

# Northwest Austin News

SERVING THE NORTHWEST AUSTIN CIVIC ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY

Volume 14, Issue 7

July 2023

## Happy Independence America: 'Twas a Great 4th of July!

By NWACA BOARD

Thanks to everyone who came out for the 4th of July Parade and Freedom Fest – a good time was had by all! We appreciate everyone who participated – our parade

marshal, Councilmember Alison Alter; our opening ceremonies hosts, Tracey and Todd Fine, our patriotic singers, the Dan Girardot family; scout troops



who posted the colors and carried the parade banner; veterans who walked or rode in the parade; Mayor Kirk Watson; the Anderson High School Band; the Lawn Chair Ladies, including County Commissioner Brigid Shea and State Representative Donna Howard; Precinct 2 Constable Adan Ballesteros and many of his officers; Precinct 2 Justice of the Peace Randall Slagle, our new APD District Representative Phillip Sparkman, drivers of classic cars; and the many other marchers and riders who were part of the parade. Thanks, too, to the many who watched the parade and cheered on the participants, including State Senator Sarah Eckhardt.

A wonderful collection of floats took part in the NWACA Float Contest. We had a dozen contestants, and these were our winners:

- Grand Champion – Americas Wild Orcas
- Most Patriotic – Northwest Little League All Stars (11-year-olds)
- Best Team Spirit – Anderson Project Graduation: 24 for 24!

At the Freedom Fest, there were interesting displays, board-breaking challenges from Journey Martial Arts, and opportunities for kids to try their skills at various carnival games. Lots of good food, too, of course, from donuts to tacos to watermelon to snow cones – with water available to wash it

FOURTH OF JULY, 2



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## FOURTH OF JULY, FROM 1

all down!

None of this would work, of course, without a crew of volunteers. Many thanks to Richard Grayum for chairing this year's parade committee, and to Mick Koffend and Chris Bove who joined Joyce Statz as committee members. Connie Lundgren, Charlie Galvin, Kevin Kott, Sally Grayum, Bridget Keating, Mae Levitan, Jessica Forrest and her daughter, Dana Winer and her daughter, Mary Koffend and her daughter Heather, Julie Rawlings, Julie Waidelich, Carol Dochen, Ruven Brooks, helped plan activities and/or participated on the day of the event.

Looking forward, put these dates on your calendar for other major NWACA activities:

- Saturday, August 19, 2-4 PM – Shredding Event – paper and computer disks accepted; more details coming in the August newsletter
- Saturday, September 30, 6:30 – 8:30 PM – Neighborhood National Night Out
- Saturday, October 7, 8 AM to noon – Annual Neighborhood Garage Sales
- Saturday, October 21, 9 – 11 AM – Household recycling of batteries, electronics, Styrofoam®

This issue of the newsletter covers quite a range of topics: a history lesson about bent trees, an essay on how to think about time, guidance on avoiding some current scams, a look at the new Dell JCC fitness center and what's open to the whole community, suggestions on handling plastic water bottles, and a variety of other news and information. Enjoy!





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-Janelle & David B.

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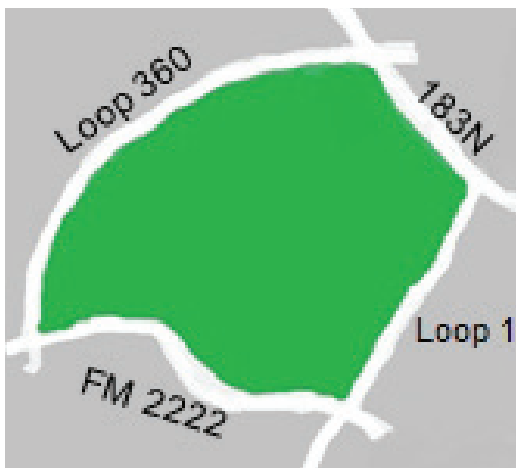
## Key Contacts

Austin Citywide Information Center	512-974-2000 or 311
Emergency, Police	911
Non-emergency (coyote sightings, compliance issues)	311
APD District Representative Officer, Phillip Sparkman	phillip.sparkman@austintexas.gov
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](http://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 NWACA Notes and the ability to join the NWACA closed Facebook group, to keep in touch with each other and with the latest news about NWACA.



## ARE YOU A NWACA MEMBER?

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

*Here are 5 great reasons to join today!*

### GREAT NEIGHBORS = GREAT NEIGHBORHOOD

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

### STAY INFORMED ABOUT ISSUES THAT AFFECT YOU

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

### GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

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

### PROTECT AND IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY

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

### SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

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

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

## 2022 – 2024 NWACA Board of Directors

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

- |                    |                  |                   |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| • Christopher Bove | • Charlie Galvin | • Connie Lundgren |
| • Ruven Brooks     | • Richard Grayum | • Teri Schock     |
| • Vicki DeWeese    | • Kevin Kott     | • Dana Winer      |
| • Carol Dochen     | • Mae Levitan    |                   |
| • Jessica Forrest  | • Ben Luckens    |                   |

Each of the Board Members can be reached at [info@nwaca.org](mailto: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](http://www.nwaca.org) to see the specific time and location. If you wish to speak at a Board meeting, please send email a week before the meeting to [info@nwaca.org](mailto: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).

## Clarification and Apology from the Editors

The Northwest Austin News was launched in January as the continuation of the monthly NWACA Newsletter, but with some additional content curated by the publishing editor. Thus, two of us – Julie Rawlings and Joyce Statz – continue to function as editors of the NWACA-provided content, while Lynette Haaland handles content from other sources that she thinks this neighborhood would be interested in reading.

The three of us are now starting to function as a team, examining the material coming to-

gether from all sources. Since we didn't do that last month, some readers were quite upset by an op-ed and an ad that appeared in the newsletter, thinking that was content placed by the NWACA editors. To be clear, it was not; these pieces were brought directly to our publishing editor, who accepted them and put them into the newsletter. Together, all three of us apologize for any confusion and hurt feelings that caused. We do not expect this to happen again.

### 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](http://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](mailto:info@nwaca.org)

## Mark Your Calendars

*These events are as planned as of June 26.  
As you consider participating in one of the events listed, please check first with the organizer.*

**July 4, 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM**

4th of July Parade along North Hills Drive  
and Freedom Fest at  
Doss Elementary School Parking Lot

**July 15, 8 AM to 11 AM**

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

**July 18, 7pm**

Parks Committee – virtual

**July 25, 5 PM**

NWACA Zoning and  
Transportation Committees – virtual

**August 15, 7pm**

Parks Committee – virtual

**August 19, 8 AM to 11 AM**

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

**August 19, 2-4 PM**

Paper and Computer Disk Shredding Event  
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Parking Lot,  
8134 Mesa Drive

**August 22, 5 PM**

NWACA Zoning and  
Transportation Committees – virtual

**August 23, 6:30 – 8:30 PM**

NWACA Board Meeting – 5280 Burger

## Events for You at the Old Quarry Library in July

By MARTHA MILLER

- Tech Time Tuesdays – Each Tuesday, from 1 to 3pm, we offer some limited assistance with technology issues. Bring your device and ask us for tips!
- Let's Talk Dirty! – On July 12th and again on July 22nd we will have programs focusing on composting. Learn about the City of Austin's curbside composting program on the 12th and more general information about composting on the 22nd.
- The Crafty Adult – On July 12th and again on July 26th, attend our adult crafting programs. On the 12th, learn how to make decoupage charger plates and on the 26th, learn how to use the popular Cricut machines!
- Fiber Friends – On July 18th, we will have our

first meeting of the Old Quarry Fiber Friends group. This is a time for anyone who is interested in yarn crafts at any level to meet up and share information. Experienced crafters can bring their current project and work with neighbors while enjoying companionship and some light refreshments. Beginners can come by to learn about our free online crafting lessons and pick up some supplies to get started. Join us for a relaxing hour with friends!

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<http://nwaca.org>




# An Introduction to the City of Austin Mobility Plans

By RUVEN BROOKS

Like any large organization, the City of Austin has a number of plans to guide their activities. The reason City employees or departments do particular things is likely because there is a plan that requires it. There are plans covering parks, housing, land use, the airport, water conservation, and myriad other topics. Here we focus on those regarding mobility, how people move around in the City of Austin.

Austin plans range in coverage from a year to twenty years. Plans in effect for longer periods of time are usually amended sometime during their life span. The typical cycle is for a city department to develop a draft plan which they present to relevant citizen boards or commissions and for which they solicit public input. Increasingly the vehicle for public input is a web site which presents the plan and allows people to comment on it. City experience has been that they get far more participation from such a web site than from public meetings. For longer term plans, the final step is for City Council to pass a resolution adopting the plan.

## Mobility Annual Plan

Unlike most other City of Austin plans, a Mobility Annual Plan, as its name suggests, covers just a one-year period. The stated purpose of the Mobility Annual Plan is to document the work being funded in the next year using the 2016, 2018, and 2020 Mobility Bonds, but it now includes any kind of mobility work regardless of funding source, including street rehabilitation projects, signals projects, speed management projects, pedestrian crossing and sidewalk projects, and bike lanes projects.

The projects shown in the Mobility Annual Plan represent the staff's best guess of what they will be able to accomplish in the next year. Sometimes, projects can't be completed and are carried forward to future plans. Also, detailed project design, including community input, only takes place when a project is funded; when a project first appears in the plan, not much detail is available. However, the Mobility Annual Plan is the best source of information for near term mobility projects.

A Mobility Annual Plan usually is opened for comment sometime in March and stays open for a two-week period. This may seem short, but items in the plan have already appeared in other, longer-term plans and there are often community input opportunities before construction actually starts. The availability for



comment is announced in the Austin Mobility News newsletter and echoed in the weekly NWACA Notes electronic newsletter.

The most recent Mobility Annual Plan can be found here: <https://data.austintexas.gov/stories/s/Mobility-Annual-Plan/2xkd-czyh/>

## Austin Strategic Mobility Plan

The Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP) is perhaps the most influential plan outside of land use plans. Among other things, it guides how the 2016, 2018 and 2020 bond money gets spent and addresses how to provide mobility in a growing Austin. The Texas State Demographer predicts rapid job growth in Travis County for at least the next thirty years. Much of that growth will be in areas like downtown and the Domain, and there is simply no place to put the new roads that would be required to keep Austin moving. Thus, the ASMP proposes increasing the percentage of the population that walks, bicycles, and uses transit or any other mode except for driving alone from 26% to

50%. While this goal may seem ambitious, it still means that the number of people driving to work in thirty years would be the same number as those that drive today.

The ASMP is intended to be a comprehensive document covering multiple aspects of mobility, such as the roadway system, the bicycle system, parking, transit, transportation demand management, emerging mobility solutions, goods movements, as well as equity and affordability. The sections are relatively independent so it's possible to read only those that are of immediate interest.

The ASMP was originally passed by City Council on April 11, 2019 and was amended for the first time on June 9, 2022. It is intended to be a living document, so another set of amendments is planned for 2023.

The ASMP can be found here: <https://www.austintexas.gov/departments/austin-strategic-mobility-plan>

## ATX Walk-Bike-Roll

This is not a plan in its own right but rather is a collection of revisions to three existing plans, the Urban Trails plan, the Bicycle plan, and the Sidewalks, Crossings and Shared Streets plan. Most of the revisions are focused in two areas: making the plans more data-driven and focusing on equity for prioritizing implementation. The bicycle plan has probably changed the most. New to the bicycle plan is a focus on making it easier to bicycle to and from transit and the introduction of neighborhood bikeways and shared streets concepts.

Adopting these revised plans also requires adopting amendments to the ASMP. The public comment period for these plans ended March 21, 2023, as announced in NWACA Notes. The draft plans and the amendments are now being revised. When the revisions are complete, City Council will hold a public hearing and then will vote on whether to adopt the final plans. In the meantime, the draft plans can be found here: <https://www.speakupaustin.org/p6648>

# Thank you, NWACA Business Members

NWACA is very grateful to our business members. They make it possible for us to have the finest 4th of July events in the City! It's because of them that we also have the Neighborhood National Night Out gathering, family-friendly events throughout the year, and a host of committees and activities that keep our neighborhood vibrant. Please join us in thanking them for their support of the NWACA community!



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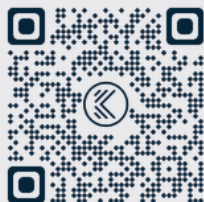
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# Constable Patrol Update, Back-up Officer Added

By CONNIE LUNDGREN

Because of the generous contributions by our members, we are fortunate to have a Constable patrol the NWACA neighborhood's portions of 78731 and 78759 twice a week. Officer Sam Lindsay has done this for several years; he says we are fortunate to live in a safe neighborhood. The most common problems we experience are car burglaries, car thefts, and porch pirates. It is an annoyance to experience any of these offenses but following the 9 p.m. rule to secure your home and car should deter criminals. (See the article about the 9:00 rule in the April 2023 newsletter.)

Officer Lindsay does not follow a set schedule, but patrols at different times, varying his route. He enjoys stopping and visiting with residents. He has recently added a back-up officer, Deputy West. Officer Lindsey is very receptive to our needs. For example, on June 26th he delivered a radar speed sign to Greystone Drive. The sign collects statistics on the number of cars that are speeding and the days and times when speeding happens the most. During previous times when Officer Lindsay monitored speeder destinations around the neighborhood, he found most offenders are residents of the neighborhood. Officer Lindsey is aware that school is out for the summer, and he is sensitive to teenagers driving fast through the neighborhood; he plans to monitor this. He promised to

return the radar speed sign when school resumes.

The Constable knows that people walk their dogs off-leash through Stillhouse Hollow Preserve at Sterling Drive. He will be monitoring that situation for us. The preserve is strictly off-limits for dogs, and people are asked to stay on the paved trail, since there are endangered species being protected there.

If you have concerns you would like addressed by the Constable, send your request to [info@nwaca.org](mailto:info@nwaca.org) and we'll pass the request along to Officers Lindsey and West.

## Unmasking Fraud: Phishing and Romance Scams

By ARGUS ALVARADO, JR.

As we reach the middle of the year and the world is returning to "normal" post pandemic, a few things stand out to me; one thing in particular: we should continue to take care of ourselves mentally, physically, and financially. While I can't help with the first two, I can help with the last by sharing some actionable information.

The Federal Trade Commission released data showing that in 2022 consumers reported losing nearly \$8.8 billion to fraud. That's an increase of more than 30% from the previous year. This month we'll talk about financial situations to be aware of, specific types of fraud, and how you can prevent it. Let's examine "Phishing" and "Romance" scams.

Phishing scams target potential victims by sending emails, utilizing website pop-ups, and text messages from a well-known source seeking to obtain personal information. A common phishing tactic is a message stating that your banking or account information has been compromised. If you get one of these messages the first thing to ask yourself is, "Do I do business with this company?" If the answer is no, don't click on any links. Instead, forward the message to the Anti-Phishing Working Group at [reportphishing@apwg.org](mailto:reportphishing@apwg.org) and continue to be vigilant. If you do utilize the company's

services, find the company phone number on their website and call them, or go to the nearest physical location.

Avoid clicking any links from potential phishing messages as they may contain malware or a harmful virus. It's also recommended to use security software with automatic updates on your computer and cell phone.

Another common scam is the romance scam. Fraudsters will take on a fake persona to gain their victim's trust and create a fantasy relationship. Their intentions are to get close to their victim quickly by appearing genuine and caring. Once they feel they've accomplished this, they'll propose meetups, or even marriage, with no intention of following through. Eventually, they'll ask for money for various reasons – from medical emergencies or legal fees, to travel and stay expenses. The fraudster's singular goal is to manipulate their victim for money. If you think you or someone you know is involved in a romance scam, follow these steps to investigate further. Start by doing a reverse image search of the person's photo to see if it has been used elsewhere. Second, search online for this person's type of job plus the word

"scammer." Lastly, never send money to anyone you have only communicated with online or by phone. If you haven't met the person after a few months, for whatever reason, you have a good reason to be suspicious.

The best protection against financial scams is awareness and education. For additional information on these and other scams, visit [www.occ.gov](http://www.occ.gov).



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# Police and sheriff’s report

Recent Sheriff’s Office and Austin Police Department reports in the Northwest Austin area include a variety of cases.	05/22/2023 9:03 PM 36XX NORTH HILLS THEFT	05/26/2023 2:51 PM 67XX LAKEWOOD THEFT	05/29/2023 12:09 AM 35XX FAR WEST BLVD PUBLIC INTOXICATION	05/30/2023 2:50 PM 67XX LAKEWOOD THEFT	06/03/2023 6:46 PM 77XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS HWY ASSAULT W/INJURY	06/25/2023 5:14 PM 35XX GREYSTONE FAMILY DISTURBANCE
	05/19/2023 2:49 PM 78XX CAPITAL OF TEX-AS HWY THEFT	05/22/2023 11:41 PM 82XX NEELY DR TERRORISTIC THREAT	05/26/2023 3:41 PM 71XX HART LN ASSAULT BY THREAT	05/29/2023 8:59 AM 88XX MOUNTAIN RIDGE SUSPICIOUS PERSON	05/30/2023 6:33 PM 71XX HART LN CRED CARD ABUSE	06/25/2023 6:51 PM SPICEWOOD SPRINGS THEFT
	05/19/2023 10:14 PM 67XX LAKEWOOD THEFT	05/24/2023 2:27 AM 72XX HART LN FAMILY DISTURBANCE	05/26/2023 10:32 PM 35XX CROWNCREST FAMILY DISTURBANCE	05/29/2023 12:45 PM 53XX OLD SPICEWOOD SPRINGS THEFT	05/31/2023 4:44 PM 88XX TALLWOOD FAMILY DISTURBANCE	06/29/2023 11:42 AM 75XX STONECLIFF SUSPICIOUS PERSON
	05/20/2023 3:51 AM 78XX MOPAC EXPY DWI	05/24/2023 8:13 AM 83XX SUMMERWOOD BURGLARY	05/27/2023 8:57 AM 86XX CIMA OAK AUTO THEFT	05/29/2023 2:00 PM 55XX BALCONES SHOPLIFTING	05/31/2023 8:23 PM 00XX SPICEWOOD SPRINGS THEFT	06/30/2023 5:22 PM 67XX LAKEWOOD THEFT
	05/20/2023 7:38 AM 86XX WILLOWICK ASSAULT BY CONTACT	05/24/2023 7:46 PM 35XX FAR WEST BLVD ASSAULT BY CONTACT	05/27/2023 3:30 PM 47XX SPICEWOOD SPRINGS THEFT	05/29/2023 5:44 PM 44XX SPICEWOOD SPRINGS FRAUD	06/01/2023 11:35 AM 71XX HART LN FAMILY DISTURBANCE	06/30/2023 10:13 PM 81XX MOPAC EXPY DATING DISTURBANCE
05/20/2023 9:03 AM 85XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS ASSAULT W/INJURY	05/24/2023 10:34 PM 00XX HANCOCK POSS CONTROLLED NARCOTIC	05/28/2023 8:14 AM 38XX MOUNT BONNELL THEFT	05/29/2023 10:46 PM 76XX CAPITAL OF TEX-AS THEFT	06/02/2023 3:35 AM 69XX HART LN FAMILY DISTURBANCE	06/20/2023 12:42 AM 00XX FAR WEST DISTURBANCE	Madison Pharis compiled this report mostly from SpotCrime at www.spotcrime.com and also from CrimeReports.
05/20/2023 11:02 AM 68XX WOOD HOLLOW BURGLARY	05/25/2023 12:28 AM 35XX NORTH HILLS FAMILY DISTURBANCE	05/28/2023 3:06 PM 35XX NORTH HILLS HARASSMENT	05/30/2023 1:10 PM 79XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS THEFT	06/02/2023 4:26 PM 35XX GREYSTONE THEFT OF AUTO PARTS	06/22/2023 9:18 PM 71XX LAKEWOOD THEFT	
05/20/2023 9:10 PM 35XX GREYSTONE HARASSMENT	05/25/2023 1:50 AM 72XX HART LN DATING DISTURBANCE	05/28/2023 10:05 PM 54XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS HWY THEFT		06/02/2023 7:43 PM 59XX COURTYARD THEFT	06/25/2023 12:00 PM 59XX COURTYARD THEFT	
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05/21/2023 9:40 PM 85XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS HWY ASSAULT W/INJURY	05/25/2023 5:14 PM 72XX HART LN FAMILY DISTURBANCE					
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05/22/2023 7:38 AM 70XX NORTHLEDGE THEFT	05/25/2023 6:00 PM 35XX FAR WEST BLVD POSS CONTROLLED NARCOTIC					
05/22/2023 9:27 AM 76XX CAPITAL OF TEXAS THEFT OF LICENSE PLATE	05/26/2023 8:45 AM 71XX WOOD HOLLOW FAMILY DISTURBANCE					
05/22/2023 10:15 AM 71XX HART LN FAMILY DISTURBANCE						
05/22/2023 6:33 PM 55XX BALCONES AGG ROBBERY	05/26/2023 10:15 AM 71XX HART LN FAMILY DISTURBANCE					
	05/26/2023 11:10 AM 35XX GREYSTONE AUTO THEFT					

## Indian Trail Marker Trees

By RICHARD DENNEY

Before the advent of major roads and street signs, trees were often used for marking trails and important locations along trails. The term “trail blazing” comes from the practice of deliberately creating visible marks, a tree blaze, on a tree’s bark to mark a path or location. Here in Texas the Spanish blazed trees with a cross to mark their caminos and its “parajes” (camping spots). Though rare, some of these old tree blazes still exist on El Camino Real de los Tejas. Native Americans, too, are thought to have used culturally modified trees to mark trails and important locations such as river fords, springs, camp sites, and other important resources.

In 2014 Members of the Texas Historic Tree Coalition (THTC), based in Dallas, made several trips to our neighborhood and surrounding areas including Camp Mabry, to evaluate several trees as possible marker trees. Included in the coalition were the authors of Comanche Marker Trees of Texas, Steve Houser, Linda Pelon, and Jimmy W. Arterberry, who formed a collaborative team with expertise in arboriculture, anthropology, and Comanche history, respectively. Jimmy Arterberry was at the time the Comanche Nation’s Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. Their book outlines ways the Comanche modified or otherwise utilized trees; here we focus on “bent trees,” thought to have been used to indicate direction of travel or mark a location on a trail. Bent trees are common in many states, though they vary in appearance. The Mountain Stewards organization maps “Indian trail trees” in the Appalachian Mountains. Here in Texas, Texas A&M’s database



of famous trees includes the “Indian Marker Tree,” a Texas live oak in Burnet, Texas. From their website: “At the better camping spots along a trail, a sapling-size tree was bent [by the Comanche] to the ground and tied down to serve as a marker. As the tree grew, it maintained this prostrate or horizontal position.”

Some are skeptical of marker trees. Bent and otherwise oddly shaped trees can result from natural causes. But there is no doubt Native Americans, having been in the Americas for at least 14,000 years, did culturally modify and otherwise use trees. Besides the well documented use of wood for living structures, leather preparation, arrow shafts,

travois etc., we also have archeological and historical evidence of the Comanche, Utes, and other Native American tribes culturally modifying trees. Fort Davis was established at a place the U.S. Army called “Painted Comanche Camp,” so named because of pictographs painted on cottonwood trees.

The question then becomes, if they did culturally modify trees, are any left? When we encounter a strangely bent tree, how do we determine if it is the result of nature versus having been culturally modified by Native Americans? The short answer is generally we can’t know with absolute certainty, so groups like THTC use a set of criteria to determine if the tree could have been culturally modified.

First, the tree has to be old enough. THTC uses techniques that do not harm a tree to evaluate the age; no tree cores. The tree must be native to Texas (not introduced by European settlement later) and of a type Native Americans are known to have utilized. Can one rule out obvious natural explanations that might account for the bent tree? A common one is an exposed root ball indicating the tree might have fallen over. Is there indication the bent tree could be a result of phototropism, the tendency for all plants to bend towards light as is common in tree motts. Is there evidence of scarring on the bark that might suggest the tree was bent as a sapling? Is there geographic / historic / archeological / ethnographic evidence or context – like a trail system -- for Native Americans having been at the site of the tree? This is the most subjective and difficult criterion to determine and typically involves some serious research. The process is complicated, but it is the type of analysis done by THTC for all the trees they record as candidate marker trees.

You can see a good candidate for a bent marker tree east of MoPac, along Shoal Creek, on the property of Signature Science, 8329 N Mopac. The tree can be viewed from their parking lot. This is private property so please act accordingly, no tree climbing! This is the location of the old O’Neill riding stable I wrote about in the March 2022 NWACA newsletter.

*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/>*

## A Message from Rep. Doggett: Go Green and Cut Cost\$

Last year, Congress took bold action to address the climate crisis our Nation faces and passed the climate law, the single largest investment in clean energy. With my support, this law also offers cost-saving measures that lower household energy costs and put money back in your pocket.

Homeowners and renters in our community may be eligible to save on average \$500 per year on energy bills while also potentially receiving thousands in support through tax credits and rebate programs to help weatherize homes, upgrade to efficient appliances, purchase electric vehicles, and more. To

learn what federal benefits are available to you and your family, visit my website at [doggett.house.gov/new-climate-bill](http://doggett.house.gov/new-climate-bill).

As always, my office is a resource for you. I hope you’ll keep me updated on your experience with these programs to transition your home to clean energy. I also encourage you to sign up for my email list and follow me on social media, @RepLloydDoggett, to stay up to date on my work for Austin families.



# Free Smoke Alarms and Home Hazards Assessment

By AUSTIN FIRE DEPARTMENT

Editor's note: While setting up a wildfire risk evaluation, one of our evaluators was asked if there was a risk assessment for fire inside a home. We were referred to this information, found at <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/free-smoke-alarms>, by a member of the Austin Fire Department.

## Free Smoke Alarms

It is the vision of the Austin Fire Department that every home and every citizen be protected by at least one smoke alarm. We seek to implement this vision through our FREE SMOKE ALARM program which

offers a free smoke alarm to any resident of Austin who is in need. The only prerequisites are that the citizen resides in a privately-owned home and has a genuine need for our assistance.

To participate in this program please call our FREE SMOKE ALARM HOTLINE at (512) 974-0299. Please leave your name, address, and phone number and your call will be returned to schedule your FREE installation.

## Free Home Hazards Assessment

You may also request a FREE HOME HAZARD ASSESSMENT. The assessment will be performed

by the Firefighters after installing the free smoke alarm. You may also opt to follow the Home Hazard Checklist (see below) and perform the assessment yourself.

## Important Numbers:

- (512) 974-0299 -- Free Smoke Alarm Hotline
- (512) 974-0290 -- Public Education Main Line

Home Hazard Checklist is here:

[https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Home\\_Hazard\\_Checklist.pdf](https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Home_Hazard_Checklist.pdf)



# It's Hot, Drink Water, But Not the Bottled Type

By MERRIESSA ANTON

Plastic water bottles create an enormous pollution problem. In 1950 the world production of plastic was 2 million tons; today annual production has increased 230 times. Americans purchase about fifty billion disposable water bottles and send more than 38 billion of them to landfills every year. It is reported that 91% of all plastic is not recycled. Our oceans, rivers and lakes all contain discarded water bottles, which cause problems for our environment as well as for aquatic animals.

Plastic water bottles are manufactured from chemicals

produced from fossil fuel. It takes three times as much water to make a water bottle than to fill it. It also takes more energy to manufacture a plastic bottle than it does to produce tap water. Once the plastic bottle is thrown away, it takes hundreds of years to decompose; as it does, toxins leach into the environment, which can cause health issues.

It's time to ditch plastic water bottles. We need to drink water, but tap water is just fine. You might want a water filter attached to the water faucet. Some people purchase a pitcher that filters water and is kept in the refrigerator. Use a reusable water bottle. Stainless steel bottles keep your water much colder than plastic bottles do.

If you see others using disposable plastic water bottles, encourage them to change their behavior by being a positive influence. Take your reusable water bottle when you go out and serve guests in your home water from your faucet or filtered water system. At the very least, purchase water in environmentally friendly packaging.

By the way, be sure to replace the plastic cap before putting bottles in the recycling bin. It is currently recommended that you place loose bottle caps in the trash.



I want to spotlight an organization that is near and dear to my heart. We are **[Re]building Together Austin**. Our mission is to [re]pair homes, [re]vitalize communities and [re]build lives. Rebuilding Together Austin is proud to be

a partner in the solution to providing safe homes and communities. Thank you to all of our [Re]Builders for your generous support and we look forward to a healthy, impactful year ahead!

**This year we celebrate our 10 year anniversary of serving Austin Area homeowners.** Contact me if you'd like to become a [Re]Builder too.

**-Albert Allen - Board President Rebuilding Together Austin**

[www.rebuildingtogetheraustin.org](http://www.rebuildingtogetheraustin.org)

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# NWACA Board of Directors Member Interview: Kevin Kott

By DAVID LEDDERMAN

Hi Folks! You may not know it, but I have a special passion for interviewing the man on the street, not just celebrities. Today I am in Austin, Texas, driving about, fishing for marks. I need to interview someone for a local newsletter but I'm getting a bit thirsty. Here's an interesting restaurant: Azul Tequila. The bar looks mostly empty except for a gray-haired guy in a raunchy Hawaiian Aloha shirt. I hate these Texans thinking they can imitate Californians!

David: Hey fella, mind if I sit next to you? You probably recognize me.

Kevin: *Not really. But that's some beard you have! Go ahead, have a seat.*

David: Oh, come on! Don't you ever watch TV? Or is your memory that far gone?

Kevin: *I mostly watch late night comedy shows. I used to especially like Johnny Carson and Jay Leno, but recently my favorite is Jimmy Kimmel.*

David: OK, you have surely lost your mind if you can't remember me! Actually, you might be a good candidate for an interview. So, tell me your story.

Kevin: *Well, I'm a native Texan, but I've lived several lifetimes in the cold wastelands of Michigan where I worked in the automotive industry. I was an engineer, then a manager, then a director, then a president. I retired a couple years back and returned to my homeland, hot, central Texas. I now live just a mile or so from this bar.*

David: So, you must feel responsible for the decline of the American auto industry. I suppose that you weren't qualified to do anything other than auto mechanics?

Kevin: *I worked in the nuclear research industry for a half dozen years, and 13 years in automotive mechatronic R&D, you know, the intersection of computer, mechanical, and electrical engineering – like engine and transmission control unit development.*

David: Of course, I know all about that stuff! Let's

switch circuits. Since you moved from Michigan to Austin, are you the starving musician that you appear to be?

Kevin: *I'm not a decent musician, but I do love music.*

David: Judging your age, you must remember some old timer music. Who are the earliest musicians that you remember?

Kevin: *Well, the first live musical act I saw was Billy J. Kramer and the Dakotas, who performed in a small San Antonio auditorium – probably around 1962 or 63. At the time I was taken aback by his longish hair and untucked shirt. I was initially turned off by the outlandish and irreverent British Invasion acts like the Beatles, The Stones, and the Kinks. A year or so later, some friends and I visited the Eastwood Country Club in San Antonio, a somewhat integrated Black club, to see Curley Mays, a replacement for Guitar Slim, play electric guitar behind his back and with his tongue. I was transformed to loving the guitar and blues and began to appreciate the fringe genres of rock, including the Brits, R&B, and what we eventually called "underground rock."*

David: So, you're what they call a "head-banger"?

Kevin: *No, I really like a variety of music. In late 1963, I heard Van Cliburn play Rachmaninoff at a BBQ in Stonewall, Texas, put on by president LBJ. It impressed me immensely and I developed an appreciation for classical music.*

David: So do you spend most of your time in bars like this, reminiscing about the "good old days"?

Kevin: *Lately, I spend a good bit of time playing pickleball, which has taken the country by storm. I had been playing tennis off and on since I learned the game at 27. But a North-*

*west Hills neighbor convinced me to try pickleball. I'm now hooked and try to play 2-3 times per week. My wife and I also have 2 beautiful dogs that we love. I try to keep them (and myself) in shape with frequent two-to-three-mile walks through the hilly neighborhood. We also enjoy bicycling vacations.*

David: Other than enjoying life, what do you contribute to society?

Kevin: *Since I retired a few years ago, I've searched for opportunities to give back. I recently joined the board of NWACA, which strives to keep residents apprised of happenings that may affect their neighborhood and quality of life. I have been working on NWACA's Crime and Safety Committee, focusing attention on Neighborhood Watch programs. This activity helps protect neighborhoods by increasing watchfulness and neighbor-to-neighbor communication.*

David: What do you like about living in Austin?

Kevin: *Of course, I love the live music scene, entertainment venues, and great restaurants. My neighbors are the most friendly and considerate of those in the many places I've lived. I love the casual atmosphere and the educated residents.*

David: Now, after getting to know me through this interview, are you starting to remember who I am?

Kevin: *I don't exactly remember you, but you seem to be an OK guy, if a bit self-indulged.*

Note: Thanks to "David Ledderman" for conducting this interview in Kevin's absence. The NWACA web page <https://nwaca.org/board-of-directors/> contains a bio of Kevin Kott and those of other board members.



# MARKET UPDATE

## NORTHWEST HILLS AND WESTOVER HILLS



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SALES VOLUME



\$449  
MEDIAN LIST PRICE/SF



\$489  
MEDIAN SALE PRICE/SF



\$1,199,500  
MEDIAN LIST PRICE



8  
MEDIAN DAYS ON MARKET



25  
CLOSED SALES



SOURCE: ABOR MLS INCLUDING DATA FROM JUNE 1-30, 2023 FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOMES. BASED ON NWACA BOUNDARIES  
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-D. McKeand

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# Spotlight: Dell Jewish Community Center

By JANICE GREEN



The renovations and program expansion at the Dell Jewish Community Center (JCC) are so vast that you should add two to-dos to your list: explore their in-depth website ([shalomaustin.org](http://shalomaustin.org)) and tour their facilities. You will discover what this beautiful place offers for the health and well-being of Northwest Austin residents and how it creates and supports the meaning of “inclusive community.”

The Dell JCC is one of four parts of the nonprofit umbrella organization, Shalom Austin, housed on the 40-acre Dell Jewish Community Campus. It is not a members-only club. Many of the classes, programs and events are available for non-members. Plus, individual and family membership dues are affordable.

While I roamed the architecturally stunning buildings and grounds, at times I felt like I had sneaked into a resort or spa or stumbled upon an oasis. Light is captured through windows everywhere, presenting views of Austin’s skyline, the

native landscape, the playscapes which non-members can enjoy, the aquatic features (e.g., heated lap pool and children’s activity pool) and poolside snack bar; athletic facilities for field games, tennis, and pickleball; track, meditation garden, and walking trails.

Check out the floor of TechnoGym cardio equipment. There is another floor devoted to exercise and strength equipment. Other amenities include a full-size double gymnasium with adult basketball leagues, sauna and steam rooms, a serene Mind/Body Studio, new group exercise rooms, and even a self-serve cafe and coffee bar. Sprinkled throughout are airy meeting rooms of various sizes available for rental, by the hour or day, for families, corporate and community organizations, and even those hosting larger fundraisers/galas.

There are more than 50 weekly classes, including gymnastics with Kim’s Gym; sports and organized summer camps (both available for non-members), preschool from infants to pre-K; and after-school pick-up from neighborhood schools. The JCC, through its partnership with Ballet Austin, provides classes for those 18-months to seven years –

soon to be extended to include a Pilates Reformer Studio and adult dance workshops. Then there are the book/literary series, the Austin Jewish Film Festival, special speaker events, art exhibits, and social/educational events for young adults, many of which are open to the entire community.

For the over-60 crowd, here are a few of the many options to work into your schedule: a reader’s theater, weekly “Community & Coffee” and “News & Schmooze” gatherings, and a “Flex Your Brain” class. All these programs are open to the community.

Janet S. Elam, Chief Operating Officer, graciously guided my tour and answered a multitude of questions. We talked about the meanings of “community” and how it is created, how it is supportive and supported, and how the Dell JCC can serve as an antidote during times our society feels so divided, fractured, and isolating. Barriers tend to dissolve when people of all ages take the opportunity to find common threads that lead them to share space and discover common-

alities. I couldn’t help but notice all the spaces that invited conversations even among strangers and non-members – from outdoor seating areas to the indoor expansive and comfy Living Room near the main entrance.

We in Northwest Austin are fortunate to have such a wellspring for building a viable community. ‘Tis time to take advantage of it.

CONTACT: To sign up for a tour or for more information, contact [membership@shalomaustin.org](mailto:membership@shalomaustin.org); (512) 735-8000; 7300 Hart Lane; [www.shalomaustin.org](http://www.shalomaustin.org).



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"My husband and I worked with Dawn Lanier in the purchase of our new home. Dawn is very easy to talk to and extremely trustworthy.

Dawn was there from the very beginning of our search. We knew we wanted to be outside of Austin, but had no idea of which area we would prefer, so she helped us narrow our focus. Throughout our search, Dawn was always available by phone or text and took us to see several homes. She had an upbeat attitude when showing us homes and didn't have a negative word to say about the houses unless we said something first or asked for her opinion.

She has contractors she called when we had a question about what something might realistically cost. For instance, we were looking at a house in our desired neighborhood that needed a complete remodel. Dawn called a general contractor she knew, he gave her a ballpark figure, and we were able to see that the cost to remodel the home priced it way out of the market.

Dawn kept an eye on the particular neighborhood we decided on and she sent us a listing for the house we wound up buying. We went to see the house and decided to make an offer. She worked with us and the seller's agent enabling us to get our offer accepted before a planned open house for the property was held. Dawn kept us apprised of what needed to be done and by when during both the Option Period and the closing of the house. She protected our interests by having us sign a termination document in case it was needed. While we were in the Option Period of our contract, Dawn recommended an inspector, a plumber and a HVAC company that we utilized to help us make a sound decision about the house. Our home was built in 1980 and is in need of some remodeling. Dawn gave us the names of two general contractors to compare costs.

I enjoyed working with Dawn and would definitely be willing to work with her again and recommend her to friends." ~Linda J.



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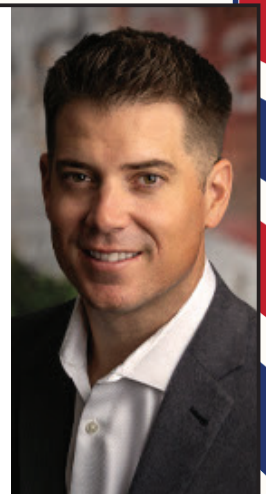
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