily damaged by fire.
- Dead Ashe juniper trees are highly volatile; those around our homes should definitely be removed. Mature live Ashe juniper can stay in the landscape without great concern.

By the way, the Ashe juniper is really part of the cypress family (Cupressaceae), while true cedars are part of the pine family (Pinaceae). Also, they’re not invasive. Researchers have found fossilized juniper pollen from 14,000 to 20,000 years ago and juniper wood charcoal has been found in burned rock middens from 6,500 years ago in Texas. Early explorers of the Texas Hill Country reported extensive forests of juniper well before European settlement, not expanses of grassland, as some claim.

<sup>1</sup> Sources of the facts cited here and further detail can be found in Ashe Juniper Reference Document in the Wildfire Prevention Library under the Resources tab at [www.nwaca.org](http://www.nwaca.org).

<sup>2</sup> Note that the majority of wildfires being extinguished by the Austin Fire Department are grassland fires on the east side of Austin, not forest fires in other parts of the City.



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Fourth of July Parade \$10 \_\_\_\_ \$20 \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_  
 Constable \$10 \_\_\_\_ \$20 \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_  
 Parks Fund \$10 \_\_\_\_ \$20 \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

### To join:

go to **www.nwaca.org** and pay online via credit card  
 or send this form and payment to:  
 NWACA P.O. Box 26654, Austin, TX 78755

### Volunteer!

Please check a committee on which you would like to participate:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Events             | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire Prevention             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History            | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning and Transportation       |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Parks              |  |

Members, please request to join our **Facebook Group** and sign up for **NWACA Notes**, our weekly email.

For more info email us at: [info@nwaca.org](mailto:info@nwaca.org)

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**-Donna and Bryan Budak**



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