

nwacanews

NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

JULY 2022

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 7



"Too Darn Hot" Ann Miller in *Kiss Me Kate*, 1953

We sit down to write this newsletter about three or four weeks before it hits your mailbox. As we think about what to share today, the phones are ringing regularly with excited questions about the resumption of the July 4th parade (we hope you'll have enjoyed it just before reading these pages). At the same time David Yeomans looms large on the TV before a brightly colored drought map of Central Texas; we're experiencing a record number of 100+ degree days; and Murchison Pool is not open due to a lifeguard shortage. Brace yourselves neighbors. It looks like it's going to be a very long, hot, dry summer.

Walk early (especially if you have pooches whose paws don't like hot pavement) and hit the cinema again this summer. Big box office hits are back with a vengeance -- Top Gun, Downton Abbey, Jurassic World to name a few. Don't forget about the Paramount Theater's line up of classic films this summer – see https://tinyurl. com/austinmovies. Austin's drippingly ornate and beautiful old movie palace still cranks up the AC while serving popcorn hot and drinks cold. Plan your strategically timed splashes in Barton Springs or Deep Eddy Pools. And, if you're blessed with your own "cement pond," invite the neighbors to come take a plunge a time or two more this year than last. Bowl away an airconditioned afternoon at Highland Lanes or reexplore the Blanton's permanent collection or the pterodactyl bones flying high above the great room at the Texas Memorial Museum on the University of Texas campus.

No matter how you pass these "Too Darn Hot" days, stay cool, stay safe, and have a great summer!

This column was written by Robert Nash as he completed his term as Co-President of NWACA. The Board would like to thank Robert and Joanie Arrott for their excellent leadership through our challenging years of the pandemic; they've kept the NWACA neighborhood vibrant and involved in a range of activities. We really appreciate you!

Fix It and Feel Good.



Key Contacts

Austin Citywide Information Center512-974-2000 or 311
Emergency, Police
Non-emergency (coyote sightings, compliance issues)
To check status, go to: http://www.austintexas.gov/department/
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 - o Dana Winer
- o Robert Nash

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)

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Mark Your Calendars

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

July 4, 9AM – 11 AM

4th of July Parade and after-parade Freedom Fest North Hills Drive and Doss Elementary

July 16, 9AM – noon

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

July 17, 2 PM

Tree, Environment, and Wildlife Committee virtual

July 19, 7 PM

Parks Committee virtual

July 26, 5 PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees Joint Meeting virtual

Aug 16, 7 pm

Parks Committee TBD, perhaps virtual

Aug 20 9am – noon

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

Aug 23, 5 PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees Joint Meeting TBD, perhaps virtual

Aug 24, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

NWACA Board Meeting St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and virtual





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

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Outstanding Teams in our Neighborhood - Teri Schock

Kudos to the Anderson High School (AHS) Boys Golf team who won the 5A State Championship Title and AHS' 1st UIL State Championship since 1998.

Hats off to the AHS Girls Golf team who clinched the 5A State Championship with an incredible 1 shot win over Alamo Heights on the final hole.

Props to Coaches McPhearson, Williams, and Pittsford on a fantastic season!

Last, but certainly not least, congratulations to the Anderson High School Girl's Lacrosse team on their undefeated season (the only undefeated team in Texas this year) and State Championship (this is only the third year of the program). The team also completed their season ranked #1 in Texas and in the top 10 in the southern region. Way to go, Coach Ross and the entire team!

- Photos courtesy of Eyde Webster







NWACA News - July 2022

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Student Scoop: Summery Foods - Kayla Winer-Winkler

When you think of summer, you probably think about a lot of things: swimming, hot weather, sunny days, and food. You most definitely think about food. This month, I'm writing about some of the best summertime foods.

If you go to a barbecue this summer, there will probably be hot dogs. Try to have some of these "not-a-sandwich"es this July 17, because that is national hot dog day. You may also find buttered corn-on-the-cob. Did you know that corn-on-the cob originated in central Mexico or that it almost always has an even number of columns? For dessert, you are likely to find s'mores on the table. The first recipe for these marshmallow treats, titled "Some Mores," was found in a girl scout handbook from 1927.

However, if you're thinking about a fresher meal, you will probably imagine the protein as seafood, whether it be shrimp, oysters, sushi, or cooked salmon. Alaskan seafood is caught mostly in summer, when the fish are more active due to temperature changes in the water. (These temperature changes also make fish food more active.) You may also think about a caprese salad, or anything with tomatoes. Like some other fruits and vegetables, tomatoes are in season, or are harvested, during the summer. This is the case for berries too. Thus, you might look in your refrigerator and decide on berries for a snack. Though, if you are looking for something sweet to cool you off, you will most likely opt for creamy ice cream or a frozen popsicle. I bet you didn't know that the first popsicle was an accident made by an eleven-year-old in 1905! If you're craving a drink, lemonade, scientifically proven to be thirst-quenching, will presumably be your go-to.

Watermelon is undoubtedly one of those foods that will be eaten all summer long, no matter the occasion. The melon

is named for the fact that it is made of 92% water - no wonder they have at least five cups of juice per fruit! Make sure you have watermelon o n h a n d for national watermelon day on August 3.



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About Audiobooks

TOSH MeINTOSH parrated by CONNOR BRANNIGAN



Three of our friends and neighbors, Sarah Bird, Juli Berwald, and Tosh McIntosh, have recently released audiobooks.

All eleven of Sarah's novels have been recorded, her latest, Last Dance on the Starlight Pier, is read by Cassandra Campbell. Audio rights have usually been included in initial contracts, but Sarah was consulted on the choice of narrator only on her last two books.

She could listen to earlier works for no more than a few pages, names and locations mispronounced; but then she switched to St. Martin's Press. "I was surprised when their audio division [asked me for] suggestions for a narrator for Daughter of a Daughter of a Queen. I didn't know the name of a single voice artist [but had] just listened to The Hate You Give and told the producer that I'd really liked that reader. He laughed and said, 'Oh, you mean Bahni Turpin, Audible Narrator of the Year? Yeah, we asked her first, but she's booked solid for years.'" Nonetheless, a copy was sent and upon reading it, Turpin agreed to record the book. "Her reading was so compelling—complete with Irish brogues and southern accents—and she made it so completely her own, that, as I listened, I forgot what came next and even that I'd written the book!"

When asked about her choice of narrator for her latest book, Sarah again took inspiration from what she was listening to, Where the Crawdads Sing. "I chose Cassandra Campbell because she communicated intelligence, resilience, and intrepidity, all with a slight southern twang."

Penguin Random House's contracts with marine biologist Juli Berwald include audiobooks. At the publisher's suggestion, Juli herself narrated her first book, Spineless. At her own suggestion, she narrated her second, Life on the Rocks. "I was very grateful for the opportunity because the scientific terms have the potential to be mangled by actors who might not be familiar with them. Also, both books are written in first person, and I felt like I could give the stories personal nuance."

"Austin is lucky to have excellent recording studios. Life on the Rocks was recorded at Pony Sound Studios and Spineless at the Sound Lab. [At each studio], a director and an audio engineer coached me and made sure everything sounded great...helping me add punch to my voice in places that required extra energy, or slow down when there were more dramatic moments. Both were excellent experiences."

"It's a gift to be able to record your own book. It's a wonderful experience to read the whole thing out loud cover to cover, knowing other people will hear your words in your own voice. I feel grateful for the opportunity."

Tosh McIntosh writes through the lens of the cockpit. Informed by over forty years of piloting tactical fighters and commercial jets, he centers his novels on aviation. With five books in print and ebook formats, he recently released an audio version of Pilot Error, the first in his Pilot Error mystery series and the first of his books to be recorded. As with the rest of his work, Tosh chose to self-publish.

The process began with Amazon's ACX (Audible Creation Exchange), where the author negotiates to pay the narrator an hourly fee or a percentage of sales. Once he uploaded a sample of the manuscript, he began accepting auditions, cutting them off when he quickly topped 30 applicants. The first audition (Connor Brannigan's) stood out. "None of the other narrators even came close to his performance." Tosh was looking for a storyteller. "I did not want a narrator to 'act' his way through the novel by trying to differentiate each character's internal voice and dialogue. [Connor was always open to suggestions and] early in our collaboration, he thanked me for so clearly articulating my preferences. He sent me chapters in blocks, which allowed me to review and comment as he progressed. By the time I had listened to the last chapter, I felt very comfortable calling it finished without any further review."

Last Dance on the Starlight Pier by Sarah Bird, Life on the Rocks by Juli Berwald, and Pilot Error by Tosh McIntosh are all available for your listening pleasure. Enjoy!



PROPERTIES AUSTIN

66

– JULIE WAIDELICH 7

What clients are saying about Julie...

Julie is one of the best agents I have ever worked with. I have 20+ years in the homebuilding industry and have had the opportunity to work with many agents over the years. In dealing with most agents, 90% of the time the best recommendation they could come up with to sell a home was to "reduce your price". That was not the case with Julie. She was a true advocate for me, the client. She was able to hold firm with our price when it came to offers from other agents by explaining to them that our home was something special and different from the other homes....she actually understands the concept of create value for the home she is selling. This was the first time I had used Julie but won't be the last in both personal and business properties. She gets it! *Steve*

We loved everything about working with Julie! She is genuine, honest, energetic, eager to assist, personable, knowledgeable and an absolute pleasure to be around! We are delighted to be settled in our new home and will absolutely refer her to our friends! *Brian*

Julie, your talents and passions as a realtor, customer service provider, caretaker, professional in our community and genuine care and concern for our family' well being are all such the ultimate package and gift. Thank you for all you have done for us. I wish I could rate you higher than a 10! For you have given us 110% during this entire process. We can not thank you enough! You are a gem! *Cathy*

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NWACA Committee Opportunities – Louri O'Leary

Have you ever thought about how the Northwest Austin Civic Association (NWACA) works? Well of course we have the NWACA Board, including those just recently elected; however, we are also made up of committees in which you can participate.

Some NWACA committees meet monthly; others are event- or service-driven. Committee chairs guide committee work, reporting progress at the monthly Board meetings. At present, most committees meet virtually, though when hosting an event or cleaning up a park, they're very much live! Please see the description of the committees in the following table. If interested, you can tell us which ones you'd like to get involved with by going to www.nwaca.org and selecting Join a Committee/Volunteer under the Get Involved Menu

Use the calendar on the NWACA web site to find meeting dates for the NWACA Board and committees.

Committee Names and Chairs	Committee Purposes	Committee Names and Chairs	Committee Purposes
Business Membership Julie Waidelich, Chair	Recruits business members for NWACA		Works to support and enhance NWACA's open spaces by organizing volunteer projects,
Civic Engagement Dana Winer, Chair	Monitors and advocates for NWACA interests on issues addressed by City Council, Travis County, AISD, and other relevant governing bodies	Parks Bridget Keating and Chris Currens, Co- Chairs	designing and implementing improvement projects in partnership with the City of Austin and Austin Parks Foundation, and serving as an
Communications Julie Rawlings, Chair	Develops continuing communication with neighbors via newsletters, email, NWACA web		advocate and active steward of our precious parks and greenbelts Addresses neighborhood
Crime and Safety Connie Lundgren, Co- Chair, another Co-chair position open;	site, Facebook, and NextDoor Coordinates with Austin Police Department to identify neighborhood crime prevention practices and provides educational materials for	Transportation Richard Grayum and Joyce Statz, Co-Chairs	transportation concerns such as safety, cut-through traffic, street lighting, sidewalks, street signage, public transit, and other related matters
Events Chris Currens, Robert Nash, Joanie Arrott, 4th of July Co-Chairs; Connie Lundgren, NWACA National Night Out Chair; Julie Waidelich, Day in the	NWACA publication Coordinates neighborhood events, including 4th of July Parade, family friendly events (such as parties at the pool), annual neighborhood garage sales, and others	Tree, Wildlife, and Environment Teri Schock and Carol Dochen, Co-chairs	Provides recycling events to collect specific items that can't go into regular trash pickup; posts, monitors, and manages Oak Wilt prevention signs during the February through June campaign; manages the Scoop the Poop campaign; monitors issues related to wildlife that affect safety of residents and their pets
Park Chair Finance Mick Koffend, Chair	Monitors expenses; ensures NWACA complies with sound accounting practices and legal requirements for non-profits	Wildfire Prevention Joyce Statz, Chair	Coordinates with the Austin Fire Department's Wildfire Division to establish Firewise Communities in NWACA, enabling local residents to make their homes fire-adapted and resistant to the threat of wildfire
History Carol Jones, Chair	Researches the history of the NWACA organization and NWACA area, presents findings to the neighborhood	Zoning	Reviews public hearing notices for zoning, variance, and site plan submittals within or adjacent to NWACA boundaries, and, if
Nominations Louri O'Leary, Chair	Seeks out and interviews candidates for the Board for the biennial election slate and to fill Board vacancies; nominates Board members to serve as Board officers	Ben Luckens and Charlie Galvin, Co- Chairs	necessary, engages to support, oppose, or improve them with NWACA member interests in mind; monitors changes to City of Austin Land Development Code

Using Agarita Berries - Chris Currens



The hills and valleys and creeks in our neighborhood are full of botanical surprises. For instance, the Ashe juniper - commonly referred to as a cedar tree - grows rampant across this region. Farmers and ranchers spend thousands of dollars to keep the invasive tree from choking pastures. Though often seen as an "undesirable," it is prized by distillers who infuse gin with the juniper's berries and a bouquet of other aromatics to give it the pleasant astringency it is known for.

A much less well-known plant in our region, that many also consider undesirable, is the agarita bush. The bush grows wild on the thin, rocky soil and is extremely hardy. A mature bush has a long bright yellow sinewy root which can extend fifteen yards from the base of the plant and keeps it healthy in the worst of droughts. It has a uniform shape, reaching about three feet high and about as round, with evergreen foliage. The agarita unfortunately has needle sharp leaves, making them formidable to deal with. There is no way to handle the low prickly shrub without getting jabbed or scratched. Even deer leave the spiny bush alone. Some landscapers have started planting agarita bushes as a privacy barrier under windows.

Despite the agarita's inhospitable nature, it has a wonderfully redeeming attribute - its berries. The bush produces a profusion of small bright red berries in April and May. The unripe berries are sour and pucker-inducing. However, the fully ripened berries are bright, slightly sweet bursts of intense flavor and make a delightful jelly.

Continued on Page 11

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FIREWISE USA[™] Residents reducing wildfire risks





Responding to the Interface – Joyce Statz

Throughout 2022 and into 2023, the Austin Fire Department (AFD) will be providing special training to their firefighters. More than 1200 individuals will take the Responding to the Interface training. While several dozen firefighters have undergone extensive training in fighting wildfires and have deep experience fighting them in Texas and other states, most AFD firefighters are skilled only in fighting structure fires. The goal is to ensure all AFD firefighters are able to handle the fundamentals of fighting wildfires in the wildland urban interface (WUI) between structures and the wildland surrounding them.

Responding to the Interface teaches firefighters how to adapt their structure firefighting techniques to working with fires along a WUI. They learn how a wildfire is likely to behave under different wind, humidity, and temperature conditions, as well as what vegetation can be expected to be wildfire fuel. They take hoses and other gear from their fire trucks through the backyards of homes and commercial properties on the WUI, practicing how to keep the wildfire down low and away from the structures. They also study the home sites in the area, to see what makes them more or less defensible, should a wildfire occur. The course takes most of a day; practical exercises are interspersed with discussions with trained facilitators – and there is an exam!

Training sessions, composed of small groups of firefighters practicing in Firewise communities, are being held throughout the City of Austin. There was a training session along Valburn Circle recently and we were able to get some photos. This was a terrific experience for people with homes on the street – they could observe the training in process, and during lulls in the training could let the kids talk to the firefighters and explore the trucks! There were half a dozen vehicles, including a brush truck that could, if needed, go through some pretty rough terrain.

If your street is interested in becoming a Firewise community, and thus becoming eligible to host this type of training, contact us at info@nwaca.org and we'll be happy to get you started.

Meanwhile, if you haven't yet had your home evaluated for wildfire risk, sign up for a free evaluation at www.nwaca.org by going to the Be Involved menu and selecting the wildfire evaluation entry. The evaluation takes only about 45 minutes and provides you with assurances when things are being done well and advice for mitigating any risks you may have.

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Continued from Page 9

Making jelly is the easy part; collecting the berries is a wince-inducing chore if one tries to pick them off the bush. The less painful approach is to spread a sheet under the bush, tucking it under the branches as widely and uniformly as possible, and then shaking the branches so the ripe berries fall onto the sheet. With this method, only ripe berries fall so one avoids harvesting sour berries.

Next, place the sheet full of berries on a table for cleaning. There will be debris - sticks, leaves, insects - to separate from the berries before you wash and rinse them to clean off any other organic matter. Put the cleaned berries in a large pot and add enough water so they are immersed (exact measurements will depend on how many berries you've harvested). Cook until the berries burst and then strain the juice through a fine mesh strainer, chinois, or multiple layers of cheesecloth. Transfer 6 1/2 cups of the juice to a large pot, add one package of Sure-Jell (or other similar pectin), and bring the mixture to a strong boil. Add 6 1/2 cups of sugar and let the liquid rise to a boil again for about a minute. Remove from the heat and fill 8 oz jelly jars. Place lids on tightly and refrigerate. The jelly will last up to two to three weeks. Alternately, leave out the pectin and make a coulis that you can pour on pancakes, waffles, or ice cream. Either way you prepare it, you won't be disappointed.

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.





Vision Zero Request: Observe the Signs – Transportation Committee



Look Out for Our <t

AUSTINTEXAS.GOV/VISIONZERO

This month, our focus is on alert driving and being mindful of informative road signs. Signs, of course, vary from speed limit or one-way directional signs, to arrows painted on the street, to a host of others. It's very important that drivers, bikers, and pedestrians pay attention, because the consequences can be scary at the least and deadly at the worst.

For example, in December of 2021 one of the Doss Elementary School crossing guards at Far West Boulevard and Northledge Drive was nearly hit by a driver who didn't observe the signs on the street telling how to exit Northledge Drive. The driver wanted to proceed from Northledge across Far West into the shopping street on the other side of Far West. However, that's not a legal option. At the time, there were arrows on the road indicating that one lane was intended to turn right and the other lane to turn left. That wasn't sufficient to prevent this scary result. If the crossing guard had been looking another way, this might have been more than scary!

When the issue was raised to the NWACA Transportation Committee, we took the crossing guard's request for better signage to the Austin Transportation Department, and they agreed to install additional signage. From the photos you can see there are now signs posted along the street, as well as two sets of guiding arrows on the pavement.

There are also several one-way signs along Northledge to remind people of the direction of travel, as well as a right-turn-only sign when exiting from the Doss parking lot. Over the years, there have often been drivers who go south on Northledge Drive, even though there is a "Do not enter" sign at the intersection of Far West and Northledge. All of these signs should minimize this issue.

Let's all pay careful attention when driving and protect everyone on the road – crossing guards and all!



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Chief's Monthly Report for April 2022 – Connie Lundgren

Continuing as we have for the last several months, here is the

latest report available from the Austin Police Chief, the data for April 2022.

Chief's Monthly Report for April 2022 Baker Sector

<u>City-Wide</u>

Crimes	Against P	ersons		Crimes Ag	ainst Pers	ions	
	April 2022	All 2022	April 2021		April 2022	All 2022	April 2021
Murder	8	23	9	Murder	1	1	0
Aggravated Assault	331	1,237	276	Aggravated Assault	17	69	14
Simple Assault	803	3,159	881	Simple Assault	87	333	113

Crimes A	gainst Prop	erty			Crimes Ag	ainst Prop	perty	
	April 2022	All 2022	April 2021			April 2022	All 2022	April 2021
Robbery	67	306	72		Robbery	4	19	1
Burglary	297	1,530	365	ĺ	Burglary	32	169	37
Burglary of Vehicle	692	3,164	741	ĺ	Burglary of Vehicle	121	620	131
Auto Theft	452	1,732	281		Auto Theft	52	197	28
Vandalism	426	1,887	603		Vandalism	35	165	58

Crimes A	Against Soc	iety		Crimes	Against S	ociety	
	April 2022	All 2022	April 2021		April 2022	All 2022	April 2021
Drug Violations	321	1,080	204	Drugs	17	52	15
Weapons	98	386	65	Weapons	4	16	1

July Road Construction Report

- Transportation Committee

In April, surface grinding on the existing lanes of US 183, as part of work to resurface these lanes, started. This work, slated to last several months, will be done at night in two-mile increments starting at Lakeline Boulevard, and will require that the individual lanes be shut down. This project is part of the CTRMA 183 North Mobility project; road closures announced here: https://www.183north.com/

The City of Austin 2016 Mobility Bond is the source of funds for widening Spicewood Springs Road from Loop 360 to Mesa Drive (a Regional Mobility Project). So far, work is underway on utility relocation with actual construction still anticipated to start by fall 2022.

TxDOT is planning five major projects along Loop 360; they're primarily replacing stop lights with overpasses. Construction for the first of these, the Westlake Drive/Cedar Street Project, started on June 1 and is forecast to be completed in mid-2025. Meanwhile, expect construction delays on this section of Loop 360.

Construction of an overpass on Loop 360 at Spicewood Springs Road is still scheduled to begin in 2025, but unfortunately, there is a chance that it will actually be delayed to free up funds to pay for (probable) increased costs of I-35 improvements. Until the overpass is complete, the widening of Spicewood Springs Road won't have much of an effect on congestion, because traffic will still back up at the Loop 360 light.

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With her help, I was able to find my dream home and purchase at a good price. She also goes out of her way to help me with any issues related to the home including giving me contact information of a locksmith, window repairs, etc.

I was very busy with my work and she kept me posted throughout the home buying and closing process reminding me of things that I would sometimes forget. I'm absolutely satisfied with the experience and will definitely recommend her to my friends!

~ Lei Xia

