

Northwest Austin News

SERVING THE NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY

Volume 14, Issue 1 and 2

January and February 2023



Welcome to the Northwest Austin News

By NWACA BOARD

NWACA is entering into its 14th year of putting together a monthly newsletter. We are working with a new publisher, Lynette Haaland, and, as you can see, this issue has a new look and feel. Lynette also produces the Four Points News for our neighbors to the west.

We didn't learn that our previous publisher was leaving the business until after the December issue of NWACA News went to print. We moved quickly to find a new publisher; even so, there wasn't time to put out a newsletter in January. This issue includes articles gathered for both January and February (including an item we would have liked you to see in early January - the photos of our 2022 holiday yard contest winners). Thus, this is a rare double issue, January/February 2023.

In this issue, you'll see the columns you've gotten familiar with

NWACA, 6

Greetings and Hello



LYNETTE HAALAND SEITZLER

Welcome to the inaugural edition of Northwest Austin News.

It's been a fast and furious month of hammering out the details but here we are - a relaunch of Northwest Austin Civic Association News in new packaging.

NWACA leaders including Joyce Statz, Julie Rawlings (co-editors) and Julie Waidelich have been extremely helpful in getting Northwest Austin News off the ground. Additionally this would not be possible without our 10 local advertisers in this edition. Thank you!

By the way, these community leaders have vetted me very well as they look out for the community they love!

We see a great need to provide valuable news and information to this established part of our great city.

Next month's Northwest Austin News will feature a local couple who have not only lived in the community for 53 years but who have also helped shape the community.

In addition to the dedicated team of writers and their articles on businesses, restaurants, schools, history, crimes, etc., we plan to add a few more timely news pieces to Northwest Austin News each month. The relevant content will nicely complement what residents in

PUBLISHER, 2

Murchison Community Garden Update

By NANCY GAY

The concept of Murchison Community Garden first germinated because of the pandemic in 2020. Murchison Middle School Parent Teacher Association Grounds Chairs, Davis and Lauren Ward, had been working with Bret Korba, long-time science teacher and founder of the school garden, to get the garden ready for students during the fall of 2019. With the abrupt shutdown of the schools in March 2020, the garden soon became overgrown. Knowing that students would not be able to access it for the foreseeable future, Davis and Lauren came up with an idea to utilize the empty space around the school garden as a community garden, attached via gates. This would allow the community to help keep the school garden functioning, while also providing opportunities for community members to garden and share the resources of the school garden - especially after hours and on weekends.

With the help of a NWACA Special Projects Grant of \$5,000, and a matching grant from Real Green Lawn Care, the Murchison Community Garden was fenced in the fall of 2020. Real Green offered



GARDEN, 2

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Texas now one of two states with 30+ million people

By ALEXA URA
Texas Tribune

Fueled by migration to the state from other parts of the country, Texas crossed a new population threshold recently: It is now home to 30 million people.

New estimates released recently by the U.S. Census Bureau put the state's population as of July 1 at 30,029,572 following years of steady growth. This makes Texas the only state, other than California, with a population of more than 30 million.

The state's population has been on an upward trajectory for decades, accompanied by demographic shifts that have reshaped everything from its politics to its classrooms as people of color have powered its growth.

Texas' population increased by 470,708 people since July 2021, the largest gain in the nation. Texas regularly holds that top spot on the bureau's annual population updates. Roughly half of that growth came from net domestic migration — the number of people coming to Texas from other states — while the other half was split almost evenly between net international migration and natural increase, which is the difference between births and deaths.

The state's source of population gains often fluctuates year to year. The bureau's estimates from 2010-19 showed Texas' growth based on natural increase and net migration, including both domestic and international, were close to even over the decade.

Despite its growth, Texas remains far behind California, which has been the most populous state in the nation since the early 1960s. The latest estimates put California's population at 39,029,342.

However, California's growth has been stunted recently as it continued to lose residents to other states. California outpaced Texas in growth based on international migration, but this year's estimates showed the state's population shrunk in size by 113,649 residents after experiencing big losses from domestic migration.

The Golden State has lost almost half a million residents in the last two years alone. Its population losses, reportedly, have been partly driven by high housing prices, as well as by quality of life and transportation challenges.

Earlier this year, a separate estimate from the Census Bureau indicated that Texas may have passed another demographic milestone: the point where Hispanic residents make up more of the state's population than white residents.

Population figures derived from the bureau's American Community Survey showed Hispanic Texans made up 40.2% of the state's population in 2021, while non-Hispanic white Texans made up 39.4%. Those estimates are not considered official. The bureau's official population estimates as of July 2021 showed the Hispanic and non-Hispanic white populations virtually even in size.

Texas Tribune is a nonpartisan, nonprofit media organization that informs Texans — and engages with them — about public policy, politics, government and statewide issues.



GARDEN, FROM 1

a sprinkler expert, and he and Davis Ward plumbed the new community garden. Urban Roots designed the garden and brought heavy machinery to till the soil and level the area. Michelle Young, founder of My Vinyasa Practice, gave a grant for stone, so that every plot was built of original limestone to evoke the presence of the quarry which was in this area in the 1950's. In spring of 2021, neighborhood volunteers turned out to create plots, using four tons of soil and donated cardboard help keep the Bermuda grass at bay. The garden opened on March 1, 2021; the first set of gardeners were approximately 30 community members with an interest in organic gardening. A few plots were tended by Murchison faculty; vegetables from these plots were given to food-insecure student families. The garden also has fruit trees and two community "come and get it" herb gardens!

We've been lucky to have amazing volunteers. Special thanks to Aiden Gilley and Joaquin Bartelli for their Eagle Projects; we now have fences, a messaging board, benches, and automatic sprinklers. The neighborhood volunteers have maintained the school garden, allowing students to continue using it, even after the original Farm to Table class was cancelled due to budget constraints. Proceeds from the community garden have been used to replace broken school machinery and to purchase compost for both gardens. In fall 2021 the area was designated a Monarch Waystation. John Medica, a Northwest Hills resident, has been crowned the 'butterfly whisperer' as he plants milkweed, lantana, pas-



PUBLISHER, FROM 1

78731 and 78759 have been reading for years.

I am a journalist by trade and now, for almost 12 years, the publisher of Four Points News which covers thousands and thousands of households in the RM 2222/RM 620 section of Austin covering ZIPs 78732, a large part of 78730 and a small part of 78726.

My husband and I have lived in Steiner Ranch since 2006 and we have two daughters in college.

Already we're getting a very warm welcome and I look forward to being your publisher!



sionflower vines, and other pollinator friendly plants to create a vibrant butterfly-friendly environment.

The garden typically has a winter growing season of September to the first freeze, and a spring growing season from March until it gets too hot. We hold workdays on the first Saturday of every month from 9am-noon; come see what your neighbors are doing. Lease a plot and grow your own amazing vegetables or flowers — you'll get high quality topsoil, water, the use of garden tools, and access to a community of like-minded gardeners. Gardening is a great family activity, too!

The Murchison Garden was recently established as an independent 501c(3) organization, and is always looking for volunteers, board members, and gardeners. Find out about open plots or ask about garden activities at murchisongarden@gmail.com

If you are lacking in good sunlight...
If the deer eat your flowers and plants...
If you like learning about gardening...
If you like organic vegetables...
If you like to know where your food comes from...
If you want to relish in the rewards of growing your own food...
If you want fun exercise...
If you want to get out in the sun...
If you like to get your hands in the earth...
If you don't have a place to locate a garden...
Try Murchison Community Garden!



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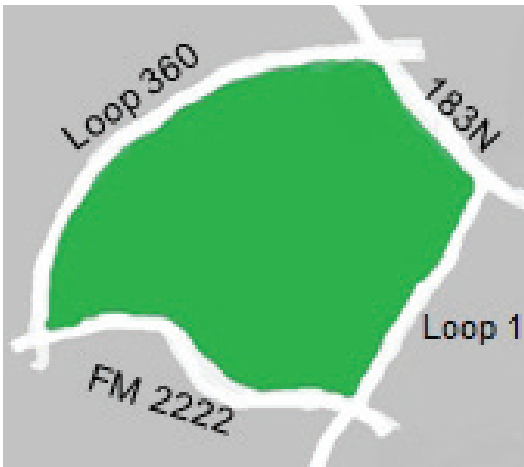
Key Contacts

Austin Citywide Information Center	512-974-2000 or 311
Emergency, Police	911
Non-emergency (coyote sightings, compliance issues)	311
APD District Representative Officer James Hyatt	512-974-6894
District 10 Councilmember, Alison Alter	512-974-2110
To get the District 10 monthly newsletter	district10@austintexas.gov
Northwest Austin News Publisher	512-483-1708
	Lynette@FourPointsNews.com
Northwest Austin News Co-Editors	Joyce Statz and Julie Rawlings

New to the Neighborhood?

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. Use the Membership button on the home page or use the form in this newsletter to become a NWACA member. Members have access to the weekly email NWA-CA Notes and the ability to join the NWACA closed Facebook group, to keep in touch with each other and with the latest news about NWACA.



ARE YOU A NWACA MEMBER?

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

Here are 5 great reasons to join today!

GREAT NEIGHBORS = GREAT NEIGHBORHOOD

Together, we can continue to do great things for our neighborhood!

STAY INFORMED ABOUT ISSUES THAT AFFECT YOU

We are actively involved in our community and advocate for our residents.

GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

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

PROTECT AND IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY

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

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

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

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

2022 – 2024 NWACA Board of Directors

Joyce Statz, President
Julie Rawlings, Vice President
Mick Koffend, Treasurer
Julie Waidelich and Bridget Keating, Co-Secretaries

- | | | |
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| • Chris Currens | • Richard Grayum | • Teri Schock |
| • Vicki DeWeese | • Kevin Kott | • Dana Winer |
| • Carol Dochen | • Ben Luckens | |
| • Jessica Forrest | • Connie Lundgren | |

Each of the Board Members can be reached at info@nwaca.org or by phone at 737-235-7325

The NWACA Board meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month except July and 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 to info@nwaca.org, so that we can put you on the agenda.

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

Special Thanks to Members

By NWACA MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

NWACA thanks members who generously contributed to the 4th of July Parade Fund, the Park Fund, and the Constable Fund, between November 15, 2022, and January 23, 2023.

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.

- Claire Ashton
- Tom and Paula Coopwood
- David Edelman
- Tom and Nancy Jane Griffith
- J. Edward Jones
- Connie and Matt Sullivan
- Elaine Thomson
- Kay and Leon Whitney
- (and, apologies to anyone whose donation we might have missed!)

Time to Renew NWACA Membership

By NWACA BOARD

Several years ago, to make it easy to remember when to renew NWACA memberships, January 1st was established as the renewal date for all members. People can join throughout the year, but dues paid in a given calendar year cover just that year. Thus, it's time now for each of us to join or renew our NWACA memberships.

In 2021, the NWACA Board voted to return to having household memberships, rather than individual memberships. That is, each household pays dues of \$25, and those dues cover the membership of all adults in the household. Each household has one vote in Board elections. Any adult in the member household may join the NWACA Facebook group and may also sign up for the NWACA Notes weekly email news.

Members who have auto-renewal enabled automatically renewed on January 1st – Thank

you! Renewal notices are sent to all others during January, either by email (to those for whom we have current email addresses in the membership database) or via U.S. mail (to those without current email addresses). To check if you've already renewed for 2023, go to www.nwaca.org, use the green Membership button at the top of the home page, then select the "Make a Payment (Join or Renew)" option. When you specify your email address, you'll be sent a login link in your email. Use that link to sign in and review the date on which your membership expires.

While you can join or renew either online or by U.S. mail, we prefer that you do it online. That minimizes the chance of postal issues, and the online system provides you a way to automatically renew.

If you encounter any issues renewing your membership, please contact us at nwacaweb@gmail.com

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.

Feb 21, 7 PM
Parks Committee – virtual

Feb 22, 6:30 – 8:30 PM
NWACA Board Meeting – St. Matthew's and virtual

Feb 28, 5 PM
NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committee – virtual

Mar 4, 9-noon
It's My Park Day – Cleanup activity in Stillhouse Hollow Preserve.
Watch the NWACA web site and NWACA Notes for a registration link.
Stillhouse Hollow Nature Preserve, 7810 Sterling Drive

Mar 4, 9-11 AM
Spring Recycling Event – Batteries, Oil, Paint, Antifreeze, Styrofoam, bathroom supplies
Mesa Parking Lot, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

Mar 15
Applications for Special Project due
info@nwaca.org

Mar 18, 9AM to noon
Monthly cleanup at Bull Creek District Park – sign up at
<https://www.givepulse.com/event/336685>

Mar 19, 2pm
Tree, Environment, and Wildlife Committee – virtual

Mar 21, 7pm
Parks Committee – virtual

Mar 22, 6:30 – 8:30 PM
NWACA Board Meeting - St. Matthew's and virtual

Mar 28, 5 PM
NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees - virtual

Batteries, Oil, Paint, Antifreeze+ Collection Event

Start gathering those leftover cans of paint, used oil and oil filters, and dead batteries. On Saturday, March 4th from 9 to 11 AM, NWACA will be hosting a BOPA Collection Event for NWACA members at the Mesa Drive parking lot of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 8134 Mesa Drive. If you're not a NWACA member, you can join at the event. Just roll up in your car or truck, and volunteers will unload for you.

For BOPA, we will accept only: batteries, oil, latex paint, and antifreeze. We cannot accept other household hazardous wastes including these: oil-based paint, paint thinner or stripper, cleaning chemicals, pool chemicals, pesticides, or light bulbs.

For the Plus portion of our collection, we will accept only:

- Clean Styrofoam® blocks, egg cartons, cups, and clean food containers. This is the type of foam made of tiny beads that can easily crumble.
- Used toothpaste tubes, toothbrushes, and floss containers,
- Used disposable razors, replaceable-blade cartridge units, and razor plastic packaging.

We cannot accept dirty Styrofoam food or drink containers, packing peanuts, or plastic foam. Foam like the soft foam in pillows is not acceptable. It must be the easily tearable and crumbly type of foam.



We will close at 11 AM to be able to get the materials to the City's Resource Recycling and Reuse Center and unload there at our afternoon appointment.

Want to help out? We always need volunteers for our collection events. We need folks to corral the cars, unload vehicles, load the collection truck, and assist with separating the collected materials. If you're looking for a great opportunity to help serve your neighborhood, meet your neighbors, and protect the environment, come join us! Any questions or volunteer sign-up can be sent to info@nwaca.org.

Got more than just BOPA? Austin's Recycle and Reuse Drop-off Center will accept other hazardous wastes like lawn chemicals, fluorescent bulbs and tubes, cleaners, solvents, insecticides, and electronics. Electronics are now accepted with the twice-yearly bulk pickup.

The Drop-off Center mixes latex paint that has been recycled into three colors (light beige, dark beige, and dark green), which are free to anyone who wishes to pick it up.

The Drop-off Center in South Austin is open again, but only by appointment. More details and location info can be found at: tinyurl.com/Recycle-Reuse-Center.

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MEMBERSHIP FORM

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Email (confidential):	



Annual dues \$25

Optional Contributions:

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!

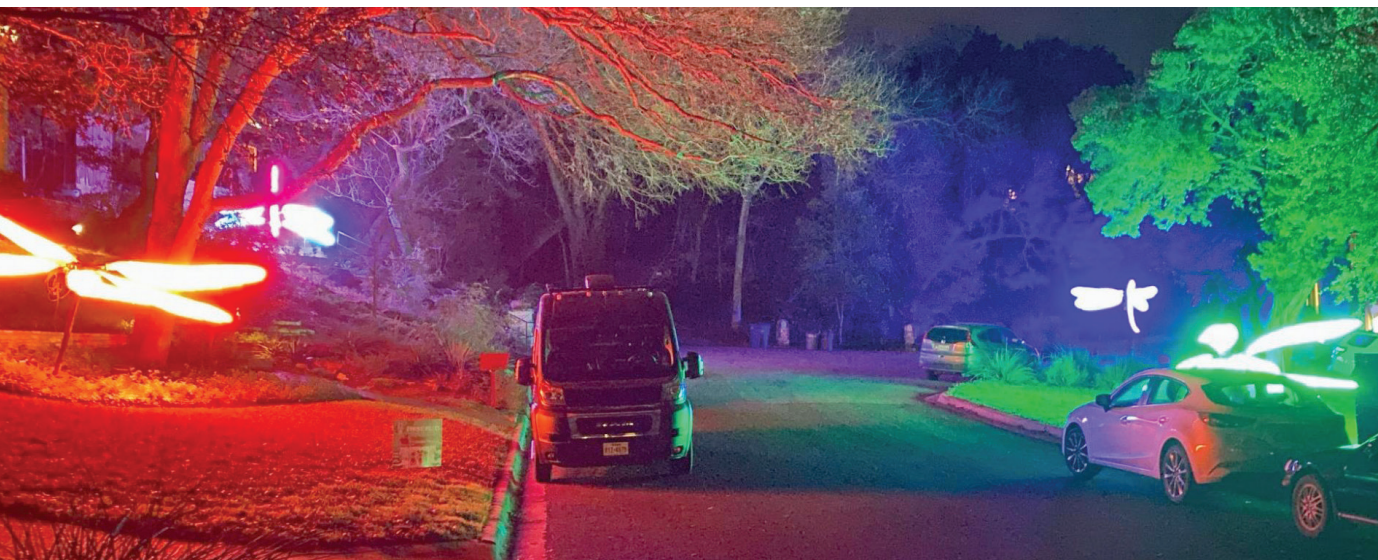
Please check a committee on which you would like to participate:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime & Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree, Environment, and Wildlife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire Prevention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning and Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Watch | |
| <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

2022 Holiday Yard Contest Winners



1st place – homes on Tumbling Circle, with a coordinated set of dragonflies



2nd place – 3901 Amy Circle with a Nativity scene



3rd place – 4303 Greystone Drive with lots and lots of Santas

NWACA, FROM 1

over the years:

- History topics by Richard Denney – ever heard about Champion State Park?
- Spotlight by Janice Green – about a chocolate business (yum!)
- Gourmand's Corner by Chris Hajdu – new restaurants to try
- Writer's Corner by Idee Kwak – a list of great books to read
- Crime Statistics by Connie Lundgren – the latest data from the Austin Police Department Chief
- Recycling tips – recently taken on by Merriessa Anton
- Transportation Updates by Ruven Brooks – a quarterly update on nearby traffic concerns

You'll also be seeing the first in a series of tongue-in-cheek articles about crime prevention by Jessica Forrest. As you read her new year's resolutions article, keep in mind that she's both pulling your leg and giving some examples of how to be cautious.

Once again, we are requesting proposals for using NWACA Special Project funds. If you have an idea that will benefit the neighborhood or community, and that would be publicly accessible, please tell us about it. See the details in the article. Also, read about the Murchison Community Garden that was partially paid for with Special Projects funds.

The next recycling event for NWACA members is the Batteries, Oil, Paint, and Antifreeze (BOPA) event on Saturday, March 4th, from 9 to 11 AM in the Mesa parking lot at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. In addition to the items in the BOPA name, we also collect Styrofoam® and bathroom supplies. Mark your calendar and review the article about the event in this issue.

Note, too, the reminder about annual NWACA membership dues. January is the month when automatic renewals occur for those who've set them up. It's also when we mail reminders to everyone else that it's time to renew their memberships. And, of course, if you're not yet a member, January is the best time to join NWACA. See the green Membership button on our web site, www.nwaca.org

We hope you enjoy this issue of Northwest Austin News, with its new format and name; information about the activities and people in the NWACA area; and more standard news fare that Ms. Haaland chooses to include. Tell us what you think by emailing info@nwaca.org or by U.S. mail to NWACA, P.O. Box 26654, Austin, Texas 78755.

Happy New Year!!

NWACA Special Projects Fund Inviting Applications

By NWACA Board

The Special Projects Fund was established by the NWACA Board to help fund projects that benefit the community/neighborhood residents and are publicly accessible.

During recent years, NWACA contributed funds for recycling containers used at our local parks, development of a new soccer field behind Doss Elementary School, refurbishing the Anderson High School Gym, a pilot constable patrol project, the Loewy Playground, the Community Garden and Murchison Middle School Common Space improvements, the Anderson High School Trojan Band equipment trailer, bike repair stations at Doss and Hill Elementary Schools, and outdoor tables that Anderson High Schools students use during their lunch period.

Any group or individual can apply for Special Projects funds; just download an application online at www.nwaca.org using the link in the Hot Topics list on the home page.

Applications for a new round of project proposals will be

accepted until March 15, 2023, and selected applicants will be encouraged to present their proposals at the April NWACA Board meeting. Submit applications, drawings, pictures, and

estimated project costs to info@nwaca.org or by U.S. mail to: NWACA, P.O. Box 26654, Austin, TX 78755. If selected, projects will be able to use their funds as early as the month following project selection. The number of projects funded is at the discretion of the Board. If you have questions about the program, email info@nwaca.org

Some applicants may choose to submit an idea in concert with the City of Austin Neighborhood Partnering Program (see details at <http://www.austintexas.gov/neighborhoodpartnering>). Such applications must be submitted by June 1st or October 1st for their cost-sharing funding cycle. Other applicants may choose to team with the Austin Parks Foundation (see details at <http://austinparks.org/tag/grants/>). Applications for different types of grants have different deadlines.

The Special Projects Fund is just one of many ways that NWACA serves our community. Funding is available because of the careful management of your dues and donations. Please help us to continue our work by maintaining your NWACA membership.



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LADERA NORTE

Perched atop one of the most stunning landscapes in Austin with idyllic canyon views, this modernized brick home boasts four bedrooms, and six bathrooms with more than 4,200 sqft of open-concept living. Set amidst panoramic views & breathtaking sunrises, the picturesque windows provide an amazing backdrop to every room. The chef's kitchen is curated w/an oversized leathered granite center island, polished limestone countertops, elegant gold hardware & high-end stainless steel appliances. The spacious bedroom retreats and en suites will take your breath away. You can have all it all in a prime location nearby Bull Creek District Park & feeding to excellent schools in one of the most sought after communities in Austin.

ROCKLEDGE

This 1954 Mid-Century ranch home exudes charm & character, situated under a canopy of trees on a sprawling .61 acre double lot on a highly desirable street in Northwest Hills. One of the first homes built in Northwest Hills, this four-bedroom, three-bathroom ranch home is wrapped in ledge rock from the Far West quarry & adorned with a red metal roof. This home was an original classic cabin before NW Hills was even developed! Very well maintained, this could be the perfect private residence or you can undergo a rebuild project and subdivide into 2 lots for loads more potential. Located less than a .25 mile from Doss Elementary & Murchison Middle School w/access to all of the great shopping, grocery & dining along Far West & Wood Hollow. This is a rare opportunity to own a piece of NW Hills history!



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Gourmand's Corner: Two New Places for 2023

By CHRIS HAJDU

Mom was right, again. Making a list and sticking to it really To welcome the new year, let me introduce two new places in Austin:

DoveTail Pizza

During the last few tumultuous years, we've seen many places close. One such place is Mumtaz Table and Bar on South First Street. The South Austin Indian restaurant never really seemed to take off or maintain a consistent crowd even though it received good reviews. Taking over that location is DoveTail Pizza, run by a collaboration of folks with backgrounds at Lenoir, Swedish Hill, Salt & Time, and Rosen's Bagels.

The new restaurant opened in late November; it delivers simple high-quality pizza using exceptional ingredients. In lieu of parmesan and chili flakes, customers can spice-up their pizzas with a house-made chili crisp. Pizzas run from standard classics like cheese, pepperoni, and "meat-lovers" to more adventurous options like white pie with ricotta cream,



snap peas, corn, and arugula or bittersweet pie with tomato sauce, mozzarella, provolone, kale, sweet + hot peppers, and eggplant. You can also opt to build your own pizza. Gluten free crusts are available.

For non-Pizza lovers, they have a wide selection of appetizers, salads, and pasta dishes. I've heard great things about the classic spaghetti and meatballs, or in their case, what amounts to one big meatball. A full beer, wine, and drink menu is available as well.



DoveTail Pizza, 1816 S. First St., (512) 522-1375, www.dovetailpizza.com

Hours: Wednesday through Sunday from 4 pm to midnight.

Lazarus Brewing

Many Austinites were saddened by the passing of I Luv Video, formerly located at 4803 Airport Boulevard. That site is now home to the second location of Lazarus Brewing, with

much more space and impressive indoor and outdoor seating areas than their other location. The outdoor area has both covered and uncovered sections, heaters, and is dog friendly. I spotted several friends of the four-footed variety there.

Lazarus is family-owned by Montana natives, Christian and Marilyn Cryder, who opened Lazarus because of their love "of beer, coffee, and tacos." Lazarus prides itself on house-roasted coffee, house-brewed beer, and amazing breakfast tacos. Breakfast tacos are served until 11am, at which time their menu switches to snacks, standard tacos, and other Mexican-inspired fare. Their beers run the gamut of popular styles like IPAs, pilsners, stouts, and a variety of other ales. They even have a French Saison. I had the Oris Don, an Oatmeal Stout (pictured). Lazarus does not distribute their beer; it's available only at the brewery. However, you can buy cans, bottles, and growlers to go. Lazarus is open seven days a week.

Lazarus Brewing Company, 4803 Airport Boulevard, 512-394-7620, www.lazarusbrewing.com



2023 Resolutions: A Lawbreaker Perspective

By JESSICA FORREST

Mom was right, again. Making a list and sticking to it really worked for 2022. Looking back over the year, I feel better about myself; lighter both in spirit (less guilt) and in body (no weapons). I think my less aggressive lifestyle this year has influenced my peers as well (not that they admit my inspiring behavior, as I sneak a peek at the chief's crime stats, 26% decline in simple assault. Success!!)

A new year brings new opportunity to start on the right foot, guided by a list of resolutions to be optimistic (or some would say delusional) about being a better person, more polished this time. Hence, here is a cheerful New Year's Resolution list by

Saint Nicholas's clerk, otherwise known as the #1 fan of the five-finger discount:

1. Stop doom scrolling on Instagram – the image posted is never, ever, as precious or marketable after pilfered from an open garage or unlocked car. Instead, focus on what is actually left in open vehicles, this is really the litmus test for new trends, the "must haves" (by me too).
2. Exercise more – sign up for the marathon. I bravely will not actually run a marathon, but once one of those boxes swiped from a porch provides me a gizmo that tracks steps, I can count my progress towards the purloined 26.2.
3. Be nicer to people – or at least pretend to be polite. Waving and driving an unmarked truck is now almost an invisibility cloak, thank you overnight delivery. I can mimic those drivers and get away with gliding slowly in a van full of "borrowed" goods. Heck, I even park with flashers on, no one checks anyways. Just give 'em a wave and smile.
4. Read more – it really takes such little effort to read the names on envelopes. What a difference it makes to throw the Joe or Jane out there when posing as a new organic pest eliminator while peering over the homeowner's shoulder at the treasures hidden within. Neighbors never talk to each other anyways, they'll certainly not speak to each other, much

less check about the "service" I am selling!

5. Eat healthier – check random Instacart deliveries for fresh fruits and vegetables first, then try to eat them before they turn into mystery goop in the back of the fridge.
6. Spend more time with family and friends – be a proud Swiftie, invite besties to belt out the latest album, no shame and no regrets, especially when driving together, as in resolution #3, or, when driving off in a hotwired land yacht singing boldly, looking totally innocent and carefree! Ah life!
7. Watch less TV – one wants to be certain about the quality of the apparatus, and if its already plugged in, connected to the streaming service, and, you know, there's time to catch up on the latest activity of the Targaryen family, then one episode turns into two, three...but I digress, really...note to self, grab and go.
8. Be more creative – honestly, I really could make up better backstories to help explain when caught red-handed, and the more preposterous the better. With all the stuff on the internet, my art of bluffing goal is to be added on the academy awards list for best storyteller. Yeah!
9. Learn a new skill - silence – keep my business to myself when faced with run-ins with authority. But hey, I can always fall back on resolution number 8 when I need to.
10. Embrace discipline – resist the urge to take something just because it's there, crime with a purpose is more lucrative. (Now, this counts as two resolutions, be disciplined and manage money better!!)

Fingers crossed that 2023 will be as lucrative as 2022 or more!

Chief – I can't wait for my 2023 report card!!!



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Business Spotlight: Hijita Chocolatería

By JANICE GREEN

In our midst is a chocolate lover's dream – a chocolatería. Ashley Ugarte, her family's youngest daughter or "hijita" (little daughter) has founded Hijita Chocolatería. Her route from hijita to chocolatier in NW Hills is a fascinating journey blending heritage, environmental awareness, and good health.

Ashley's maternal grandmother, still living in Mexico, inspired her love for tradition and cooking. But that inspiration took a backseat while Ashley was a pre-med student at Rice University, graduating with a degree in environmental health science. Her college experiences at M.D. Anderson and while in Ecuador working with a woman's health project and witnessing deforestation led her to shift career trajectory to explore the interconnectedness of food, environment, and health. She worked in San Francisco six years, first with a non-profit focused on providing healthy food in children's schools, then in the restaurant milieu, followed by four years with Dandelion Chocolate where she became a head chocolatier enthralled by the history and versatility of the cacao bean.

There is a rich Mexican American culture surrounding the cacao bean. Chocolate reconnected her to her pre-Hispanic cultural roots. Note that cacao was domesticated by Mesoamerican societies as a drink called Xocolatl which Emperor Montezuma allegedly introduced to conquistador Cortés, who saw this substance used as currency and for energizing warriors and who then introduced cocoa to Europe.

During the pandemic Ashley realized she wanted to create her own business woven from the threads of her work experiences and training. She returned to Texas and founded Hijita Chocolatería. Ashley forged relationships with heirloom cacao farmers and co-ops in southern Mexico where the environment is primo for varietal cacao growth – farms dedicated to agroforestry systems.

She outfitted her chocolate laboratory with equipment repurposed for the complex and labor-intensive processing of cacao: roasting beans, separating the husks from the nibs, grinding and liquifying the cacao and piloncillo (non-processed sugar). For drinking chocolate, she uses unfermented beans; fermented beans are used for her truffles/bars.

There are no emulsifiers, preservatives, fats, or milk used to hide lesser quality cacao in Ashley's chocolate. Most American and European chocolate flavors are manufactured; Ashley's flavors arise directly from the cacao bean which is the sole source for the natural tastes and distinguishable notes of fruit or nuts as the chocolate settles onto the back of your tongue. Of course, I had to test her truffle varieties and discovered there was not a hint of bitterness or artificial sugars, just subtle yet distinct suggestions of hibiscus, strawberry, cashew, and almond flavors arising only from the fermented cacao beans ... a divine taste experience!

Ashley's drinking chocolate and truffle/bar varieties are available through her website (below). She offers classes in truffle-making using her chocolate, plus tastings for corporate events and private parties. She also participates in Austin's Front Market as well as other community markets and festivals.

Keep an eye on Ashley Ugarte because this enterprising hijita is making an impact!. And don't forget Valentine's Day – as if you needed an excuse to explore Hijita Chocolatería!

Contact: www.hijita.com; Instagram: @hijita_co



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January 2023 Road Construction Report

By **RUVEN BROOKS**

1. The 183 North Mobility Project will build two toll lanes in each direction from SH45 to MOPAC. The new lanes are being built down the middle of the existing highway so much of the early construction won't have much effect on existing lanes. There will be more impact as access to these new lanes is added. Construction is already underway with completion targeted for 2026.
2. The City of Austin 2016 Mobility Bond is providing funds for widening Spicewood Springs Road from Loop

- 360 to Mesa as a Regional Mobility Project. So far, work is underway on utility relocation with actual construction now delayed until Spring, 2023, with an anticipated 2026 completion date.
3. TxDOT is planning five major projects along Loop 360; they primarily replace stop lights with overpasses. The first of these, the Westlake Drive/Cedar Street project is forecast to be completed in mid-2025. Meanwhile, expect construction delays on this section of Loop 360.
4. The TxDOT project to build an overpass on Loop 360 at Spicewood Springs Road no longer has an announced

- starting year for construction. Bids on the I-35 Capital Express North and South projects came in 40% over expectations and funding for other projects has been transferred to the I-35 projects. It is possible the Legislature will allocate additional funding to the I-35 projects which would release funds for the Loop 360 project.
5. Until the Loop 360 project is complete, the widening of Spicewood Springs won't have much of an effect on congestion because traffic will still be backed up at the light at Loop 360.

Shopping for your LOVE has its dangers

By **JESSICA FORREST**

Whether it's for a high school sweetheart, lifelong partner, new flame, or unrequited crush, shopping for your love can be ... distracting. To those whose head is in Cupid's clouds pondering cacao or bloom, best remember Cyrano's love warning, "a sweet perfumed rose in whose petals Cupid lurks in ambush!"

Be forewarned, a new crime trend is targeting the distracted and the elderly. Police are warning about "jugging." This crime involves thieves staking out unsuspecting victims at banks or retail stores before following and robbing them while they, the victims, juggle smartphones and car keys in parking lots or driveways.

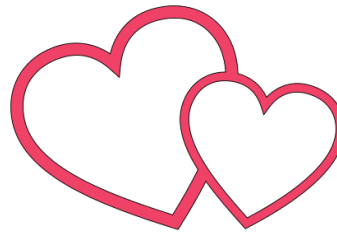
Here's how it works: juggers wait in parking lots and watch for people — mainly those over 65 — walking out of banks, using ATMs, or walking malls or computer stores to scout for large purchases. The jugging can occur in a parking lot or once the person gets home. Juggers can also steal money or newly purchased items from vehicles while the victim leaves the car for a bite to eat or run another errand. Jugging

involves crimes identified by the FBI as larceny, robbery, assault, and breaking and entering.

The Houston Police Department said documented jugging cases (735) in 2022 surpassed 2021 numbers (720), even though the agency has yet to include data from November and December. Police in Florida and Texas have issued warnings following jugging cases. On January 20, 2023 KVUE reported that the City of Austin ended 2022 with a total of 149 juggings. "We have seen an increase in this type of crime" said Austin police Chief Joseph Chacon."

Crime trends follow behavior patterns of potential victims. For instance, the increase in online shopping led to the rise of thieves stealing delivery packages.

Jugging is just one of the crimes tracked by the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center; data from 2020 showed that



victims lost more than \$281 million to romance scams, most of which occur in online dating sites. These schemes affect victims from all demographics, but elderly women are often targeted most.

The FBI offers these warning signs regarding romance scams: immediate attempts to communicate by email or messaging services outside of a dating site; claims to be from the United States but is currently living or traveling abroad; reports of a sudden personal crisis and pressure for financial help; and asking for money, goods, or other types of financial assistance without having met in person.

Please be mindful for yourself and for your loved ones. And on this Valentine's Day, challenge yourself to be chivalrous and to creatively impart personal expressions of love that hopefully last a lifetime; "You and I, it's as though we have been taught to kiss in heaven and sent down to earth together, to see if we know what we were taught." —Doctor Zhivago, Boris Pasternak.

Austin Police Chief's Report for December 2022

City-Wide

Crimes Against Persons

	Dec 2022	Dec 2021	% Change	All 2022		Dec 2022	Dec 2021	% Change	All 2022
Murder	6	0	-	68	Murder	0	0	-	2
Aggravated Assault	279	289	-3%	3,699	Aggravated Assault	14	10	40	163
Simple Assault	763	861	-11%	9,951	Simple Assault	110	88	25	1,042

Baker Sector

Crimes Against Persons

	Dec 2022	Dec 2021	% Change	All 2022
Murder	0	0	-	2
Aggravated Assault	14	10	40	163
Simple Assault	110	88	25	1,042

Crimes Against Property

	Dec 2022	Dec 2021	% Change	All 2022		Dec 2022	Dec 2021	% Change	All 2022
Robbery	70	66	6%	942	Robbery	6	2	200%	57
Burglary	328	491	-33%	4,593	Burglary	26	58	-55%	521
Burglary of Vehicle	750	893	-16%	10,126	Burglary of Vehicle	140	167	-16%	2,102
Auto Theft	483	429	13%	5,150	Auto Theft	42	48	-13%	523
Vandalism	396	526	-25%	5,953	Vandalism	43	48	-10	587

Crimes Against Property

	Dec 2022	Dec 2021	% Change	All 2022
Robbery	6	2	200%	57
Burglary	26	58	-55%	521
Burglary of Vehicle	140	167	-16%	2,102
Auto Theft	42	48	-13%	523
Vandalism	43	48	-10	587

Crimes Against Society

	Dec 2022	Dec 2021	% Change	All 2022		Dec 2022	Dec 2021	% Change	All 2022
Drug Violations	255	243	5%	3,104	Drugs	18	7	157%	162
Weapons	86	94	-9%	1,054	Weapons	5	1	400%	46

Crimes Against Society

	Dec 2022	Dec 2021	% Change	All 2022
Drugs	18	7	157%	162
Weapons	5	1	400%	46

Questions and Apps Regarding Recycling

By **MERRIESSA ANTON**

Someone posted a question on a neighborhood website asking where to put the recycle, trash, and compost bins on collection day. I called Austin Resource Recovery and asked where our bins should be placed. The answer is to place your bins 5 feet apart along your curb.

Do you have the Austin Recycles app? With this app you can download a calendar (based on your address) that shows your recycling, trash, and composting pickup days. The app answers questions regarding what to do with items you want to recycle and where to drop off tree trimmings and items to recycle or reuse. It also answers questions about how to recycle hazardous waste, electronics, and small appliances.

Though it has nothing to do with recycling, another important app is Austin 311. This is a free app that allows you to report animal-related issues, food complaints, abandoned vehicles, street light outages, potholes, and many other problems. You can report an issue and receive feedback when it has been resolved.

It's easy to download these apps from the Google Play or Apple app stores.

Writers Corner: Top Six Books of 2022

By IDEE KWAK



Not sure which is the best list of Best Books? Literary Hub's Ultimate Best Books of 2022 tallies the findings of thirty-five renowned lists: 887 books highlighted in twenty-nine publications. The top eighty-four books are collated according to the number of lists (from 14 to 4) on which they appear.

So whittled from thirty-five lists to one list, here are the top six (with a collage of quotes about each).

"Trust" by Pulitzer Prize winner Hernan Diaz (14 lists). Trust is set in New York's worlds of wealth during the early 20th century. The first three parts of the book take us on unpredictable turns in ego, self-deception, and personal ties, tipping the balance between trust and betrayal in matters of money, power, class, marital, and filial relations. The fourth part of the book ends the story with a major twist on the truth set out in the first three parts.

"Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow" (14 lists) by Gabrielle Zevin, one of the featured authors at the 2013 Texas Book Festival. A love story, but not one you've read before, the novel is set in the 1990's world of video game design where success brings fame, joy, tragedy, duplicity, and, ultimately, a kind of immortality. We're drawn into the pioneering days of a vast entertainment industry too often scorned by book lovers. With the depth and

sensitivity of a fine fiction writer, Zevin argues for the abiding appeal of the flickering screen as a source of both serious art and immersive entertainment.

"An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us" (14 lists) by Ed Yong, not the athletic coach but the science journalist for The Atlantic. Yong won a Pulitzer for his definitive pieces on Covid-19, the basis of his lecture at the University of Texas August 29, 2022. An Immense World takes you on a "thrilling" (New York Times), "dazzling" (Wall Street Journal) tour of the radically different ways that animals perceive the world. The book will fill you with wonder and forever alter your perception.

"The Candy House" (12 lists) by Jennifer Egan, who spoke at the Texas Book Festival in 2010 and 2017, and presented From James Michener to Jennifer Egan: The Evolving Use of Oral History in Writing Fiction at the University of Texas on February 18, 2018. The story follows characters who grapple with a revolutionary technology, "Own Your Unconscious," a device that allows people to upload and share their memories. Naturally, people disagree on whether a collective consciousness is a good thing.

"If I Survive You" (12 lists) by Jonathan Escoffery. Born in Texas shortly after his parents and older brother immigrated from Jamaica in the late 1970s, the author reflects on his own journey in these connected short stories. The book which follows Marlon

James in search of his own identity has been described as kaleidoscopic, urgent, hilarious, revelatory, and like nothing you've read before. In the opinion of Ann Patchett, the collection reads like a novel, like real life, like fiction written at the highest level.

"The Furrows" (12 lists) by Namwali Serpell. A Zambian writer and Professor of English at Harvard, the author was featured at the 2019 Texas Book Festival. In this novel, a woman grieves the loss of her younger brother, her bold exploration of memory and mourning twisting unexpectedly into a story of mistaken identity, double consciousness, and the wishful—and sometimes willful—longing for reunion with those she's lost. The story captures the uncanny experience of grief, the way the past breaks over the present like waves in the sea.

The Ultimate Book List gives us authors from Canada to Colombia, from Poland to Albania, from the British Isles to Zambia and Nigeria, from China and Japan to Belgium and Finland. It includes one author who is our very own. Making it on seven lists, Elizabeth McCracken holds the University of Texas James A. Michener Chair in Creative Writing and lives in Austin close to the Elisabet Ney Museum. The work that earned her a place on the Ultimate List is *The Hero of This Book*, a lightly fictionalized memoir of her mother, a small, short, injured at birth woman who seems larger than life.

For further information go to <https://lithub.com/the-ultimate-best-books-of-2022-list/>

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Was There a State Park on Bull Creek?

By RICHARD DENNEY

Back in the day, for a very short while, Texas had a State Park on Bull Creek. Never heard of it? Here's the untold story, or more correctly, forgotten story, of Champion State Park.

A.C. Champion was an early settler on Bull Creek. Notwithstanding his various business ventures, he is best known for something that never came to fruition: a state park on Bull Creek. The seeds of an idea for a state park seemed to begin in 1912 when Champion tried to attract attention to Bull Creek. From The Austin Statesman, Nov 11, 1912:

Proposes lakeside road. A.C. Champion knows route to Bull Creek.

A scenic road to skirt lake Austin and bring the beautiful Bull Creek region as near as possible to the city, has been suggested to the city council and the Chamber of Commerce as a thing very much to be desired. The man who is prepared to locate such a road, and presumably to open it up, is A.C. Champion, owner of property on Bull Creek, who has been employed by the city to clear the timber and underbrush from the basin of the river and its tributaries, wherever these will be submerged by the rising waters of the lake. Mr. Champion has brought the matter of building such a road to the attention of the body's mentioned, proposing that those interested take a jaunt out that way and see for themselves. He suggested Thursday of

this week... to make the trip and enjoy a barbecue with him at that time on the Highlands overlooking both the river and Bull Creek. The proposed road would skirt the lake in such a way that it's waters could be glimpsed at frequent intervals by passers, while on the other hand rugged hills would rise up to charm the eye.

Between 1912 and 1924 the "lakeside road" grew into a grander plan; from 1924 to 1926 the paper is abuzz with news of the possibility of a new state park at Bull Creek. The Austin Lion's Club was a main proponent of the park working with the Champion family to get the project approved and funded by the state.

Governor Pat M. Neff (governor 1921-1925) visited the site of the proposed park in 1924; various headlines from news articles that year show the park was obviously a go: "Landscape Engineer to Plan Champion Park"; "State Gets Park on Bull Creek". One article from the paper that year features photos of the "State parks board and Austin committee" at the park site. By January 1925 headlines from the paper reports: "State Deeded Travis Park. Champion Signs Papers on Bull Creek Tract." The deed stipulated the state must make improvements within a year, else title reverted back to Champion. Things apparently looked solid enough that Champion State Park appeared on a 1927 Rand McNally road map.

In 1926, the year after deeding the property, A.C. Champion

passed, and by 1929 the plans for the park had fallen through, the land reverting to the Champion heirs. The tract was now being considered as a state fish hatchery by the Game Commission. What happened is summarized in this article: "This site [proposed fish hatchery] located on Bull creek ... is part of the area once given the state for a park, but which reverted to the donor, the late A.C. Champion when the state failed to improve the park and build a road to it." It leaves a lot to the imagination as to why this would happen, but happen it did. The park was dead.

So where was the park? I've not yet located the deed to the state, but based on news articles and some grainy newspaper photos it looks to have been at the mouth of Bull Creek, with frontage on the Colorado, perhaps all or part of what would later become Camp Tom Wooten; today's Courtyard. The reported park size varies from 80 to 100 acres, close in size to what A.C. Champion's heirs would later sell for the creation of Camp Tom Wooten.

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/>

When State Officials Accepted Travis' Scenic Park



Top: State parks board and Austin committee, standing at entrance to 87-acre park given the state on West Bull Creek, and Lake Austin, by A. C. Champion, left to right: D. E. Eddy, chairman of the state parks board; Mrs. Phoebe H. Warner, member of the board; Walter E. Long, Herbert Key, member of the parks board; A. C. Champion, donor of the park; Mrs. James Welder, member of the board; A. V. Wiley and John Tobin. The pilot car shown behind the group, bears the legend, "Rev. Pat M. Neff and State Parks Board."

Lower: Violet crowned hills of the state's play park. This view is from the present scenic drive, looking north across Bull Creek which enters Lake Austin just left of the point shown. The long rock ridge towering above Bull Creek are well known landmarks.

View of Champion State Park Near Austin.



—Courtesy of Galveston News.

Picturesque drive, six miles out of Austin, leading to A. C. Champion park, which contains 87 acres donated by one of the early pioneers of Travis county to the state. Members of the present legislature will be taken over the drive to see the beauty spots of the new park.

MARKET UPDATE

NORTHWEST HILLS AND WESTOVER HILLS



\$1,117,000
MEDIAN SALES PRICE

↑ 9.9%
FROM DEC 2021



\$10,784,000
SALES VOLUME

↓ 25%
FROM DEC 2021



\$457
AVG LIST PRICE PER SF

↑ 12%
FROM DEC 2021



\$442
AVG SALE PRICE PER SF

↓ 11.9%
FROM DEC 2021



\$1,329,400
AVERAGE LIST PRICE

↑ 25.5%
FROM DEC 2021



53
DAYS ON MARKET

↑ 960%
FROM DEC 2021



9
CLOSED SALES

↓ 30.7%
FROM DEC 2021



SOURCE: ABOR MLS INCLUDING DATA FROM DECEMBER 1-31, 2022 FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOMES, BASED ON NWACA BOUNDARIES: MOPAC/HWY360/2222/HWY 183

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Dawn provided the best expert advice on the sale of our home during a changing time in the market. She always recognized and supported the decisions we ultimately made. Whenever possible, Dawn made herself available to personally be at our house for showings. In this way, she was able to impart the unique features of our house, as well as the warm stories of what it was like to raise our family there and entertain at our home.

If you are looking to sell your home, we cannot recommend Dawn highly enough as the agent you should choose. Not only will you be satisfied with her professional services, you will truly enjoy working with her during the process of preparation, listing, showing, and closing. We truly appreciate Dawn!"

~Peggy and Kevin Schott



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