

Northwest Austin News

SERVING THE NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY

Volume 14, Issue 4

April 2023



Happenings Around the Neighborhood

By NWACA BOARD

Your NWACA Board and committee members are busy working on local issues and planning upcoming events. We realize we could use a few more people to serve on both the Board and on our Events Committee. If you're interested, please contact us at info@nwaca.org.

You might have noticed the results of some recent Board actions: first, the graffiti that was at the Luby's site is now covered up. Our Zoning Committee members contacted both the developer and the City and those efforts paid off. Second, the Travis County Constable is back. While his presence is still limited, we are pleased he is providing about twice as many patrol hours as before. If you know of a street or intersection that needs special attention because of speeding or other traffic law violations, let us know at info@nwaca.org, and we'll pass that information along.

We are also looking into the Austin Transportation Department (ATD) proposal to install 15 sets of asphalt speed cushions on Greystone Drive between Valburn Drive and Mopac. Some neighbors who live on or near Greystone are strongly in favor of this speed mitigation approach and others are strongly opposed. So that everyone is fully informed about the project, we'll be hosting a community meeting on April 19th at 6:30 PM in Huffman Hall at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 8134 Mesa Drive; please use the St. Matthew's parking lot at 4121 Steck Avenue. Engineers from ATD will be there to explain the plan and to answer questions from the community. If you have ques-

NEIGHBORHOOD, 7

Landmark Commission stalls demolition of Knox ranch house in Northwest Hills

By KALI BRAMBLE
Austin Monitor

A sprawling lot in Northwest Hills – once home to a summer camp for boys – could be headed to City Council's agenda sometime soon, after a move to zone the site historic secured approval from the Historic Landmark Commission earlier this month.

Built around 1940 for army captain and outdoorsman Warren Penn Knox, the ranch house at 7304 Knox Lane remained in his family until the passing of Margaret P. Knox late last year. Now, new owners are eyeing the site for demolition and redevelopment, though details are under wraps.

In its previous life, the property was known as Running Rope Ranch, a day camp for outdoorsy youths that offered riding lessons, swimming and other training in outdoor ac-

tivities. The lot also boasts unique wildlife and archaeological finds, including a number of possible Native American mounds and seven natural springs that are home to the endangered Jollyville Plateau salamander.

With its storied past and landscape treasures, staff in the Historic Preservation Office said the site may qualify for landmark status per the city's historic designation criteria. While neither the property's current owners nor neighbors were present to make the case, several parties wrote in to oppose the demolition.

"My primary objection is that this house has been a major landmark for several generations of Northwest Hills families," neighbor James E. Jarrett said in a written statement. "For more than 40 years it has been decorated during the holidays as a gingerbread house. ... If the new owners allowed the res-

LANDMARK, 2



This ranch house at 7304 Knox Lane was built around 1940 for army captain and outdoorsman Warren Penn Knox. New owners are eyeing the site for demolition and redevelopment.



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LANDMARK, FROM 1

idence to remain, I'm sure many of us nearby neighbors would decorate the house as in the past and continue to create a spectacle for future families."

Commissioners voted unanimously to initiate historic zoning, citing the property's historical association, archaeological significance, community value and landscape features.

Still, the case will need to face both the Planning Commission and City Council for approval, a process with a notoriously slim success rate without owner cooperation.

Staff will return to further discuss the case in April, with instructions to delve deeper into concerns raised over founder W.P. Knox's ties to the Texas Confederate Home for Men. Commissioners also hope for more answers regarding the owner's plans – rumored to involve a 12-home subdivision.

"It is a large piece of property, so in my mind that is probably the intention," said Commissioner Blake Tollett, who authored the motion. "But I don't think that would negate preserving some portion."

Austin Monitor, an online, nonpartisan, 501(c)3 nonprofit publication that covers local government and politics in and around Austin.

LANDMARK, 4



Location map at 7304 Knox Lane

BOY LEADERSHIP COURSE AT ST. EDWARD'S; KEEN INTEREST IS MANIFEST

The boy leadership training course, sponsored by the boys' life bureau of the Knights of Columbus is being conducted at St. Edward's College by Professor Ray Hoyer, B. S., A. M., director of the graduate department of boy guidance at the University of Notre Dame, assisted by W. P. Knox, assistant regional scout executive of Austin. Professor Hoyer is also assisted by Rev. E. Vincent Mooney, C. S. C., A. M., LL. B., head of the department of social sciences at St. Edward's College.

3 Scout Leaders To Attend Course

Three executives of the capitol Boy Scout area will attend a regional troop camping course to be given in San Angelo April 21-23,

it was announced Wednesday. The three are Warren P. Knox, district commissioner; Jack Stoltz, university student, and Noel P. Amstead, assistant scout executive. Other members of the local council expect to attend the course to be given in Houston May 19-21.

A course in troop camping for scouters of the council will be held here May 27-29 by the men trained in the regional courses.

3 Scout Leaders To Attend Course. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); 19 Apr 1939: 3.

Knox, Thomas Rites to Be Solemnized Here Saturday

Miss Margaret Ruth Thomas, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Leonidas Thomas, will become the bride of Aviation Cadet James W. Knox, son of Lt. and Mrs. Warren P. Knox, Saturday at 8:30 p. m. at the University Methodist church with the Rev. Edmund Heinssohn officiating.

Wedding music will be played at the organ by Miss Beulah Beaver. Alice Mungula will sing d'Hardelot's "Because" and Grieg's "Ich Leibe Dich."

Miss Vivian Knox, sister of the bridegroom, will be the bride's only attendant. Aviation Cadet Knox will be attended by John A. Focht, Jr., best man. Ushers will be Will Roy Thomas, brother of the bride, and Aviation Cadet Ralph B. Lawrence.

After the wedding a reception for the bridal party will be held at the home of the bride's parents. Guests will include members of the immediate families and close friends of the bride and bridegroom.

Miss Thomas and Aviation Cadet Knox are both members of old Austin families. She is the granddaughter of Mrs. George W. Beaver, and he is the grandson of the late Judge and Mrs. Charles Rogan.

Both attended Austin high school and the University of Texas. Aviation Cadet Knox was a student in the university when he joined the Army air corps in the spring of 1942. While in school he was a member of Alpha Phi Omega and the Naval R.O.T.C. unit. He will receive his wings and commission June 24 from the San Marcos navigation school.

Circus Scheduled Friday

The Capital City Circus, which shows here Friday and Saturday at its home lot, the 2200 block on Leon street, is an Austin product. All performers are Austin people recruited and trained here, while the equipment has been made or purchased in Austin. W. P. Knox, who is directing the organization and training the circus, is a former boy scout executive, and has been a camp director and boys' worker for many years. This is the fourth home talent circus that Mr. Knox has directed. His last show was at Kingsville.

The Capital City Circus has all the features of a big circus, with clowns, aerialists, animal acts and side shows. The grounds have taken on a real circus appearance. High poles from which the trapeze and swinging ladders are suspended have been erected and are in use daily. The circus rings are also busy as animals are being rehearsed in their acts. The trained animals include horses, ponies, mules, dogs, goats, pigs, rabbits and ducks. A yoke of red steers, pulling a small covered wagon, is one of the features. The menagerie will include many kinds of wild and domestic animals.

Knox said he has had excellent cooperation from the various organizations and individuals in making this Austin circus a success.

Running Rope Ranch

A Day Camp for Boys

Age 7 to 15 Years

The camp combines ranch and outdoor activities, physical development, equitation, hiking, cooking and handicraft. Noon meal served campers.

Enrollment limited to 25 for five weeks beginning June 6.

CAPT. W. P. KNOX

R. 4 Box 392 Phone 7-9684

Class Views Pack Exhibit

The pupils of the 6B class of Fulmore School have recently seen two demonstrations of transportation methods which is now under study.

The first was the exhibit and demonstration of packs, yokes, and saddles, by Captain W. P. Knox of Running Rope Ranch, held on the Fulmore grounds. The exhibit of packs carried by man included the Korean pack, the Indian pack basket, the Army packs, the Boy Scout pack, barrel stave pack, rucker sack, grain sack, Alaskan pack frame, and tump line.



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Knox-Rogan.
One of the most beautiful of home weddings was solemnized Saturday evening at the home of the bride's parents, Judge and Mrs. Charles A. Rogan, when their daughter, Miss Mary Lou Rogan became the bride of Warren Penn Knox of San Antonio. The ceremony was pronounced by the Rev. A. Frank Smith of San Antonio, in the presence of a large group of friends of the young people.

Immediately after the ceremony Mr. and Mrs. Knox left for their home in San Antonio, where a furnished bungalow awaits them. The bride's going away suit was a modish spring model coat suit with accessories to correspond. A corsage of roses was prettily worn with it. The wedding bouquet tossed by the bride as she departed, was caught by Miss Ruth Robbins. The bride is the attractive daughter of Judge and Mrs. Rogan and was reared in Austin. She graduated at the Austin High School and the University of Texas. She is an Alpha Delta Pi, and has been teacher of Spanish in the Main Avenue High School of San Antonio.

The bridegroom, Warren Penn Knox is a graduate of New Hampshire State College, his home being in Madbury, N. H. During the war he was a first lieutenant in the Fourteenth Cavalry, Fort Sam Houston. He is now connected with the Chamber of Commerce in San Antonio.

Out of town guests for the wedding were: Misses Ruth Robbins, Rogan; Lucille Hall, San Antonio; Emily Dickson, San Antonio; Mrs. W. L. Freeman, San Antonio; Master Robert Willis Freeman, San Antonio; Messrs. James D. McCusker, San Antonio; Don Montgomery, San Antonio; Mrs. L. Montgomery, San Antonio; Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Warren, Boston, Mass.; Mr. and Mrs. Palmer, Boston, Mass.; (relatives of the groom); Rev. A. Frank Smith of San Antonio.

Knox-Rogan. The Statesman (1916-1921); 07 Mar 1920: A2.

RAIN. W. P. Knox, who runs the Running Rope Ranch on Balcones Trail at Austin, reports that 1.80 inches of rain fell there Sunday, boosting his May total to 2.15 inches and the 1952 total to 10.95.

Campers Plan Sports, Exhibits To End First Summer Session
Parents and friends of the boys at Running Rope Ranch north of Austin Friday will complete their first summer session with a horse show, swimming meet and handicraft exhibit.
Owened and operated by Captain John Alvis, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Alvis; Kenny Dryden, son of Dr. and Mrs. S. H. Dryden; Bill Duncan, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Duncan; Tom Ekin, son of Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Ekin; Martin Felter, son of Mr. and Mrs. E. E. Felter; Ralph Jones, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Jones; Bobby Kelly, son of Mr. and Mrs. Everett Kelly; John Kuippa, son of Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Kuippa; Billy Page, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Page; Phacion Park, son of Mr. and Mrs. P. S. Park; Ben Powell III, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Powell Jr.; David Smith, son of Mr. and Mrs. David Smith.
The Austin Statesman (1921-1953); 30 June 1953: A17.

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION

DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS

FEBRUARY 1, 2023
PR-2022-143328; GF-2022-169703
7304-06 KNOX LANE

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1940 house.

ARCHITECTURE

The building at 7304 Knox Lane is an eclectic house with early Ranch and vernacular stylistic influences. It is one and one-half stories in height, with an L-shaped plan and intersecting partial-width porches. Its compound roofline features deep eaves with cedar shakes at gable ends. Fenestration includes 8:8 wood windows of varying dimensions.

RESEARCH

The house at Knox Lane and Running Rope Lane, known as 7304 or 7306 Knox, was constructed between 1930 and 1940. The land was purchased in the 1930s by Mary Lou and Warren Penn Knox. W. P. Knox, the district commissioner for the Boy Scouts of America, turned the property into a day camp for boys called Running Rope Ranch.

Knox was a Vermont native who moved to Austin after World War I. After serving as an Army captain in World War II, he became involved in Central Texas outdoor youth activities, including work as the official operator of the Arrowhead Ranch Camp in Kerrville, before opening Running Rope Ranch in the 1940s. The ranch offered riding lessons, hiking and survival training, swimming in the spring-fed pool—the land boasted seven natural springs, which were later identified by Margaret Thomas Knox as a habitat of the threatened Jollyville Plateau salamander¹—and other outdoorsmanship training. From 1959 to 1966, legendary Austin horsewoman Ginger Pool taught at the ranch.² The Knox family operated the day camp for ten years.

Knox, noted as “larger than life” in posthumous publications, had eclectic interests. He entertained his pupils by showcasing rope tricks he learned as a rodeo performer after WWI. He was a life member of the Marshall Ford Game Protective Association, volunteered on the Council of the Texas Confederate Home for Men, and taught Sunday school at University United Methodist Church.

In later years, James and Margaret Thomas Knox and their children moved to the property. Margaret Knox, Captain W. P. Knox’s daughter-in-law, was the daughter of famed Austin architect Roy L. Thomas. She married aviator and P.O.W. James Knox in 1944. After he retired from the military, the couple moved back to his family home in 1966. There, Margaret Knox worked as a seamstress, a beekeeper, a children’s book author, and a wildlife rehabilitator until her death in 2022.

PROPERTY EVALUATION

Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

- 1) The building is more than 50 years old.
- 2) The building appears to retain high integrity.
- 3) Properties must meet two criteria for landmark designation (LDC §25-2-352). Staff has evaluated the property and determined that it may meet two criteria:
 - a. Architecture. The building is an eclectic house with early Ranch and vernacular stylistic influences.
 - b. Historical association. The property is associated with the Knox family and Running Rope Ranch.
 - c. Archaeology. Research indicates a high probability of significant archaeological data, including evidence of Native American mound-building activity and springs purported to be used by Native American residents of the land.
 - d. Community value. The property may possess a unique location, physical characteristic, or significant feature that contributes to the character, image, or cultural identity of the city, the neighborhood, or a particular demographic group, as it has been noted in several Northwest Austin Civic Association publications.
 - e. Landscape feature. The property may function as a significant natural or designed landscape with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city. While some of the original ranch has been developed and some outbuildings removed, natural springs and a spring-fed swimming pool remain.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Consider initiation of historic zoning. Should the Commission decide against historic zoning, release the demolition permit only upon receipt of a City of Austin Documentation Package and a plan for archaeological monitoring.

MARKET UPDATE

NORTHWEST HILLS AND WESTOVER HILLS



\$1,2387,500
MEDIAN SALES PRICE



\$13,901,500
SALES VOLUME



\$449
MEDIAN LIST PRICE/SF



\$467
MEDIAN SALE PRICE/SF



\$1,325,000
MEDIAN LIST PRICE



17
DAYS ON MARKET



10
CLOSED SALES



SOURCE: ABOR MLS INCLUDING DATA FROM MARCH 1-24, 2023 FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOMES. BASED ON NWACA BOUNDARIES: MOPAC/HWY360/2222/HWY 183

JULIE WAIDELICH



YOUR NEIGHBOR. YOUR REALTOR.

Contact me for a complimentary market analysis and see if making a move in 2023 makes sense for you.

SPRING MAINTENANCE TIPS

Spring is a popular time for home buyers to start their search for a new home, and as a result, it's a great time for sellers to get their home ready to sell. Here are a few helpful tips to make sure your home maintenance is up to date should you find yourself in the market to sell.

CHECK YOUR ROOF

Inspect your roof for damage caused by winter weather, such as leaks or missing shingles.

CLEAN GUTTERS & DOWNSPOUTS

Clear out any debris or leaves that may have accumulated in your gutters and downspouts.

CHECK YOUR WINDOWS & DOORS

Check for cracks or leaks that could let in air or water. Seal gaps with caulk or weather stripping.

INSPECT YOUR HVAC SYSTEM

Schedule an appointment with an HVAC professional to inspect and service your heating and cooling systems before the hot weather arrives.

TEST SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

Replace any batteries that are low.

CHECK OUTDOOR LIGHTING

Replace any burned out bulbs and check that they are functioning properly.

CLEAN, CLEAN, CLEAN

Power wash your home's exterior to remove built-up dirt, grime or mildew.

CHECK YOUR PLUMBING

Inspect your plumbing for any leaks or water damage. Fix issues before they become major problems.

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Dear Friends,

April 2023

In 2002 my brother invited me to do the bicycle ride across Iowa (RAGBRAI). As I started training I remembered one of my co-workers talking about a ride from Houston to Austin – the MS 150 – so I registered thinking this would be a great training ride.

Then something totally unexpected happened as I started my fundraising activities! I came to realize that many friends and acquaintances were either living with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) or MS had some effect on their family. I was truly surprised by this and this awareness inspired me to learn more about MS.

For the 2003 MS150, I asked one of my sons-in-law, Scott, to ride with me, and we formed an unofficial, 2-person, family team. Then, the shocker came. After riding together for about four (4) years, Scott was diagnosed as living with MS.

My relationship with MS continued in 2009 when my wife's and my care management company was asked to apply to be care managers for those living with MS. (Care Management is one of the programs of the National MS Society (NMSS) that maximizes the quality of life of those living with MS through assistance with community resources and advocacy - the NMSS is not just about research.) I personally have been a care manager to those living with MS. I always left a client visit inspired by the journey of those living with MS and motivated to continue my fundraising.

Once again I registered to ride in the MS 150. I am raising funds to support the NMSS' commitment to STOP MS, RESTORE lost functionality and END MS forever. Please join me in my commitment of support for the NMSS. Your generous tax-deductible donation can be made by going to my personal page at <https://mssociety.donordrive.com/participant/Mick-Koffend>. Then, click on the "Donate" button towards the right. Or, if you prefer, send your check payable to the "National MS Society" and mail it to the National MS Society, 1050 N Post Oak Road, Ste 240, Houston, TX 77055. Please be sure to write "Mick Koffend, Texas MS 150 2023" in the memo section of your check.

There have been amazing breakthroughs in MS research, program development and educational opportunities. You can see some of these when you go to my website to donate.

In closing you have my personal thanks for your generosity because my son-in-law Scott's and many others' quality of life has improved greatly from the developments your donation supports.

Mick Koffend



Join your
Northwest Austin
neighbors for an
**Earth
Day
Festival**

Saturday, April 22 @2-4pm
Doss Elementary Park
Murchison Community Garden
earth-friendly activities, resources,
and snacks for the whole family!



NEIGHBORHOOD, FROM 1

tions you'd like raised, please send them to info@nwaca.org before the meeting, or you'll be able to write them on question cards available during the meeting. For more details about the proposal and its origins, see the news announcement at www.nwaca.org.

This matter is one for which the City of Austin expected input last year when they posted their broader proposal for street updates. It's one example of how the City is now favoring online and phone responses to their plans, rather than gathering input through large community meetings. Considering this change, NWACA committee members will be spending more of their time reviewing plans as they are published and alerting the neighborhood to changes that are under consideration, identifying how and where to provide feedback.

Here are some upcoming events to put onto your calendar:

- Saturday, April 22, Earth Day Festival, Doss Elementary Park, Murchison Community Garden, 2 - 4 PM
- Spring 2023 Election – Deadline to register April 6, Early voting April 24 – May 2, Election Day Saturday, May 6
- Thursday, May 11, NWACA Annual Neighborhood Meeting, 6:30 – 8:30 PM
 - o Speakers include Council Member Alison Alter and representatives from several City

departments.

- o Updates will be provided on NWACA events and other activities.
- o Display tables will be staffed by Business Members, NWACA committees, law enforcement groups, and City of Austin department representatives.
- o Refreshments will be provided.

It appears that there are only two items on the May 6 th ballot; both are City of Austin propositions regarding police oversight. Proposition A was drafted by the criminal justice political group Equity Action; Proposition B was backed by Voters for Oversight and Police Accountability, a political committee funded almost entirely by the Austin Police Association. As details about these propositions and their potential impact become available, we will keep you informed via the NWACA website www.nwaca.org and the weekly NWACA Notes email. A February article in Community Impact provides an initial analysis at <https://tinyurl.com/CommunityImpactAB>.

Please join us for the NWACA events and see you at the polls!

Mark Your Calendars

*These events are as planned as of March 21.
As you consider participating in one of the events listed, please check first with the organizer.*

April 15, 9AM to noon

Monthly cleanup at Bull Creek District Park – sign up at <https://www.givepulse.com/event/336685>

April 18, 7 PM

Parks Committee – virtual

April 19, 6:30 PM

Community Meeting About Greystone Drive
Huffman Hall, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
Enter at 4121 Steck Avenue

April 22, 2-4 PM

Family Friendly Earth Day Celebration –
Doss Elementary Park and
Murchison Community Gardens

April 25, 5 PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees - virtual

April 26, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

NWACA Board Meeting - St. Matthew's and virtual

May 11, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

NWACA Annual Neighborhood Meeting
Huffman Hall, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
8134 Mesa Drive/4121 Steck Avenue

May 16, 7pm

Parks Committee – virtual

May 20, 9AM to noon

Monthly cleanup at Bull Creek District Park – sign up at <https://www.givepulse.com/event/336685>

May 23, 5 PM

NWACA Zoning and Transportation Committees - virtual

May 24, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

NWACA Board Meeting - St. Matthew's and virtual

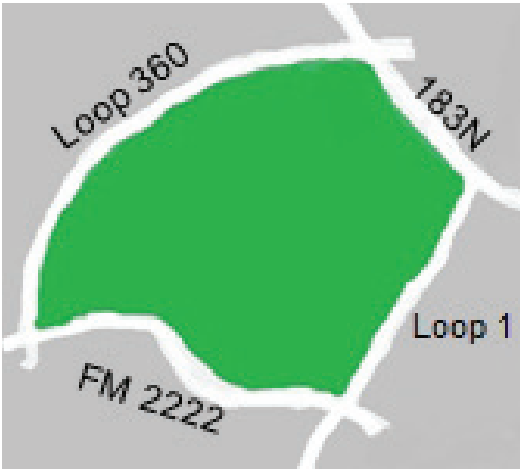
Key Contacts

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
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Mick Koffend, Treasurer
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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 February 23 and March 21, 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.

- Bill and Linda Jakobeit
- Mike Keenan
- Valerie Laubacher
- Melissa Malone
- Eva and Roy Orbach
- Tony and Alice Sessi
- Thomas and Betty Shaw
- Ann Trentin
- James and Jenny Wilson
- (and, apologies to anyone whose donation we might have missed!)

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name:	Phone: ()
Address:	Zip:
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

April 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 substantially underway with completion targeted for 2026. Most of the required frontage road closures take place from 9 pm to 5 am.

See this site for weekly updates: <https://www.183north.com/construction/travel-alerts>

2. The City of Austin 2016 Mobility Bond is providing funding 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 Fall 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 West-

lake Drive/Cedar Street project is forecast to be completed in mid-2025. Meanwhile, expect construction delays on this section of Loop 360. Closures are announced here: <http://loop-360project.com/>

Another one of the projects is to build an overpass on Loop 360 at Spicewood Springs. This project has been on hold due to lack of funding. CAMPO, our metropolitan planning organization, was recently given permission to increase their planning budget by ten billion dollars. Some of these funds have been

allocated to funding this project but, because of the need to move utilities connected with the AT&T switching center, construction is now scheduled to start in 2025.

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.

How realistic is the idea to bury Austin's power lines? Council wants to know.

By **NINA HERNANDEZ**
Austin Monitor

At its regular meeting last week on March 23, City Council approved a pair of items aimed at exploring the possibilities for burying existing utility power lines as well as ones to be constructed in new capital projects such as Project Connect. The idea surfaced after the devastating February winter ice storm that left thousands of Austinites without power for days. Austin Energy attributed the outages to an unprecedented amount of ice that accumulated on lines and downed trees and utility poles.

Item 84, sponsored by Council Member Ryan Alter, directs the city manager to conduct a feasibility study on the idea of burying existing power lines, and then to develop a long-term capital improvement plan for doing so. The resolution requests that the city man-

ager develop a plan to prioritize potential areas to bury lines, such as near critical infrastructure, medical centers and emergency response infrastructure. The resolution asks the city manager to define which areas aren't compatible with such underground utility infrastructure, review current best practices among other cities, and estimate costs and potential funding sources. The city manager will also look into possible amendments to the Land Development Code that could promote installation in the future.

A third version of the resolution included an acknowledgement of the roles that trees play in mitigating urban heat, improving the safety and walkability of city streets and enhancing cleanliness of air and water. "Overhead electric distribution lines frequently create conflicts for the growth and health of these vital pieces of green infrastructure," it states. Therefore, the manager is also directed to



consider opportunities to coordinate the work with the planting of new trees along streets, particularly along corridors of high pedestrian use.

Item 58, sponsored by Council Member Vanessa

Fuentes, directs the city manager to encourage coordination between city departments regarding the placement of underground lines in the development of future capital projects. The resolution asks the city manager to "identify opportunities for improvement to ensure that the potential for underground placement is thoroughly considered."

Both resolutions ask the city manager to report back on progress related to these efforts at the Elec-

tric Utility Commission and the Austin Energy Utility Oversight Committee within 180 days, which would be in September.

Fuentes thanked her colleagues for the support, and emphasized the importance of the measures in Austin's overall quest to increase emergency preparedness.

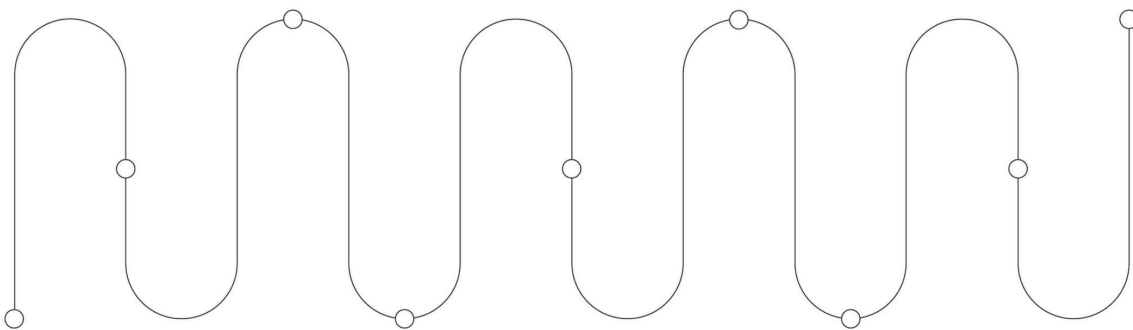
"This pair of policy items before us is that next step in the process for us to explore ways of how we can bury our power lines," Fuentes said.

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Business Spotlight: Ecotopes

By JANICE GREEN

Our Northwest Hills landscapes have taken severe hits in the last two years. While heartbreaking, it provided an opportunity to reimagine how we want our pieces of land to look, feel, and reflect. This is where Ecotopes, nestled in the trees on Spicewood Springs Road, comes into play.

Steve Shelton, founder of Ecotopes, is an award-winning landscape architect; he graduated from the first class of The University of Texas School of Architecture's landscape architecture program that began almost twenty years ago. Raised in west Texas, he's resided in Northwest Hills for two decades and thus has an intimate knowledge of the unique elements of this ecosystem and a personal investment in our neighborhood. FYI, an eco (home) + tope (place) is the smallest part of an ecosystem holding homogenous properties – a/k/a/ earth-pixels.



Ecotopes offers a range of services: landscape designs for your site and surfaces; lighting, storage, and planter vessels; rainwater capture; custom designs for outdoor furnishings; and post-construction landscape services to protect the design intent and provide seasonal alignment ... not just lawn-mowing.

We know we need to retrofit our landscapes from the traditional manicured lawns to more native ones with modern materials - "from what it has been to what it should be." By doing so we can reduce water use, promote biodiversity, and more quickly rebound from the catastrophic forces in nature.

Steve's design mission is to "create spaces that match a client's outdoor needs with the site's unique bundle of characteristics." This includes recommending plants that can survive whatever the weather throws their way and creating zones of comfort for solitude, culinary activities, and entertaining.

Tapping into Steve's creativity begins with making an appointment with him via the Ecotopes website. Walking around his "storefront studio" is an intriguing adventure into Steve's decorative and functional imagination: simple and comfy wood/metal exterior furnishings, metal/stone planting structures, even his self-designed hibachito for grilling. He also fosters linkages with regional artisans.

The Ecotopes website is brimming with ideas and information. It describes in easy-to-understand

terms the process for tapping into Steve's design talents. First, he visits the project site to understand the structures, vegetation, constraints, and human elements involved. He begins by identifying the ecological conditions within a site – areas of shade, sunny edges, pockets of prairie and desert, creek sides, escarpments. He anticipates storm flows and imagines separating material conditions. All of this can lead to a tangible design concept that eventually identifies construction phases and details about retainers and budgets.

Walking and driving through the tall stacks of storm debris, toppled trees, and mangled landscapes in our neighborhoods was depressing. But meeting with Steve left me hopeful and it brought to mind the rising phoenix legend – emerging from a catastrophe smarter and stronger. With resources such as Ecotopes, forged through Steve Shelton's experience and familiarity with our beloved natural habitats, we can reassess our previous landscapes and renew our joy for outdoor living.

Contact Info: www.ecotopes.com; 4615 Spicewood Springs Road; 512-587-2401

Tips for Effective Composting

By SHOAL CREEK NURSERY

Everyone can compost a bit differently to suit the needs of their garden, landscape, and lifestyle. These tried-and-true tricks, however, can improve the quality and condition of your compost whether you have just a small tumbler or a large pile decomposing away.

• **Position Your Pile Properly** Depending on your climate, either full or partial sun is often best to help the compost stay heated and to encourage better microbial action. A level area is preferred, and there should be good drainage so the compost does not become waterlogged, which could drown the microbes and bacteria that foster better decomposition. The area should be easy to access so you can work with your compost as needed, but it should also be out of sight if desired.

• **Keep It Covered** If your area has excessive rainfall accumulation, a cover can keep your compost from becoming drenched or buried. A simple roof can be effective, or you may use a tarp to keep the compost sheltered. In very hot areas, basic shade can keep the compost from overheating, or in dry or drought-stricken times, a tarp can help retain

moisture to keep the pile at the proper moisture and humidity for the best decomposition.

• **Water Your Pile** If your compost dries out, the beneficial bacteria, microbes, worms, and other creatures helping the decomposition will die. Ideally, the pile should have a moisture level similar to a damp sponge, but without dripping or standing water. In dry areas or during periods of drought, it may be necessary to water your pile occasionally, or in very humid or wet regions, you may need to cover the pile to keep it from being too wet.

• **Create a Diverse Mix** Compost requires both green (nitrogen-rich) and brown (carbon-rich) materials to create a good nutritional balance. A 50/50 mix is easiest to maintain, though a more carbon-rich mixture is often preferred. Adding diverse materials to the pile can ensure the presence of more nutrients and minerals for healthier compost. Unusual items that can help enrich your compost include coffee grounds, used tea bags, pet fur, human hair, soiled paper napkins or tissues, spent matches, wooden toothpicks, cut flowers, fireplace ashes, eggshells, and corn cobs.

• **Avoid Unwanted Materials** Certain materials should not be added to compost piles because either they are more likely to attract pests or create strong, foul odors. Keep dairy, meat, pet feces, kitty litter, bones, fish, and dirty diapers out of your compost pile. Furthermore, avoid putting chemically treated items – pet fur that has been treated for fleas, weeds sprayed with pesticides, etc. – in a compost pile, as these toxins can inadvertently kill the microbes necessary for decomposition.

• **Mix It Up** Oxygen is essential for the best decomposition. Mixing your pile regularly using a pitchfork or shovel can help turn the material and incorporate more air. If the pile is short or shallow, raking the material can help turn it over to keep it oxygenated, but be sure you are able to reach to the middle and bottom of the pile for the best results.

• **Chop Up Items** Because the ultimate goal of compost is to achieve a fine, crumbly texture without discernible pieces, chopping, crushing, cracking, or shredding material before you add it to the pile will help it decompose more effectively. Smaller pieces have greater surface area for microbes to reach, which will speed up the decomposition. Smaller, finer tex-

tures will also be easier to turn and mix so you don't have to strain to work your compost.

Different techniques will work best for different types of composting methods, and you should experiment with tricks to best suit your composting style. Before you know it, you'll be composting so effectively that you'll always have a healthy, nutritious supply of compost to nourish your garden, flowerbeds, containers, and anywhere your landscape needs a boost.



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Cutworms Damage Garden Plants: Remedies Abound

By WIZZIE BROWN
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Granulate cutworms are damaging in the immature, or larval stage. Cutworms can cut plant seedlings stems off at the soil level and on older plants they can climb the plant and feed on foliage or fruit. Young larvae skeletonize leaves while older larvae eat holes in foliage, feed on the surface of fruit, or burrow into fruit. Larvae are nocturnal, which may make it difficult to discover the culprit of plant damage. You may need to inspect the garden at night when larvae feed.

Eggs are laid singly or in clusters on the upper surface of foliage. Eggs begin white in color but darken as larvae get close to emerging. Larvae are grayish-red with a brown head and light markings along the side of the body. Larvae start off around ¼" but grow to 1.5" in length. Pupae are in soil and are a dark reddish-brown color. Adults

are drab brownish-gray mottled moths with a wingspan around 1.5 inches. The front wings have a bean shaped marking paired with a circular marking.

Granulate cutworms feed on a wide variety of crops including beans, cabbage, peas, celery, watermelon, muskmelon, broccoli, cauliflower, potatoes, lettuce, onions, tomatoes, peppers, spinach, carrots, cucumbers, radish, beets, turnips, and brussels sprouts.

If you have had cutworm problems in previous years, you can till soil before planting to disturb pupae. Plant collars can be used to physically block larvae from clipping new seedlings. Collars can be made from cut sections of PVC pipe, fruit/ vegetable cans with both ends cut out, or aluminum foil wrapped around stems of seedlings. A key to using plant collars is that they need to be partially buried in the soil and sticking up from the ground to protect the seedling and block

larvae. If you are confident that no pupae are in the soil, row cover can be used to keep adult moths from laying eggs on the leaves of host plants. If eggs or egg clusters are spotted on plant foliage, they can be squished or removed from plants.

Chemical treatment may consist of insecticidal soap on smaller larval stages. *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) variety *kurstaki* is a biological product that only targets caterpillars and can help to conserve beneficial predator insects. Another biological product is spinosad which is selectively active on insect pests that feed on foliage. Both Bt and spinosad need to have good coverage on the infested plants as they need to be consumed for them to work. This would also mean that you would need to treat with these products in the evening since cut-



worm larvae are nocturnal. With any pesticide product, make sure to read and follow all labeled instructions and make sure that it can be used in the area that you plan to treat.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600.

Why Should I Throw Food Waste in the Green Compost Bin?

By MERRIESSA ANTON

Something we all need to think about is how we can improve our impact on the environment. One way to influence climate change is to use our green compost bin. Half of the items residential customers throw in their brown trash bins and send to the landfill could be composted. The compostable materials put in our landfill cannot break down as they would in nature or in a compost pile. Instead, they decompose without oxygen, releasing methane gas into our atmosphere. These food scraps and paper goods produce more methane than any other material in our landfill, contributing to global warming. Compostable materials placed in your green compost bin break down into compost, which can be used to help soil retain water and fertilize without chemicals.

Austin residents can easily collect their food scraps and have them collected weekly by the city. A small compost collector in your kitchen helps with this process. The city offers a free collector at various times during the year. You can also purchase a collector at many stores. You will also need a BPI (Biodegradable Products Institute) Certified bag to line your compost collector and help you carry your food scraps to your outside

green compost bin. You can use a paper bag or a small box if you prefer. Wrap food scraps in a paper towel or newspaper if you are worried about heavy smells and moisture. I sprinkle baking powder inside my collector to help with odor. Some people put their food scrap collection in their freezer until their curbside collection day.

Austin residents can dispose of meat, dairy, seafood, and bones with their food scraps, since Austin compost is processed in a commercial composting facility using high temperatures. Many cities do not have high temperature processing and can only handle raw vegetables and eggshells.

Collecting your food scraps and placing them in your green compost bin can also save you money by allowing you to downsize your brown trash bin. There is no charge to change the size of your bin, and your monthly fee can be reduced. A brief call to 311 can help you begin this process. More information about composting can be found at www.austintexas.gov or by searching for "City of Austin Curbside Composting."

Next month: "What can I put in my compost bin and what is trash?"



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It is completely maddening when you discover that your car has been broken into overnight. Your personal space has been invaded and defiled – your security compromised. It’s ten times more frustrating when you realize that you neglected to lock the car. You inadvertently invited a thief to target your car. To keep this from happening again, consider developing the habit of “securing the fort” before retiring each night.

The 9PM Routine

At 9PM, every night, conduct a security check and verify that you have:

- ❑ Removed valuables, firearms, and garage door openers from vehicles.
- ❑ Locked vehicles.
- ❑ Brought inside or secure bikes, tools, keys, and other valuables.
- ❑ Closed and locked overhead and walk-through garage doors.
- ❑ Locked all external house doors.
- ❑ Turned on or activated exterior lights, security cameras, and alarm systems.

Crime experts across the country say that overnight neighborhood burglaries can be prevented by making “The 9PM Routine” well, routine. To be effective, a family needs to make this process a habit - something that is ingrained. Some cities, like Miami, have seen success in promoting this activity by broadcasting nightly text reminders. However, with the growth of ubiquitous smart phone utilization, you can very effectively set your own reminder. Set a 9PM daily alarm on your smart phone or iPad. Post the 9PM Routine check list below on your refrigerator; assign your kids and others living with you to participate in the nightly security check.

Neighborhood Friendships Create Safer Communities

By JESSICA FORREST

There have been several studies* suggesting that communities with strong friendship bonds (i.e., social cohesion) have lower crime rates. Overall, friendships within neighborhoods play an important role in preventing and combating crime by creating a sense of community and building informal social controls in several ways:

- Increased sense of community: when neighbors are friends, they are more likely to look out for one another. They also may be more likely to participate in neighborhood volunteerism and other community initiatives.
- Improved communication: friends within a neighborhood community are likely to communicate; they have more open lines of dialogue that allow for the sharing of important information.
- Increased trust: when neighbors are friends, they are more likely to trust each other and feel comfortable sharing information and resources. This can help to build a stronger sense of community and make it easier to work together to establish common norms to combat crime.

- Increased visibility: when friends within a neighborhood are out and about, they are better able to identify what may be suspicious activity. This can help to deter potential criminals and make the neighborhood a less attractive target.

- Improved response times: when friends within a neighborhood are aware of community patterns, they may respond more quickly and effectively to common needs or deter criminal activity. This can increase satisfaction within the neighborhood as well as police services and help prevent crimes from escalating or continuing.

While National Night Out is not officially until October 3rd, 2023, there is no reason to wait until then to meet your neighbors or organize a block party. Or simply enjoy these cool evenings in your front yard or on your driveway – make sure there’s an extra chair or two and offer a welcoming invitation for neighbors to join you.

Such social activity is a good way to start a Neighbor-

hood Watch group. Social cohesion is really the basis of Neighborhood Watch for all the reasons cited above. NWACA can provide you with crime prevention materials to share with your neighbors. And, when you establish your Neighborhood Watch, you’ll get signs to post at the ends of your street to warn criminals that residents are looking out for each other and will report criminal activity. Go to www.nwaca.org to sign up or to get more information.

*Research sources: U.S. Department of Justice, Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, Hirschi’s Social Bond Theory

Explanation of social cohesion – Elmore Leonard style – thanks to ChatGPT

Social cohesion. You ever heard of it? It’s the glue that holds a community together. Like a band of outlaws, they gotta have each other’s backs if they’re gonna survive. And believe me, these days, we need all the cohesion we can get.

Now, some folks might think social cohesion is just a fancy way of sayin’ “gettin’ along”. But it’s more than that. It’s about respectin’ each other, even if we don’t always see eye to eye. It’s about havin’ a common purpose, and workin’ together to achieve it. And it’s about havin’ each other’s backs, no matter what.

Think of it like a heist. You got your mastermind, your getaway driver, your muscle, and your inside man. Everybody’s got a role to play, and they gotta work together if they wanna pull it off. It’s the same with social cohesion. Everybody’s gotta pitch in and do their part, whether it’s helpin’ out a neighbor, standin’ up for what’s right, or just lendin’ a listenin’ ear.

Now, I ain’t sayin’ it’s gonna be easy. Hell, it might be the toughest job you ever took on. But if you wanna build a community that’s strong, that’s resilient, and that’s gonna stand the test of time, you gotta start with social cohesion. So what do ya say, partner? You ready to join the gang?

Austin Police Department Chief’s Monthly Report for February 2023

(Note that we show the data that is the most current on the APD web site.)

City-Wide					Baker Sector				
Crimes Against Persons					Crimes Against Persons				
	Feb 2023	Feb 2022	% Change	All 2023		Feb 2023	Feb 2022	% Change	All 2023
Murder	6	2	200%	15	Murder	0	0	-	0
Aggravated Assault	260	291	-11%	559	Aggravated Assault	8	15	-47%	20
Simple Assault	701	709	-1%	1,451	Simple Assault	77	55	40%	156
Crimes Against Property					Crimes Against Property				
	Feb 2023	Feb 2022	% Change	All 2023		Feb 2023	Feb 2022	% Change	All 2023
Robbery	114	78	46%	188	Robbery	9	1	800%	12
Burglary	359	423	-15%	756	Burglary	27	43	-37%	67
Burglary of Vehicle	825	799	3%	1,784	Burglary of Vehicle	136	163	-17%	323
Auto Theft	479	402	19%	905	Auto Theft	39	46	-15%	70
Vandalism	448	499	-10%	903	Vandalism	45	46	-2%	93
Crimes Against Society					Crimes Against Society				
	Feb 2023	Feb 2022	% Change	All 2023		Feb 2023	Feb 2022	% Change	All 2023
Drug Violations	298	193	54%	600	Drugs	13	9	44%	21
Weapons	98	68	44%	179	Weapons	0	2	-100%	3

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APD launches new non-emergency reporting system

By AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT



The Austin Police Department has partnered with Versaterm Public Safety’s Case Service to launch a new non-emergency online reporting system via ireportaustin.com. Case Service is an artificial intelligence assistant that instantly communicates with community members through voice, mobile, web, and text. The AI assistant conducts a full interview with the person filing a report and provides key information to the police department. This system allows the report to be accepted into the official offense report database within hours or a similar time frame as if an officer wrote the report. This platform reduces wait times for community members and speeds up the investigation process.

To file a report online, the following guidelines must be met:

- No immediate danger to people or property,
- The suspect is no longer on-scene,
- The reporting party must be 17-years-old or

older and have a valid email address.

The online system accepts the following report types:

- Assault (minor or no injury, excluding domestic violence)
- Threats (excluding domestic violence)
- Burglary that does not involve fire/arson
- Theft (excluding prescriptions, firearms, explosives, vehicle license plates, and motor vehicles of any kind)
- Lost or missing property (excluding narcotic prescription medication, vehicle license plates, and firearms)
- Damaged property or Graffiti
- Fraud
- Harassment
- Counterfeiting or Forgery
- Identity theft
- Illegal use of a credit or debit card
- Minor, non-criminal child custody issues for documentation only
- Trespassing (suspect no longer on scene)

- Shoplifting reports

Once a report is submitted, the individual who submitted the report will receive confirmation via email with the assigned case number. If a supplement needs to be added later, community members can create a new report and provide the original case number when prompted.

The new reporting system supports multiple languages, including English, Arabic, French, Hindi, Korean, Simplified, and Traditional Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese, among other languages.

The department is confident this technology will streamline the reporting process, alleviate the current backlog for APD non-emergency requests submitted via 3-1-1, and provide community members personalized attention to their incidents. Upon successful deployment of this first phase, APD plans to expand the use of Case Service further.

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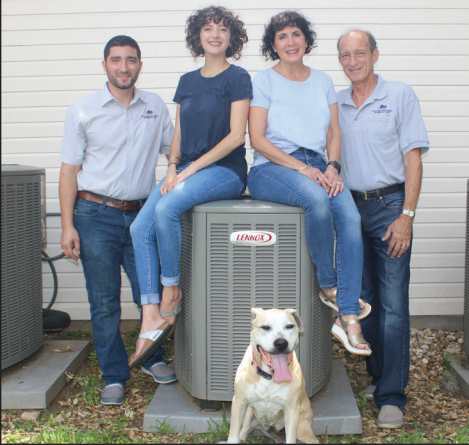
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State police to supplement APD officers amid ongoing staffing problems

By CHAD SWIATECKI
Austin Monitor

The city has entered into a partnership with the Texas Department of Public Safety to supplement the Austin Police Department amid its ongoing staffing shortage and a public perception that the city has too few police officers.

The partnership was announced Monday, March 27 a few days after Mayor Kirk Watson and Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick discussed the city's safety and police issues during a meeting a few days before. Watson, who cited APD's "unprecedented challenges in staffing levels" as the main cause for reaching out to the state, said duties such as assisting with traffic control and crashes as well as some violent crimes would allow Austin police to better handle ongoing case work and other components of their jobs.

"I also want to be sure that our police officers feel respected and have the resources they need to do their job. This is a recognition that the police department needs more staff, and we have a partner that can assist us," he said. "This partnership will improve safety and provide a runway as we recruit more officers and work to retain those currently on the force."

The state has worked with Austin police repeatedly throughout the years, including assisting with stopping and solving the rash of street takeovers by street racing groups in February. The partnership will not cost the city anything.

Police Chief Joseph Chacon said Austin police will remain the primary overseers of the city's public safety, with the state assisting when extra personnel are needed. He said data and crime analysis will be used to create the proper deployment strategy, with a substantial increase in state police presence expected in the coming days.

"We still want Austin police officers responding to the vast majority of calls that go into 911 for the things that we see all the time. What I anticipate DPS is supporting ... bringing in some teams that are going to be able to look at where are we seeing the crime occurring, addressing the crime. Generally this is going to be violent crime, but it's also going to be related to traffic-related enforcement and traffic deaths in more of a supportive role and not necessarily responding to that 911 call."

A recent poll conducted by Notley and the Austin Monitor asked more than 400 respondents about their perceptions and opinions regarding

public safety, with 33 percent responding they don't feel safe and 50 percent responding that they feel safe.

When asked about the appropriateness of police staffing levels, 53 percent of respondents said the city has too few officers. "Too many" officers received 15 percent, while 31 percent felt APD was adequately staffed.

Council Member Mackenzie Kelly said the perception around public safety – including response times for 911 calls – is one of the primary factors to consider when looking at how long the state could be used to assist the police department.

"I've spoken to police officers who don't think we'll be back to the staffing levels we need for five to seven years, and that's a conservative estimate. Our police department was decimated in 2020 when our City Council removed the 150 vacant positions and stopped the cadet academy, so it's going to take some time for the city to get where we need to be."

Kelly, who is on Council's Public Safety Committee, said she'd like to see quarterly updates about the progress being made between the two departments.

"There is something positive to be said about the city of Austin collaborating with the Texas Department of Public Safety, since it's not something we've needed with previous administrators of the city or previous iterations of City Council," Kelly said. "It's better than the alternative of waiting for more bad things to happen before the state becomes involved."

Council Member Chito Vela, who pushed the city to reach a one-year extension of the police contract in recent labor negotiations, praised the city for working with the state.

"I appreciate the help from DPS and am happy to see friendly cooperation between Austin and the state of Texas. Thank you to interim City Manager (Jesús) Garza and Mayor Watson for negotiating this agreement. I hope we can pursue an equally collaborative and productive relationship with the state in other policy areas."

Austin Monitor, an online, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) nonprofit publication that covers local government and politics in and around Austin.



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Major Improvements Completed at Emma Long Park



On Friday March 24, Council Member Alison Alter spoke at Austin's Emma Long Park and cut the ribbon on a series of improvements to the park's trails, campgrounds, bathhouse, picnic area, and volleyball courts.

In early 2017, the Parks and Recreation Department completed a vision plan and received approval for the plan from the Parks and Recreation Board. The vision plan for the metropolitan park at 1600 City Park Rd. prioritized incre-

mental improvement recommendations that support existing and future park uses and programming opportunities. The project proposes to repair aging or failing infrastructure for long-term sustainability and durability while preserving the historical and cultural features of the metropolitan park. The scope includes architectural and site improvements to the bathhouse and plaza, an extension of walking trails which now total 2,000 feet, new volleyball courts, new group camping areas, improved infrastructure, and accessibility modifi-

cations.

Other speakers at last week's ribbon cutting included Liana Kallivoka, Austin Parks and Rec assistant director, and Lindsay Sansom from Texas Parks and Wildlife.

It was especially fitting that the community gathered in this park named after Austin's first female Council member, Emma Long, during Women's History Month.

Writer's Corner: The Austin Film Festival

By IDEE KWAK

There is no magic formula for success for any writer, but there is magic that happens at Austin Film Festival (AFF) when writers of many genres gather and realize that, regardless of their preferred storytelling outlet, it all comes back to the story itself. A story is a story, for better or worse, and whether people listen to it or watch it unfold on a big screen, a small screen, or a stage, all that matters is that the audience is moved. That's every writer's job.

Here in Austin, writers can gain a lot of valuable information from many multi-talented wizards who have cracked

their writing racket and have wrestled it to the ground. And while the AFF Conference isn't until October 26-November 2, submissions to its seven competitions have begun.

March 23 was the early bird deadline for all of them, but if you have a work near completion, it's certainly not too late to enter, with final deadlines of either May 25 or July 7 depending on the category you choose.



The categories are Feature & Short Film, Produced Digital Series, Feature Screenplay, Short Screenplay & Teleplay, Scripted Digital Series, Fiction Podcast, and Playwriting.

There are multiple ways to attend the festival, and with events selling out, it's not too early to plan now. While the Producers Badge (\$650-\$725) offers complete access, other badges and individual tickets are now on sale at <https://austinfilmfestival.com/product-category/badges-and-film-passes/>

There are also volunteer positions available.

I hope to see you there in the Fall!

Watch Out for Wildlife with Their Young Ones

Public Service Announcement

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

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

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

- Coyotes breed in February and March; pups are born about 60 days later.
- During this time, male coyotes do not tolerate other canines in their territory; many conflicts between coyotes and domestic dogs result from this territorial behavior.
- An average coyote litter contains 4 or 5 pups, born in dens. In urban

environments, dens can be in storm drains, under storage drains, in holes dug in vacant lots, parks, golf courses, or any other dark, dry place.

- Coyote pups are cared for, fed, and protected by both parents. The pups mature quickly and can eat meat and move about easily by the time they are a month old.
- Nursing females and the grouping young need lots of food until late summer. As people and their pets spend more time outdoors during this time, the possibility of a coyote encounter increases.
- It is not unusual to observe a family of coyotes traveling through urbanized areas.
- If food is deliberately or inadvertently provided by people, the pups quickly learn not to fear humans and develop a dependency on easy food sources.

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



Help Keep our Wildlife Wild!

NWACA advises residents to NOT feed wildlife. Many well-intentioned individuals do so out of concern for the wildlife they are feeding. However, intentional and unintentional feeding of wildlife attracts predators to the wildlife being fed. Additionally, an association with humans and food contributes directly to habituated behaviors of animals like coyotes and feral hogs, which then become aggressive in pursuit of a food or prey attractant. Please eliminate food attractants from your yards for the safe enjoyment of our streets, parks and playgrounds for neighbors and pets.

Concordia Celebrates Nature Fest, Balcones Preserve

Concordia University's unique setting at the edge of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve stages the perfect environment for its annual Nature Fest. It wrapped up on March 31. There were various presentations open to the public including wildlife, falconry, and environmental policy. Faculty, staff, and student rangers guided daily trail hikes of varied lengths and difficulty to view birds and other wildlife.

Independent hiking is also permitted on the more accessible Tornado Trail from daylight to dusk year round. Tornado Trail offers a self-guided and safe path through the woods rather than a refined, paved trail. The 250-acre tract of the preserve is part of the 30,000 + acre Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, this unique natural space behind the campus has allowed Concordia to develop one-of-a-kind student opportunities such as the state's first collegiate Texas



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Master Naturalist chapter, a Student Ranger program, and experience-based curricula that offers a bachelor's degree in environmental science and Conservation. Concordia faculty across many disciplines has access to the preserve lands as a living laboratory that reinforces the university's conscience for and commitment toward environmental stewardship.



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“We recently completed the purchase of our new Austin home and had a wonderful experience!

Dawn took us all over Austin viewing properties in person when we were in Austin and via FaceTime since we live out of town. She was very knowledgeable about the city, including the traffic patterns, schools and communities. Dawn worked tirelessly with the negotiations and always supported us, even through challenges. She gave us great guidance in making offers and educated us throughout the process.

She is a very dedicated Realtor with excellent communication skills. We could get a hold of Dawn pretty much any time whether it was early in the morning or late in the evening. She communicated effectively and made sure to close any loops so we knew what had to be done and what was completed. Dawn was always very friendly and has a positive, professional attitude. She even created wonderful home viewing schedules from her sick bed with Covid! This was above and beyond!

She was also very brave in asking strangers, sellers and her plethora of contacts questions that we had regarding neighborhoods and houses. She also shared with us her many contacts so we could continue excellent home care. We will definitely recommend Dawn for anyone buying or selling their house.”

~Lisa and Jason Holinbeck



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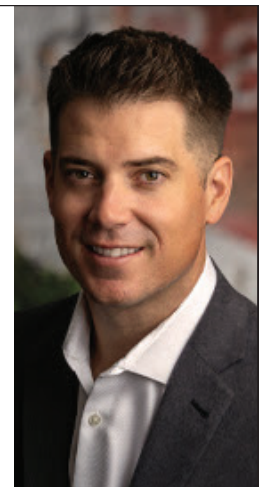
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