



nwaca NEWS

NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY 2022

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 2

Happy February NWACA neighbors!

It is hard to believe that by the time you read this newsletter, it will have been a year since our incredibly memorable snow and ice event of 2021.

We hope you enjoy the articles this month. This issue contains a plethora of fun and useful information: from our first in a series of short pieces focusing on Vision Zero (Austin's community goal for making streets much, much safer) and how you can get involved, to board member Chris Currens' interesting piece that includes history regarding Northwest Hills cedar choppers and a great recipe for polenta with goat cheese and rosemary.

Kayla Winer-Winkler brings us the "Student Scoop" on Groundhog's Day and Chris Hajdu shares some exciting culinary updates, while reminding us to share some extra love with the four restaurants that recently experienced burglaries: El Dorado, Bartlett's, District Kitchen, and Chez Zee. Also, Richard Denney shares some mostly forgotten history about Travis County's First Poor Farm.

Dry conditions and high winds the day we sent this issue to the publisher make for a compelling reminder to closely read Joyce Statz' Firewise column.

This month we launch our annual member survey and invite you to take few minutes to share your thoughts about how NWACA can best serve you. The survey will remain open through the middle of March: <https://tinyurl.com/NWACA2022>

The NWACA board again thanks all our business and family members. To learn more about us or to become a member of the association, log onto www.nwaca.org

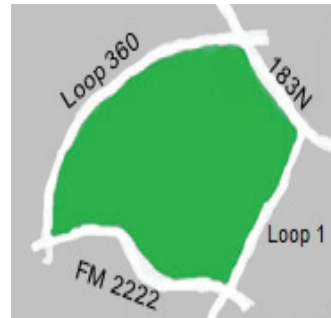
It's My Park Day Saturday March 5

Janelle Medrano

Saturday, March 5, 2022, brings another opportunity for the NWACA community to support our green spaces. You can volunteer for an It's My Park Day (IMPD) Spring project at Stillhouse Hollow Nature Preserve, located at 7810 Sterling Drive. IMPD Spring is an annual volunteer event sponsored by the Austin Parks Foundation in conjunction with the Austin Parks and Recreation Department. Up

Continued on Page 5

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!

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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

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**Each of the Board Members can be reached at
info@nwaca.org, or by phone at 512-920-2973**

The NWACA Board meets on the 3rd Wednesday 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 advertising@peelinc.com. The advertising deadline is the 8th of the month prior to the issue.

Mark Your Calendars

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

February 15, 7:00pm

Parks Committee

virtual

February 16, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

NWACA Board Meeting

virtual

February 22, 5 PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committee

virtual

March 5, 9-noon

It’s My Park Day – Cleanup activity in Stillhouse Hollow Preserve. Register online after Feb. 3 at austinparks.givepulse.com/group/9012-Its-My-Park-Day-Spring
Stillhouse Hollow Nature Preserve, 7810 Sterling Drive

March 15, 7pm

Parks Committee

virtual

March 16, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

NWACA Board Meeting

virtual

March 19, 9AM to noon

Monthly cleanup at Bull Creek District Park – sign up at
<https://givepul.se/lqpd6p>

Bull Creek District Park

March 20, 2pm

Tree, Environment, and Wildlife Committee

virtual

March 22, 5 PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees
Joint Meeting

virtual

March 26, 10 am-noon

Spring Recycling Event – Batteries, Oil, Paint, Antifreeze,
Styrofoam, bathroom supplies
Mesa Parking Lot, St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church



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Try a Hearth Healthy Workout!

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH • 2:00PM

Join us as Blaine Booher, PT & MBA with ONR Rehabilitation, discusses the benefits of a Heart Healthy workout specially designed for older adults. To RSVP, please call 512.387.8315.

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Groundhog Day – Kayla Winer-Winkler



Groundhogs also known as woodchucks

We have always celebrated Groundhog Day on February 2, but why do we need a rodent to predict our weather? How has this day been celebrated in the past? Why use a groundhog, and not another animal?

Well, we don't actually need a groundhog to predict the weather, but in the late 1880's this was one of the most accurate ways, and tradition just stuck with us through generations.

Groundhog Day began with the pagan spring festival, Imbolc. Then, when Christianity swept through Europe, Imbolc became Candlemas, marking when Jesus was presented at the holy temple in Jerusalem. Candlemas is also known as the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In Europe, some Christians believed that a sunny Candlemas meant another 40 days of snow. Candlemas was celebrated when priests would give blessed candles to mark how long and cold winter was. When the tradition reached Germany, Germans changed it a little. They said if a small animal glimpsed their shadow, only then would the day be sunny. Obviously, an official animal had to be elected; however, it wasn't yet a groundhog, but a hedgehog.

Later, some Germans came to Pennsylvania, bringing with them this tradition. However, hedgehogs weren't very common, and groundhogs were. Many of these settlers joined the local groundhog hunting group, called the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club. Many years later, a newspaper editor belonging to the club announced that the only true weather-forecasting groundhog of America was a groundhog named Phil. There have been many variations of 'Phil,' including Staten Island 'Chuck,' Birmingham 'Bill,' and even Shubenacadie 'Sam' and albino Warton 'Willie,' from Nova Scotia and Ontario.

Happy Groundhog Day!

Continued from Cover

to 100 projects will be completed throughout the city; at our local preserve, we'll clean up trash and tidy up the landscape around the parking lot and upper trail.

Beginning on February 3, volunteers can register online at austinparks.givepulse.com/group/9012-Its-My-Park-Day-Spring. Find "Litterally" Gone for Good at Stillhouse Hollow Nature Preserve on the project list to complete your registration. We will work from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on March 5; all volunteers will receive a commemorative t-shirt from the Parks Foundation.

A reminder: to protect the habitat for its endangered species, Stillhouse Hollow Nature Preserve is off-limits to dogs. Recently, observers have seen folks taking dogs into the preserve; some dogwalkers have left dog waste behind. Please respect the rules - walk dogs outside the preserve and pick up their waste for disposal at home. Your efforts will be much appreciated.

Early Voting Begins February 14 for Primary Elections

NWACA Civic Engagement Committee

Early voting for the March 1 primary elections will take place Monday, February 14 through Friday, February 25. To vote by mail, applications must be received by February 18; ballots must be returned to the Travis County Clerk by March 1. Voters will select candidates for Texas Governor, the Texas Legislature, and other statewide offices, as well as for the US House of Representatives. To view a sample ballot and polling locations, visit <https://countyclerk.traviscountytexas.gov/departments/elections/>. Check the website <https://www.vote411.org/>, which will have background information about the candidates on the ballot.



I Live Here, I Work Here



Brian Copland's 78731 Home Sales in 2021

Last year, I worked with the most Northwest Hills clients I ever have. Out of my \$70 million in homes sales in 2021, I'm proud that nearly \$12 million of that was in my neighborhood. My business has grown because of your support and I am forever grateful for neighbors like you. Looking forward to working with you and taking care of your referrals in 2022.



Brian Copland

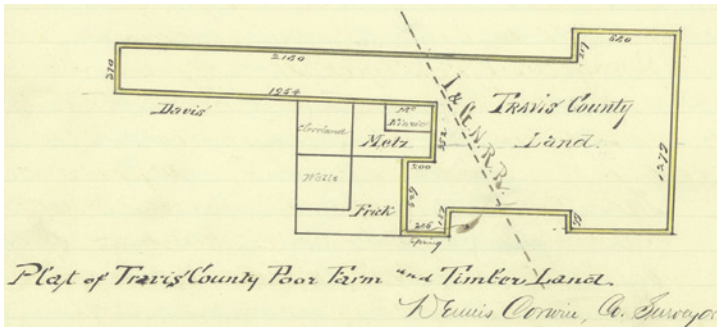
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Travis County's First Poor Farm Revisited – Richard Denney



Travis County Clerk Records Commissioners Court Minutes J, p.537

The first poor farm in Travis County was adjacent to our NWACA neighborhood. Established in 1879 the 303-acre farm was roughly bounded by today's Mopac, Anderson Lane, Burnet Road, and Greenlawn Parkway. It was in operation until its closure ca. 1905 when the farm was relocated south to near today's Tarrytown.

Not part of the farm proper, the county also purchased a roughly .16-mile-wide strip of land south of Spicewood Springs Road that extended from the farm northwest to near Mesa Drive. This was "timberland" used to provide timber and other resources for the farm.

Travis County Clerk Records include a ledger from 1890 to 1900 with an inventory of property, resident paupers, hired hands, and county convicts sent to the farm to work off fines.

The main buildings appear to have been located on about a 9+ acre tract near today's Lucy Read School, with a main entrance off today's Burnet Road aligned with Richcreek Road.

Mrs. Edna Carpenter's husband was superintendent of the poor farm from 1903 to 1904; her memoir *Tales from the Manchaca Hills* provides a look at life there. The superintendent and family lived in a one-story, five-room house that included a kitchen, two large porches, and a large storeroom for groceries, clothing, and supplies. A cook was employed who prepared three meals a day for the residents

and convicts. The house also included a washroom and dining room where the residents ate at one table. Convict dining was confined to a side porch at a separate long table.

There were numerous outbuildings, a barn, a dozen two-room cottages for the resident paupers, and a separate guard house for convicts. By this period, the farm even had a telephone powered by battery.

She noted there were about 20 residents and usually about 15 convicts staying on the property. Convict labor helped raise wheat, oats, corn, cotton, and vegetables for consumption and sale. The elderly or disabled residents not able to do farm work did other chores: laundry, making butter, helping with cooking and serving meals, raising chickens, and tending to livestock. Overall, the picture she paints of everyday life is much like a commune (albeit with convict labor).

County records document deaths on the poor farm. As one statewide study noted, the high death rate on poor farms made establishment of cemeteries on the property common. There is some evidence for a cemetery on this farm in an Austin news article from 1886: "Ras Scott, a white pauper, died at the county poor farm day before yesterday of consumption, and was buried yesterday. Friends, he had none, but for all that, he was given decent burial in the graveyard on the farm."

If there was a cemetery, where was it located? No official record of location has yet been found, including Texas Historical Commission's record of lost cemeteries. Also, at some other poor farm cemeteries, bodies were reinterred when development encroached. At this point, no evidence has been found this occurred. The location of a cemetery, if it existed, and the disposition of burials remains mysteries not yet solved for this, the first of Travis County's poor farms.

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/>

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2021 YEAR IN REVIEW | Northwest Hills

221

NUMBER OF NEW LISTINGS

Down 27% from 2020

228

NUMBER OF SALES

Down 6.5% from 2020

\$1,095,500

CLOSED PRICE MEDIAN

Up 24% from 2020

\$1,050,000

LIST PRICE MEDIAN

Up 19% from 2020

5 DAYS

DAYS TO SELL MEDIAN

Down 2% from 2020

105%

CLOSED PRICE TO LIST PRICE RATIO

Up 4.8% from 2020

\$407

LIST PRICE/SQFT MEDIAN

Up 21.6% from 2020

\$414

CLOSED PRICE/SQFT MEDIAN

Up 24% from 2020

\$269,824,946

SALES \$ VOLUME

Up 19.6% from 2020

Of the 228 published sales in our neighborhood in 2021, 20% involved cash buyers.

Source: ABOR MLS including data from January 1 - December 31, 2021 for single family homes. Based on NWACA boundaries - Mopac/Hwy 360/2222/Hwy 183.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT IN 2022?

Prices will continue to rise due to low inventory and high demand. In addition, interest rates are increasing and there are an unprecedented number of companies relocating to Austin. These factors, along with an influx of domestic and international buyers, will significantly impact our spring housing market. Based on market indicators, 2022 will continue to favor sellers, and qualified buyers will need to be strategic in their offer to be successful in purchasing a home. If you are considering a move, we welcome the opportunity to be your trusted real estate advisor.



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NWACA News



Professor Michael Starbird

the Mathematical Association of America. The spark he brings to his classes developed early; puzzles and games were shared at his boyhood dinner table by his father, a professor of math, physics, and astronomy at the Junior College of East Los Angeles and an exceptional pianist.

In 1974, after Mike received his degrees at Pomona College and the University of Wisconsin, he came to Austin to teach at UT. He and his wife settled in Northwest Hills in 1979 and still live in the same house where they raised their two daughters, both of whom live in our neighborhood as well.

Mike met his co-author, Edward Burger, in the 1980s. Ed, a UT grad student and standup comedian at the time, would become a professor at Williams College, then President of Southwestern University in Georgetown, and subsequently President of Austin's Saint David's Foundation, a position he now holds. Mike and Ed's first writing collaboration was a textbook for liberal arts students: *The Heart of Mathematics*, an *Invitation to Effective Thinking*. Its pages scintillate with stories, games, codes, and brainteasers, going from pinwheels to fine paintings. It is truly enjoyable!

Their next collaboration, *Coincidences*, *Chaos*, and *All That Math Jazz*, delightfully does what the cover says: makes light of weighty ideas. "The authors leapfrog over math and anecdote toward profound ideas about nature, art, and music... a book for lovers of puzzles and posers of outlandish questions, lapsed math aficionados, and the formula-phobic alike." (Amazon).

While *The Heart of Mathematics* (900 pages) is available only in English, *Coincidences*, *Chaos* and *All That Math Jazz* (300 pages) has been translated into nine languages; their third book, *5 Elements of Effective Thinking* (150 pages) has been translated into eighteen languages. Though the number of languages in which their books are printed appears to decrease with increasing page count, I'm confident Mike and Ed's next project, a book on teaching, will break the pattern.

Mike looks forward to Chorus Austin resuming performances so he can once again lend his baritone voice to the ensemble. His interests also include playing the piano. Humble about his musical accomplishments, he hosts annual musicales for students at his home where he feels his playing encourages others to offer their talents as well.

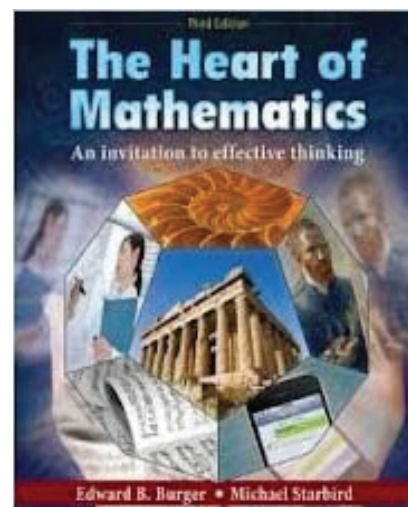
Math is fun!

In 2001 when Professor Michael Starbird offered the first of his Great Courses, *Change in Motion: Calculus Made Clear*, he didn't dream that by 2009 he'd do five more. His courses cover statistics, probability, the joy of thinking, and geometry, his clear and often humorous style propelling sales to over 600,000 copies.

A Distinguished Teaching Professor at the University of Texas at Austin (UT), Mike has received more than fifteen prestigious awards, including a national teaching award from

The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking

Edward B. Burger
Michael Starbird



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Dealing with Hate in our Neighborhood

NWACA Board

Recently people in our neighborhood reported finding anti-Semitic flyers in ziploc bags on their driveways. If you received one, or encounter another hate message, please take the following actions:

- File a report with Austin Police by calling 311; make note of the reference number and be prepared for a callback, likely from an unknown number. The callback is very important, since it ensures the report gets to the police department.
- File a report with the Anti-Defamation League at adl.org/reportincident.
- Dispose of the offensive materials. (The ADL and APD have the samples they need).
- If you or someone you know has video surveillance footage related to an anti-Semitic incident, please email securitydirector@shalomaustin.org.

Hate and anti-Semitism have no place in our community.

Vision Zero Tip: Put up a Sign

NWACA Transportation Committee

For the next several months, we'll provide tips to residents for ways to encourage traffic safety in the NWACA neighborhood. Our first tip: get a Vision Zero sign from the City of Austin Transportation Department and put it up in your yard. When seeing these signs throughout the neighborhood, drivers and bikers and walkers will be reminded to use safe methods to traverse NWACA.

To see the four Vision Zero sign options, visit this web page:

<https://www.austintexas.gov/page/vision-zero-yard-sign>

To get your free sign, send an email to visionzero@austintexas.gov and someone from the office will contact you to arrange for contactless pickup of the sign of your choice.

To learn more about the City of Austin Vision Zero program, visit this web page: <https://www.austintexas.gov/departments/vision-zero>

Thank you for making our neighborhood a safer place to live.

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Crime & Safety Update

Connie Lundgren

In December 2021, we began publishing a chart showing a subset of the crimes reported each month by the Austin Police Department Chief. We continue the report this month, with the latest information available when we went to press and using the format from our January 2022 update.

Chief's Monthly Report for November 2021

City-Wide

Crimes Against Persons

	Nov 2021	All 2021	Nov 2020
Murder	9	84	5
Aggravated Assault	262	3,096	301
Simple Assault	764	9,527	856

Baker Sector

Crimes Against Persons

	Nov 2021	All 2021	Nov 2020
Murder	0	2	0
Aggravated Assault	17	163	12
Simple Assault	82	1,066	96

Crimes Against Property

	Nov 2021	All 2021	Nov 2020
Robbery	79	939	108
Burglary	382	4,007	446
Burglary of Vehicle	860	8,686	1,026
Auto Theft	408	4,001	380
Vandalism	424	6,041	625

Crimes Against Property

	Nov 2021	All 2021	Nov 2020
Robbery	6	40	7
Burglary	53	514	55
Burglary of Vehicle	139	1,628	183
Auto Theft	53	520	50
Vandalism	37	608	76

Crimes Against Society

	Nov 2021	All 2021	Nov 2020
Drug Violations	215	2,275	190
Weapons	89	801	61

Crimes Against Society

	Nov 2021	All 2021	Nov 2020
Drugs	12	151	16
Weapons	5	34	8



Spot Crime.

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- Dr. Seuss

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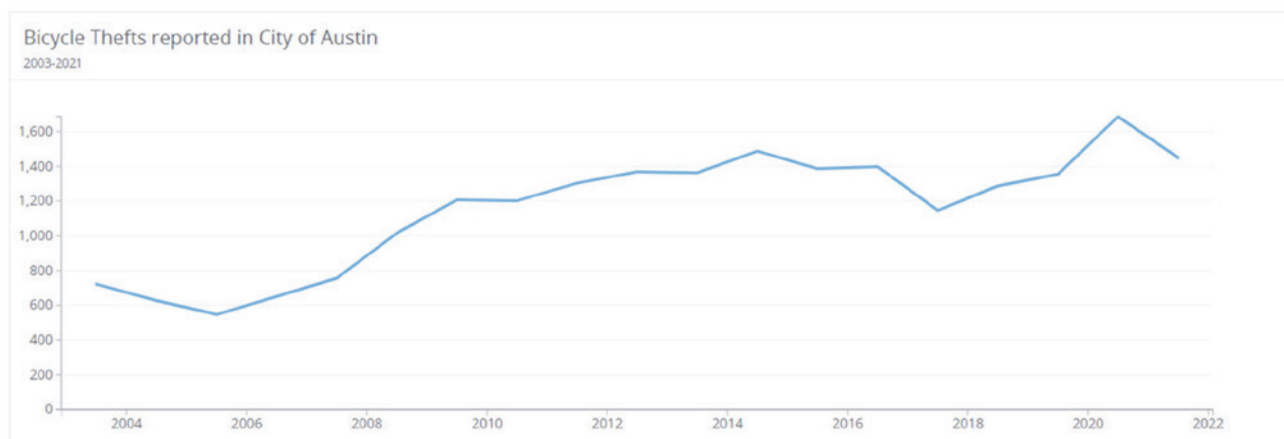
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Bicycle Theft Prevention

Crime and Safety Committee



Bicycle theft continues to be an issue in Northwest Hills and nationwide. According to Krimelabb.com, there were 53 bike thefts in 2020 within the 78759 zip code and 36 in 2021. In 78731, 22 bikes were stolen in 2020; 18 were taken in 2021. Citywide, there have been more than 1,000 bicycle thefts every year since 2008, per the OpenAustin data portal. These thefts are not limited to adult bikes; on October 28, 2021, there were two reports of bike theft at Murchison Middle School.

Bicycle theft mitigation strategies include both individual and community measures. Individuals should lock their bikes in a highly visible area. Unfortunately, for the Murchison thefts mentioned above this was insufficient; the school crossing guard witnessed the thefts occur.

Additional individual mitigation measures include keeping garage doors closed when bikes are being stored, using high-quality bike locks, and locking bicycles so that the lock goes through the frame and the front wheel (see image). Owners should register their bikes with the Austin Police Department at <https://www.austintexas.gov/page/bike-registration> as well as at Index, <https://bikeindex.org/>, a non-profit bike registry. They should take photos of their bikes to document key characteristics.

Community-level strategies can also be used to mitigate bike theft. For instance, places like schools, grocery stores, and places of worship should have abundant bicycle parking facilities near their entrances and other well-traveled places.

Crime data studies point to other methods that can deter theft. One study, which has been cited by 425 other papers, shows that the more LoJacks (a hidden radio-transmitter device used for retrieving stolen vehicles) that are installed in an area, the lower the rate of automobile thefts. In essence, when more people have LoJacks, thefts

go down because retrieval is more likely. For bicycle theft, there are also devices which allow owners to track their bikes remotely in the event of a theft. One such device is a Tile. The Tile Sticker model is designed specifically with bicycles in mind:

It's black and designed to be small and easy to hide on your bike. At just 7.3 millimeters thick, our tiny, lightweight tracker can attach virtually anywhere on your bike. Many cyclists like to put it under the seat or inside the frame where no one can see it. The Tile Sticker is waterproof, so you won't have to worry about the elements causing it to break or fall off.

Tile trackers work off Bluetooth. That means that the tracker needs to be within range of a device that has Bluetooth turned on and has the Tile app installed. In other words, the more people in the community who install the app, the easier it is for people to retrieve their stolen bikes. On January 12, 2022, there were 3,282 Tile Members near Northwest Hills. More people using the app as well as more people installing a tracker on their bike could help deter bike thefts in our community.

BEST LOCK POSITION



METHODS

1. Lock the bike frame and wheels together
2. Securing the quick release front wheel alongside the frame and rear wheel



Bad News...

Looks like these masks are here to stay for awhile.

Good News...

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WARNING



**CRIME
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Block Captain.**

Stop Crime!

More info: info@nwaca.org

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We'll Miss you, Miss Tamara! –

Teri Schock

You may recall a previous spotlight on our local celebrity known to the school children as “Miss Tamara.” For so many drivers, stopping at the Far West and Mesa crosswalk on school days to let children go by, she is known as “our dancing crosswalk guard,” which came about as she danced to exercise.

After five years, our Miss Tamara has decided to retire – she will no longer assist children (and adults) cross the busy intersection in her role of school crossing guard. Although Tamara has previously described herself as shy, she is very friendly, especially with young children. Perhaps that is why so many students have shared with her their life experiences and the challenges of the middle school years during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Tamara described neighborhood kids that she sees regularly as “aware and concerned.” She says the isolation caused by the pandemic has opened many parents’ eyes. She hopes that hearts are being opened, too.

What’s changed since she became a crossing guard? Tamara believes traffic on both Far West and Mesa is worse than when she first started. Although most drivers are courteous and observe road rules, she has seen more and more people become aggressive while driving and toward her. She has observed more drivers on their phones, not paying attention to what is happening around them. She has been cursed at, yelled at, and, along with many near misses, has seen an actual collision involving a pedestrian. She was recently saddened when the crossing guard at the Doss/Far West crosswalk was almost struck by a driver.

What’s next for Miss Tamara? Although she feels her work as a crossing guard was as important as it was rewarding, Tamara is eager to give her body a rest and spend more time with her husband, family, and new puppy. She will continue providing spiritual guidance as a Chaplain with The Church @ Work. Tamara says we haven’t seen the last of her; we may catch a glimpse of her in the neighborhood from time to time. Our dancing crossing guard leaves us with a quote: “If you don’t have joy in your life, you don’t have a life.”

Best wishes to you, Miss Tamara! We'll miss you!



Goats and Polenta and Northwest Hills – Chris Currens

Until the 1940s, farms, nurseries, and dairies dotted the rolling savanna that is now Crestview, Brentwood, and Allandale. Just to the west, characterized by thin and rocky soil on cedar choked hills, is the area generally known as the Northwest Hills of today. The hills weren't considered productive, and they were left to subsistence-level cedar choppers who raised goats as a side business. The goats thrived on the scrubby undergrowth, which allowed the choppers to harvest cedar posts more easily. As Austin grew, the cedar choppers were pushed farther out. By the 1960s, landmen began to assemble the tracts of land that would become Highland Hills, Westover Hills, Mesa Oaks, Mesa Village, and the rest of our neighborhood in the 1970s and 1980s. However, remnants of the past quietly clung on in small untamed pockets, even as they were enveloped by manicured lawns and carefully pruned trees. In the early 2000s a parcel that once supported a small herd of goats was sold and developed as a pocket neighborhood off Enclave Mesa. Even though that land had been dormant for some time, it closed a chapter on Northwest Hills' agrarian past.

The goats are long gone, but the tenacity the cedar choppers found in those goats wasn't lost on others, and a small goat-raising renaissance started in Central Texas in the 1990s. Goat milk cheese

became the darling of the gourmet crowd. Taking their cues from the Mediterranean flavors of France, Spain, and Italy, Texas hill country herders quickly became known for their fresh, tart cheeses. Chèvre, French for goat cheese, is a young cheese meant to be eaten a few days or weeks after it is made. When fresh, it is spreadable and creamy and mild. As it ages it gets tangier, develops deeper flavors, and is increasingly crumbly. Since goats produce milk only in warm months of the year, in winter you're likely to find more mature chèvres on store shelves. The nuttier flavor of aging chèvre is perfect for the kitchen.

To celebrate a small slice of northwest Austin's past, I want to share a great recipe for polenta with goat cheese and rosemary. It's perfect side for a winter's night meal. Polenta, ground corn that is similar to corn meal, marries well with the mild nuttiness of chèvre. The rosemary completes the flavor profile with its aromatic notes. Here's the recipe:

Bring six cups of chicken stock to boil in a large saucepan. Whisk in two cups of polenta, adding it in a steady stream. Lower heat to simmer and continue cooking while stirring almost constantly for ten minutes. Do not let it boil or settle. Once the polenta begins to thicken stir in two tablespoons of butter, six ounces of crumbled goat cheese, and one teaspoon of fresh chopped rosemary. Season

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- (and apologies to anyone whose donation we might have missed!)

Goats and Polenta - Continued from Page 15

to taste with salt and pepper. Remove from the heat once the cheese is fully incorporated and keep warm until served. If it becomes too thick add a small amount of chicken stock or more butter to get the consistency desired.

Notes: Pure Luck Farm in Dripping Springs produces a great chèvre. Barton Springs Mill, also in Dripping Springs, grinds locally grown grains and has ground polenta corn. Fresh rosemary sprigs are readily available at the store or often can be picked from a bush in a neighbor's yard. (It is one of the few deer-proof ornamentals we can grow in Northwest Hills.) But ask your neighbor first!

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Gourmand's Corner

5280 Burger

Update and More –

Chris Hajdu

It's been a few months since I last wrote an article and I thought I'd start the new year with quick updates on local openings, closings, and other newsworthy topics from the local neighborhood/nearby restaurant scene.

5280 Burger and Taphouse Update

I initially wrote about 5280 Burger last fall at the time of their grand opening; I'm happy to share that the business is doing well. The patio is now open, crowds are growing, and they recently announced a new happy hour menu. Happy hour (from 3pm-5:30pm Monday through Thursday) includes ½ off all Cocktails, Wine, and Beer; \$2 cans of Lone Star, Coors Light and Michelob Ultra; \$4 ¼ lb. sliders and \$3 snacks (includes: fried pickles, shishitos, fries, cheeseburger egg roll, queso ,or salsa and chips.) If you haven't yet, visit and check out 5280 Burger and Taphouse at 7032 Wood Hollow Drive.

Two Local Restaurants Celebrate Anniversaries

Waterloo Icehouse celebrated 45 years in business on November 11! They have four locations throughout Austin, including one within NWACA's boundaries at Loop 360 and RM 2222.

Austin Terrier celebrated its 10th anniversary on November 15. The restaurant, located at 3435 Greystone Drive, specializes in gourmet pizza, burgers, sandwiches, and salads; it serves craft beer, wine, and signature cocktails.

The Closing of a Local Institution

I was bummed to hear about the closing of Dry Creek Café and Boat Dock. After 68 years in business, the locally famous, cash-only bar has shut its doors for good. This was one of the first places I visited after moving to Austin in 1991 and I still remember on my

first visit getting scolded for not returning my empties. The owners announced the property was sold to a buyer who intends to use it as part of a day camp for orphaned children.

Check out these stories for some good tributes to this Austin institution: <https://texashighways.com/travel-news/its-closing-time-for-longtime-austin-institution-dry-creek-cafe-and-boat-dock/>

<https://www.austinmonthly.com/a-girl-walks-into-a-bar-dry-creek-cafe-and-boat-dock/>

Grand Openings of Note

Maryland-based seafood chain Hook & Reel recently opened its first Austin location at 9070 Research Boulevard, Suite 305. The menu features steamed or raw oysters, seafood spaghetti marinara, fried seafood baskets, po' boys, seafood boils, and more.

Bird Bird Biscuit opened a second restaurant in October at 1401 West Koenig Lane where Thunderbird Coffee used to be. Like the original Bird Bird Biscuit on Manor Road, it specializes in fried chicken biscuits and other comfort food items. It is owned by Austin locals Ryan McElroy and Brian Batch.

Celis Brewery opened CTX Beer Garden late last year. The new beer garden and taproom is open adjacent to the existing brewery, at 10001 Metric Blvd. At 12,000 square feet, it offers outdoor seating, food trucks, a stage for live music, and an indoor taproom with more than 20 draught options. The brewery expects to hold Austin FC viewing parties as well as beer tastings.

Local Restaurant Robberies

Last up, a downer topic. Several local restaurants have been unfortunate victims of crime; robberies occurred at El Dorado, Chez Zee, Bartlett's, and District Bar and Grill. The last few years have been very difficult for the restaurant industry, and robberies such as these only add to the struggles they are already facing with Covid-19, staffing shortages, inflation, and supply chain issues.

Please patronize these restaurants to help them out.

As always, get out there and explore and if you find anything you think would make a good topic for this article, let us know at info@nwaca.org



National Cohesive Wildfire Strategy – Joyce Statz

While our wildfire mitigation focus in NWACA is generally on hardening homes against wildfire, the broader picture for the nation includes four areas of focus. The vision statement of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy is “To safely and effectively extinguish fire when needed; use fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and as a nation, live with wildland fire.” Governments, non-government organizations, and the public began collaborating in 2009, to define national goals, describe the challenges, identify opportunities to reduce wildfire risks, and set national priorities to achieve the goals. A summary of the strategy describes fuel management options such as prescribed fire, home and community action through building codes and home hardening, and several wildfire response management options.

The huge amount of wildfire fuel now in most American forests is a result of too much focus on extinguishing fire. Putting out the fire became the primary approach following a wildfire disaster in August 1910. Known as the Big Burn or the Big Blowup, this

unprecedented wildfire in the northwestern United States (Idaho, Montana, Washington) and part of British Columbia burned three million acres over two days, killing 87 people, most of them firefighters, and destroying many buildings and seven towns. In the interest of protecting the forest, the U.S. Forest Service strengthened its already favored strategy (to put out all fires as quickly as possible) used before the Big Burn, with a new “10 a.m.” policy. The goal became: suppress all wildfires by 10 a.m. of the day following the reported fire.

That approach is now being questioned: given our current fuel load and the increased risk of fire because of climate change, more suppression will likely make future fires even worse. Thus, the National Cohesive Strategy includes the use of monitored prescribed burns and, at times, letting a natural wildfire run its course.

In past centuries, naturally occurring fires usually kept forests in balance, eliminating the dead and down material and minimizing overgrowth of trees. Native Americans practiced

tree management with fire, carefully tending fires that removed unhealthy growth. In some western states, Native Americans are now educating today’s forest service personnel in how to use managed fire - another example of two national cohesive strategies: “use fire where allowable” and “manage our natural resources.”

The focus to “live with wildland fire” calls on homeowners to appreciate the need for managed fire to reduce the fuel load and the need for homeowners to make their homes resilient. A researcher from Headwaters Economics, quoted in a recent New York Times Magazine article, pointed out that to a certain extent, we have “a home ignition problem, more than a wildland-fire problem.”



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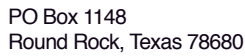


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