

July



Aug

2013

Walnut Creek Neighborhood News

Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association

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The Second Fourth: Glorious!

What can you say? The weather, the “grownups”, the kids, the food, and – to kick it all off – The Parade: All Glorious!

The crowd started gathering – many carrying amazing dishes and desserts - after 10:00 a.m., when the temperature was still just touching 80 degrees F. with an occasional light breeze. After much greeting, confabulation and milling about smartly, the leaders started at about 10:55, with noisemakers going, heading up the hill from the Klump’s house at 11813 Indianhead. Eventually the whole bunch was moving along, with neighbors watching and taking pictures from both sides of the street, up to Caddo, then down to Oakwood, then north on Oakwood to the intersection with Indianhead and back up to the starting point, considerably more spread out than at the start. The Second Annual Walnut Creek Neighborhood Fourth of July Parade – around what is now widely identified as “The



Waiting for the bell...

Peninsula” – was over in not much more than twenty minutes. Participants ranged in age from under two to well over seventy, with those staying to guard the food adding perhaps ten years to this range. More than seventy folks participated in one way or another, with



The youngest participant



And they’re off! Topping the hill on Indianhead on the way to Caddo.

another fifteen or twenty watching and cheering along the way (and almost no cars “participating” with us).

Plan to join the fun next year, especially if you live outside the Peninsula area. Those residents participated in big numbers, but we “foreigners” not so much. Let’s make this a neighborhood-wide tradition for all ages. We can block off the street if necessary, so let’s make it necessary!

SPJST Aids St. Mark Food Pantry

As part of Join Hands Day, a national event sponsored by America's Fraternal Societies in cooperation with the America Fraternal Alliance, Austin SPJST Lodge 155 conducted a food drive to benefit the food pantry (called the Love Box) at St. Mark United Methodist Church. The membership of the lodge voted to contribute money for the pantry, and the amount was then matched by District Two (Director Jesse Pospisil; 155 is a member of this district). This was the second drive for St. Mark by Lodge 155. The first was conducted in 2011 (see the 2011 May-June issue 05_11 WCNA online.pdf under WCNA Newsletter 2011 at

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wcnanews/files/>



President Joe Motl presenting checks from Austin SPJST Lodge 155 to Pastor Cindy Layton, St. Mark UMC

Kickoff NXNA Garden Tour a Success
Money raised for garden projects at schools

Cooler spring temperatures and rains meant that visitors for the first-ever North-by-North-Austin Garden Tour were met with abundant greenery and lushness.

From a Keep Austin Weird garden made completely from recycled materials, to a garden featuring rare succulents, to a class Texas woodland-under-the-oaks garden right here in Walnut Creek, the gardens drew rave reviews and visitors from all over town.

One of the great things about the tour is that it features “real” gardens by “real” people—so visitors can see what they can actually accomplish in their own gardens, on lots and with homes like their own homes.

“It’s a way to see what other people have done, and to get new ideas for your own garden,” says garden host Susie Milam. “You don’t have to do it all at once. You can work on it in pieces. It may take a few years, but that’s OK!”



*A young garden tour visitor in the sunshine by a loquat tree
 Photo © 2013 alamosbasement. Some rights reserved.*

Two gardens from the Walnut Creek neighborhood were featured: the Clark garden on Whitewing, and the Breuer/Mateer garden on Oakbrook.

Get involved, stay involved

If you’re interested in having your garden on the 2014 tour, send an email to info@lovenorthaustin.com



A giant thistle in a Gracywoods garden on the NXNA Tour.

You can also continue to make donations at lovenorthaustin.com – click on the “Register Now” button.

Money raised will go toward pilot gardening projects at Lanier High School, Dobie Middle School and Woolridge Elementary School. The “Love Your School Day” workday at the schools will be Saturday, November 2, 2013 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

A planning meeting for “Love your School Day,” when we’ll plan exactly what will be done at each school, is set for:

Thursday, July 30
 6:30 p.m.
 North Austin YMCA at Rundberg

If you want to help plan the projects, please come to the planning meeting.

RSVP for the workday at:
Lovenorthaustin.eventbrite.com

Section 2 You and Your Home: Value, Beauty, Safety, Security, Health

Walnut Creek Trail Extension Coming Our Way!**Phase 2 will replace most of the current neighborhood trail**

By Sara Breuer

(This article contains contributions from the Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association Board and generally reflects the opinions of same. Materials referenced include an email briefing by the City staff, articles in the Austin American-Statesman, Community Impact and KVUE, and the City of Austin project website - <http://austintexas.gov/article/walnut-creek-trail-system>)

The City of Austin's Public Works department is moving forward with the construction of a large bicycle and pedestrian trail that, when complete, will replace several neighborhood trails, including the Walnut Bluffs Trailhead that the Walnut Creek neighbors have created and maintained for a number of years. The project intends to produce pathways that nearly encircle Austin, and will connect our trail to a segment passing through Walnut Creek Metropolitan Park via a passageway under the bridge over Walnut Creek on North Lamar.

The Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association is attempting to discover exactly what is planned for the neighborhood and to become part of the review process. For more information about what WCNA plans are or to get involved in participating in the planning and implementation of the trail, please contact your board members.

The big picture

The southern portion of the trail, 7.3 miles in length from Govalle Park to Johnny Morris Road south of Highway 290, is about 25% complete. It is being paid for with around \$8 million in TXDOT funds, \$2 million from PARD for design, and possibly other sources. A portion of this trail, from Jain Lane to Delwau Lane, was scheduled to be available for public use by the end of June 2013. At press time, the City has not responded to an inquiry as to whether it is actually now open.

The northern portion of the trail is partially funded by a \$1.9 million federal grant the City was awarded in 2002.

City funding to match the grant funds became available in 2009. Since then the project has had several delays, including the dismissal of design firm Larson, Burns & Smith, as well as the contractor, Westar Construction, after spending more than a million dollars with the firms. Besides money already spent on plans that never came to fruition, the City is spending \$5.9 million with Muniz Concrete & Contracting to construct the trail.

Phase 1 of the northern portion of the trail has been beset by myriad delays and problems, more than a decade after City Council approved an initial contract to design and build it, but is now currently under construction and scheduled for completion in either spring 2014 or summer 2014, depending on which documents you read. That phase starts at Balcones District Park near Amherst Drive and ends at Walnut Creek Metropolitan Park. It will be 3.2 miles long, incorporate nine creek crossings and include a 10-foot-wide concrete trail with a two-foot-wide grass shoulder on either side. Four new trailheads with additional parking will also be constructed.

Mixed reaction to the trail

While many are supportive of the trail conceptually, the actual route and implementation is drawing concern from neighbors who are close to the planned trail expansion. This northern portion of the trail will run through the Walnut Crossing Neighborhood Association boundaries and Kernan Hornbrug, president of the association, expressed his organization's objections in a February 1, 2013 story in the Austin American-Statesman. The trail will be elevated at times to as high as 19 feet, which is above the treeline and surrounding houses. "They said they needed to get going (on the project) to hang onto the stimulus money, and we didn't try to hold up the plans. They've promised they'll make changes as they go. It's basically, 'trust me.'"



A portion of the southern trail under construction.

*Photo © City of Austin Public Works
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Trail plans for our neighborhood

Phase 2 of the northern portion of the trail extension is the phase that will have an impact on our neighborhood and will traverse a portion of the trail that we have created along Walnut Creek. The planned trail will be 1.8 miles long with four creek crossings and two trailheads and go from the Walnut Creek Metropolitan Park along Walnut Creek to I-35 near Yager Lane (ending at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality campus). This trail also is paved, 10-foot wide with 2-foot shoulders on each side, and will cross Walnut Creek near the (trailhead at) Walnut Bluffs trailhead. Preliminary engineering work is supposed to be complete this summer.

In February 2013, the Austin American-Statesman reported that Project Manager Richard Duane said that construction likely will not start for another two years. Nevertheless, neighbors who use the trail may have noticed surveying flags appearing along the trail for the last several months. The plans are already quite far along, and we as neighbors are making efforts to be included in final decisions as key stakeholders. In April 2013, Project Manager Richard Duane led a “walk-around” the proposed trail. Dorsey Twidwell and Gary Brewer from our neighborhood participated. At that time Dorsey and Gary were told that additional meetings would be held for neighbors to express issues and concerns. During this meeting, one engineering consultant stated that construction could begin within 12 to 18 months, considerably sooner than the schedule given above.

In addition to the main trail, there is a planned “entrance node” that includes (plans for) a 12-car paved parking lot in the area currently at the wooded entrance to the trailhead. This is the area where the entry fence, entrance sign, and the bench currently sit. Plans for a neighborhood playscape have been centered around this area.

Neighborhood Concerns

After looking at these proposed plans, neighbors nearest the trail have raised several concerns. One potential issue is that current plans show the trail traversing Walnut Creek very close (within 15-20 feet) of at least one home along the bluff overlooking the creek. Additionally, the planned parking lot is raising concerns about traffic, quality of life, and potential public safety issues. There are no plans for park police presence on the trail, and the secluded nature of the parking area is of concern to nearby neighbors who already contend with drug transactions and use - as well as other crimes - at the trailhead, despite vehicles of the offenders currently being highly visible along the street.

Get involved

We need people to get involved in finding out more and helping direct important decisions about the final trail plans. The City of Austin project website states that City staff members have met with stakeholders to review the proposed alignment and determine the best path to minimize tree conflicts. However, WCNA has not had an opportunity to fully express our concerns. Since the April meeting, multiple emails have been sent to the Project Manager requesting a “general stakeholder meeting with neighbors from the Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association”. Instead, Mr. Duane’s latest response states, “Your concerns have been noted and when the preliminary alignment is complete, additional comment will be solicited.” Clearly the interests of us residents need to be communicated to the planners before plans get “hardened”. The board is continuing to try to make this contact; Please express your opinion or questions to the board and/or through the key contacts listed below:

City of Austin Project Manager
Richard Duane
(512) 974-7730
Richard.duane@austintexas.gov

Public Information Officer
Carolyn Perez
Carolyn.perez@austintexas.gov
(512) 974-7139

Parks and Recreation
Robert Brennes
512-974-9472

City of Austin Construction Inspector
Kenneth Johnson
(512) 974-1568

Public Works Supervisor
Dennis Crabill
512-974-7232

Texas Department of
Transportation
Tracy Cooper
512-832-7380

In addition to the trail project, the city has given the neighborhood notice of intent to trim or remove trees in the easement under/near the high lines passing through Walnut Bluffs Trailhead. The required clearance is quite large, so possibly could affect trees near the few homes located close to this easement. To quote:

“If you or any of your neighbors have any questions about the proposed tree work or any tree replacements for individual properties affected, you may contact me at (512) 322-6931(office), or Roy Henning, Line Clearance Superintendent at (512) 322-6930 (office). Thank you for your cooperation.”

Signed Carl Schattenberg, CF; Utility Forester – Transmission; Austin Energy

Seems pretty obvious why a new town in Texas would have “Sun” in its name...

- Sun City, Texas 78628
- Sunrise, Texas 76661
- Sunset, Texas 76270
- Sundown, Texas 79372
- Sunray, Texas 79086
- Sunny Side, Texas 77423

Some anniversaries this year that some of us may remember some of:

- 150 Gettysburg
- 130 U. T. opens its doors in Austin
- 110 Crayola is born
- 100 Hellman’s Mayo established
- 90 “Hollywood Sign” dedicated in LA
- 50 Assassination of Kennedy
- 40 Willie’s first 4th of July Picnic

Many great dishes were brought to the Fourth of July Parade and Potluck. A red & white one is included here: Guess there still aren’t any blue vegetables (besides (sorta) eggplant in the skin?).

Basil Tomato Salad Recipe

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons EACH white wine vinegar and lemon juice
- 3 Tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- 1 clove garlic finely minced
- 1/2 teaspoon salt & 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 3 cups cooked rice, cooled
- 2 - 3 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 1 medium cucumber, seeded and chopped - OPTIONAL
- 1 small red onion, chopped

Directions:

• In a small bowl: whisk together oil, vinegar/lemon juice, chopped basil, minced garlic, salt and pepper. Add rice, tomatoes, and onion; toss. Serve chilled. Yield: 6 servings.

Section 3

City-County News and Events

Old Fire Station to Move From Neighborhood

The fire station opposite us on Lamar (11606) will move to a place east of 183 at 290, according to plans described in AAS on 1 July. A \$25,000 grant from LCRA will expedite plans. In “the old days” this was our volunteer fire station, and routinely beat Austin fire trucks to any fire within miles of here. While we oldtimers will be sad to see it go, it seems it’s been made redundant by the fire station beside McBee Elementary on Braker.

Travis County Burn Ban Reinstated

The county burn ban that was lifted on 3 April has been reinstated through at least 31 July. To check current restrictions on burning in the county see: http://www.co.travis.tx.us/fire_marshal/news/in_the_news.asp

Watering Schedules in Austin

Lake Travis and Buchanan remain at very low levels, even at the end of the “rainy season”. Thus we remain under Stage 2 restrictions for the foreseeable future. For residences this means no use of sprinklers between 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., and only on one day each week: Houses with even-numbered addresses on Sundays and odd-numbered addresses on Saturdays. Hand and drip watering can still be done anytime.

<http://austintexas.gov/departments/stage-2-watering-restrictions>

STAGE 2 WATER RESTRICTIONS

RESIDENTIAL		COMMERCIAL		PUBLIC SCHOOLS	
Hose-End Sprinklers BEFORE 10 AM or AFTER 7 PM	Automatic Irrigation BEFORE 5 AM or AFTER 7 PM	Hose-End Sprinklers BEFORE 10 AM or AFTER 7 PM	Automatic Irrigation BEFORE 5 AM or AFTER 7 PM	Hose-End Sprinklers BEFORE 10 AM or AFTER 7 PM	Automatic Irrigation BEFORE 5 AM or AFTER 7 PM
Even Address Sunday	Even Address Thursday	Even Address Tuesday		Monday	
Odd Address Saturday	Odd Address Wednesday	Odd Address Friday			

**One Day Per Week Watering
REPORT VIOLATIONS TO 3-1-1**

William Ader: How my wife and I communicate: "You know that guy who looks like that other guy in that show we used to like? He died."

If you agree to the conditions, you can get an \$85 rebate for participating in a new smart thermostat program that enables customers to control their air conditioning and heating anytime with their smart phones or online no matter where they are. More information at <http://goo.gl/YxnNZ>

From NACN newsletter: You can help guide future air quality policy in Central Texas AND the survey enters you to win a 20" Homelite Cordless Electric Lawnmower valued at \$299: mzinsights.air.sgizmo.com/s3

If you're web-savvy, you can manage payment of any Austin utility through a single portal at goo.gl/UVHTj

Large Brush and Bulk Collection Schedules: <http://austintexas.gov/department/residential-curbside-collection-schedule>

Neighbor-generated file of criminal activity in the neighborhood: <http://goo.gl/N8H4i>

Section 4

Events and Contact List

Don't Forget!

Next Bulk Collection: Week of August 26

Next Large Brush Collection: Week of September 16

Interested in helping patrol the neighborhood during the day? Contact Robert, our President (See all board members contact information below right).

Into fiber arts? Join the group at

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WCNAFiberGuild/?yguid=248172602>

How about fiber optics? Check out Google Gigabit Fiber: <https://fiber.google.com/cities/austin/>

Dues can now be paid via PayPal: <http://goo.gl/5iQIk>

WCNA Board Meetings are generally held on the first Wednesday of each month at Santorini Cafe. Everyone is welcome to attend, but check with a WCNA board member (see below) to verify that the date -and/or time - hasn't changed.

City/County Contacts:

Mayor Lee Leffingwell, 974-2250
lee.leffingwell@ci.austin.tx.us

Mike Martinez, 974-2264
mike.martinez@ci.austin.tx.us

Laura Morrison, 974-2260
laura.morrison@ci.austin.tx.us

Sheryl Cole, 974-2255
Sheryl.cole@ci.austin.tx.us

Bill Spelman, 974-2258
william.spelman@ci.austin.tx.us

Chris Riley, 974-2256
chris.riley@ci.austin.tx.us

Kathie Tovo, 512-974-2255
Kathie.Tovo@ci.austin.tx.us

County Commissioner,
Sarah Eckhardt, 854-9222
Sarah.Eckhardt@co.travis.tx.us

EMERGENCY: Police, Fire, EMS, Animal Control: 911

City of Austin: All services, codes & code violations, animal reports, etc:
Phone: 311 Online: <http://austin-plcsrprodewi.motorolasolutions.com/Home.mvc/Index>

APD Burglary Unit
<http://www.facebook.com/APDBU>

Report abandoned/suspicious vehicles: 512 974-8119

Angela Johnson, APD District Rep. (512) 974-5043
angelajohnson@austintexas.gov

Sam Lindsey, County Constable (512) 854-4515
sam.lindsey@co.travis.tx.us

O'Shay Garden, County Constable (512) 854-9697
oshay.garden@co.travis.tx.us

WCNA Board of Directors and Officers

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339-0229 robertl@meadows.com

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832-0404 tjones72@austin.rr.com

Pat Pitt Treasurer
837-6620 s.pitt@earthlink.net

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947-9077 bradwilcox@live.com

Dorsey and Bunnie Twidwell
339-0412 bunnie@mail.utexas.edu

Tasha Bowser
731-6863 Bowser.Tasha@gmail.com



About WCNA and the newsletter

WCNA membership is open to any resident (owner or renter) or property owner within the boundaries, including perimeters, of the association.

Membership dues are \$15 per household for a calendar year. Send a check to: WCNA ; PO Box 82746; Austin, TX 78708-2746

Dues notices and payment envelopes are included in the Nov/Dec and Jan/Feb newsletters each year.

Payment also may be made using PayPal: See page 6 (Section 4)

WCN News is sent to all members and every household within the boundaries represented by the Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association:

Braker Lane, North Lamar, I-35, and Walnut Creek.

To contribute to the newsletter, send contributions via email to wcn.contact@gmail.com or contact a board member.

The opinions expressed in articles printed in this newsletter are the explicit opinions of the writer(s) and are not to be implied as the opinions of either the editor or the Board of Directors of the Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association, Inc.

**Fourth of July on the Peninsula in Walnut Creek Neighborhood,
waiting for the parade to start.**

