

May



June

2014

Walnut Creek Neighborhood News

Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association

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Trees and Chocolates at the WCNA Annual Meeting

President Robert Meadows called to order a good turnout for the meeting at St. Mark UMC, where new board members Sharon Porter and Christian Ninaud were elected and current board members Dorsey & Bunnie Twidwell and Jean Ramsey were re-elected. On a poignant note, a special City of Austin Lifetime Service Award to Sandy Tobias, who died last year in September, was presented by Dorsey Twidwell to her husband Wayne Tobias. Wayne and Sandy were prime movers for WCNA for more than 10 years (with Wayne as our president for most of that time) and were recognized for their service at the annual meeting in 2011.

We were then treated to an educational and entertaining discourse on the trees of Austin and their exalted position with the city (well, at least to most of the city government). Regardless of how much you knew or thought you knew, it is likely that you learned something new from City Arborist Michael Embesi, a 15-year veteran arborist, 10 with Austin. For example, a city Tree Benefit Calculator will tell you the approximate monetary value of any of your large trees.

Activities of the board were then summarized, including current issues needing action, especially zoning on Lamar. Meanwhile, a 100-piece Whitman's Chocolate Sampler from Alison Louise Brown added acclaimed zing to the proceedings.

Do you know what comes after June? The 4th!

Announcing: The Third Annual Walnut Creek Neighborhood Independence Day Parade!

Kay and Joel Klumpp once again will be graciously hosting the activities. The plan – as in previous years – is to meet with trappings around 10:00 on the morning of Friday the 4th at the Klumpps home at 11813 Indianhead.



At a signal typically about 11:00 a.m., participants will begin the parade around “the peninsula” formed by Indianhead, Caddo and Oakwood, ending – usually within 30 minutes – back at the Klumpps front yard for a pot-luck picnic lunch and meet/greet/schmooze fest with our neighbors. (Btw, while nothing says “Independence” like hotdogs and watermelon, the spread is always amazing!) All ages and sizes are welcome, whether you want to parade or not (the heat and elevation change can be hard on some of us, and bystanders along the route to cheer the marchers are especially welcome!)

If you would like to help in any way, contact Kay at kayklumpp@yahoo.com

Canopy Comments by Sharon Porter

We anticipate that Chris Dolan, City of Austin arborist for oak wilt mapping, will survey our neighborhood by the end of May after the leaf exchange when new leaves have replaced the ones that have fallen from the trees and a valid assessment can be made. Findings, recommendations, and updates will be reported through neighborhood media and our Walnut Creek Neighborhood News.

Social media seems to be the most efficient way to keep neighbors informed, and we seem to have most of the neighbors on one or more of the three: Nextdoor, Facebook group, or Yahoo group. All groups are restricted to residents of the neighborhood, and membership requires residence at an address in the neighborhood.

If you are not represented on one of these social media, you will not receive real time reports of the survey.

If you are in one of these households, and want to join one of these social media, contact Robert Meadows, President, Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association, telephone 512-339-0229, email robertl@meadows.com for further information.

If you prefer to not belong to neighborhood social media, but do want information about our oak wilt survey, be sure to look for the report in the next issue of this newsletter.

The more neighbors who treat vulnerable trees as recommended, the more successful the neighborhood will be in controlling oak wilt and protecting our live oaks.

SHADY OAKS GARDEN CLUB

Spring Most Attractive Yard Awards

First Place (pictured): 11906 Whitewing
Wild flowers, roses, other blooming plants in numerous pots, raised rock beds around a live oak and a mountain laurel take advantage of the morning sun under dense shade.

Honorable Mention: 11508 Whitewing
Large Live Oaks shading English Ivy as a ground cover. A mixture of yellow Columbine, red Amaryllis and various wild flowers across the front. At the back and side of the ivy are purple Iris, red Amaryllis, wild flowers, shrubs, a large pink rose by the driveway.

Honorable Mention: 11904 Oakbrook
An example of attractive simplicity. A young Palo Verde (Jerusalem Thorn) and a variety of other plants across the yard make a striking view with the white house trimmed in brown as a background.



Spring 2014 Most Attractive Yard - 11906 Whitewing

Honorable Mention: 102 E. Covington

A large planting of tall Shasta Daisies, roses and dwarf Crepe Myrtle make a colorful display of this front yard.

Travis County Appraisal Protest: A Must This Year

By Jill Leberknight, Walnut Creek Real Estate Expert

It is County Appraisal Season again. Walnut Creek property appraisals have arrived or will in May, and if you haven't seen them yet you should be prepared for significantly larger numbers. With a 36% increase in 2013 WC home prices and a 15.7% increase so far this year, we are certainly facing some multi-year appraisal hikes that – if applied without change to our tax assessments - likely would exceed the 10% maximum annual tax increase the county can assign for homesteads.

I am encouraging everyone to protest this year & every year as we work our way through this growth spurt. To that end, I will hold two “protest workshops” in May at Santorini's Café to make sure everyone has the support & information they need before the protest request deadline on midnight of 31 May. I will have area stats, tips and tactics to prepare your protest, along with details on changes made at TCAD that are affecting how home owners need to protest their appraisal. In the past, these workshops have also been a great time to gather with folks – and especially neighbors - who have successfully navigated this process.

The initial meetings will concentrate on generating the information to maximize the probability of establishing an appropriate protest. Throughout the summer I will then arrange to be at Santorini's on a regular basis to create an individualized protest report on the spot for the home owner before their informal hearing. I will again make sure all documents and data are posted on our social media sites and will make myself available to visit in person or over the phone if you are not able to attend any of these meetings.

Meetings will be held Tuesday May 20th and Wednesday May 28th both from 6:30-8pm. So come over to Santorini's Cafe, have a drink, enjoy a treat and commiserate with neighbors on our community growing pains.

Property Appraisal Protest Workshop

Tuesday May 20th & Wednesday May 28th from 6:30-8pm at
Santorini's Café at **11800 N Lamar Blvd.**

Walnut Creek Real Estate Expert Jill Leberknight will provide tips & tactics to successfully prepare your Travis County Appraisal Protest.

Iris Addiction: Create Your Own Design By Laura Hampton

I've been living in the neighborhood for just over one year now, and this spring has been my first iris season. High on my list of "Reasons I Need a House Instead of an Apartment" were 1) the ability to get a dog (done! And named Iris...) and 2) the ability to plant as many irises as I want. I've had what I think is a constructive obsession with irises since I was in middle school and started ordering different varieties online. I then got bored and decided to begin cross-pollinating them and now have many varieties of my own invention. Until I moved into Walnut Creek, I'd been in apartments around town and my irises had been living at my parents' house in North Austin. This past fall I finally got to dig all of them up, save the ones I left for my mom, and move them over. Here's a smattering of what has bloomed so far this spring.



Fun facts, depending on your definition of fun:

- Some iris are pollen sterile, meaning they have a stamen but it doesn't produce any pollen. These can still be cross-pollinated, they just need to be the "Seed" parent rather than the "Pollen" parent. That Texas Sunset Version 12 is one of my hybrids that has "defective" pollen – the stamen is kind of black, and there is no pollen on it.
- Each iris bulb produces only one stalk in its lifetime. After it's bloomed, however, it will still continue to shoot off additional rhizomes each year, so it's worth keeping them planted.
- Iris should not be planted in mulched flowerbeds – mulch holds in moisture, which can cause bulb rot. Iris should also not be watered at regular intervals. Even in a drought, they will be fine with just whatever water they get when it rains. I have lost a TON of iris to bulb rot, even in flowerbeds that don't seem to get that much water.
- To cross-pollinate an iris, rub the pollen of one iris (located on the stamen, beneath the flowers' styles) onto the stigma of another. The stigma is a "lip" on the underside of the styles. For best results, perform this cross-pollination on all three stigmas. Here's the best diagram I found online of an iris' anatomy (found at www.leonineiris.com, to give credit where credit is due):
- Cross-pollinations do not always "take" – similar to humans. Here's what you see when your cross-pollination has been successful:
- Each seed within a pod can produce a unique flower! It is not the case that each seed produces the same plant, so take good care of all your seeds so that you get as many varieties as possible from your pollination. As an example, I have 4 VERY different looking varieties of iris that came from the same seedpod (see below). The "parents" were a solid orange iris called Good Show (light in color with orange beards) and an iris called Ruffled Copper Sunset. I had about 15 seeds grow into rhizomes and four of those varieties bloomed this spring. I named them "That Texas Sunset" followed by a version number – versions 7, 10, 11 and 12 bloomed this spring. They vary widely in their appearance – and even each smell is unique!



- The Austin Iris Society in conjunction with Zilker Botanical Gardens has a rhizome sale every fall.

Parents:



Children from the same seedpod:

That Texas Sunset 12

That Texas Sunset 10

That Texas Sunset 7

That Texas Sunset 11



- Iris clusters should be dug up every 2-3 years and split apart so that each rhizome can be replanted where there is enough room for it to flourish, and produce even more rhizomes!
- It takes about 3 years from the time you plant iris seeds to the time you have blooming iris.
- I'd encourage anyone with even a remotely green thumb to try their hand at cross-pollinations! Creating a new variety of iris is super rewarding, and it amounts to a very cheap hobby.

Happy hybridizing! (Laura can be reached by message on NextDoor)

Section 3

City-County News and Events

City Council District 7 Candidates

With six months left before the November election, candidates for the new city council districts are starting to announce, or at least announce their interest/intent to announce. So far, we have five likely and one potential – all men(!). All (must) reside in the district, but the district is stretched over quite an area so none may be familiar to WC residents. They are Jeb Boyt, an attorney; Ed English, retired sales and marketing professional; Jimmy Paver, development director for Stepping Stone daycare schools; Alex Blum, Amazon administrator; Pete Salazar, employment specialist for Caritas; and (potentially) Josiah Ingalls, who ran for mayor in 2009 and City Council in 2011. They range widely in education, age, and political activism, but all appear to be serious candidates. Main issues for all are affordability, transportation, and government transparency/accountability. Given the number of candidates, a runoff is likely. If required the date would be sometime in December, possibly during or around the Christmas holidays, meaning turnout would very likely be very low, making your vote more important. The election is Tuesday the 4th of November. Details at <http://www.austindistrict7.org/>

Top tier gasoline

A consortium of automobile manufacturers, concerned about the reduction in performance-improving additives in gasolines since 1995, researched which refiners still include most of these in their blend. They found nine which meet their specifications in our region, and recommend use of these brands to improve mileage, engine life and performance: BP, Chevron, Conoco, Costco, Exxon, Mobil, Philips 66, Shell and Texaco. Everything known by the author about this subject was found here: <http://www.toptiergas.com/>

Neighborhood Participation in CodeNEXT

President Robert Meadows attended CodeNEXT workshops and collected the “kits” for our neighborhood to provide input to the process. This was described at the annual meeting in March, where four kits were distributed to residents who volunteered to organize generation of the requested information. This comprised marking up maps indicating features of the neighborhood that were desirable, undesirable, or could provide an opportunity for improvement, and submission of photos of such features. Robert & Monica (north), Sarah Breuer & Tim Mateer (west), Theresa Jones & Michael Crawford (south) and Pat Pitt and Alison Brown (east) handled collection of inputs from interested neighbors around the neighborhood. It should be noted that “our neighborhood” was “Gracy Woods(sic)” and covered from Braker Lane to Howard Lane and from IH35 to Burnet Road, so ours is a small piece of the defined area. In general we like our trees, large lots, and greenspace (trail) but don’t like the “irregular” surrounding businesses, noise, and (especially) cut-through traffic. Thus opportunities for improvement include improved traffic flow, including completing Dillingham Lane that would carry traffic between TCEQ and Lamar. The initial material was turned in to the CodeNEXT Project on 21 April, but input is still being accepted until the end of the year.

We have received many questions about joining the three social media sites - NextDoor, Yahoo and Facebook - used for neighborhood communication, so it seems the processes are more convoluted than they should be. Here are the steps to join the Yahoo site, WCNAnews, on Yahoo. All groups require having an account with the organization to be able to join.

To join Yahoo go to Yahoo.com and create your account Username and Password (and unfortunately other info you might not want to provide).

Get on your account and enter wcnanews and click on “Search Groups”. You should now see wcnanews as one of, or the only, group (News of the Walnut Creek...).

Click on the wcnanews and you should see “About Group” in line with a “+ Join Group” button. Click on the button and fill out the information requested (enter the “wiggly code” in the box below, or in case you can’t read it click on “Try a new code” until you can; Just say you’re a neighborhood resident in the comment and click on “Send Request”).

You will receive notice of approval as soon as a moderator accepts, and you can set your preferences for receiving information (daily summary, every email/post to the site, etc).



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Dr. Watson took over **Braker Lane Animal Clinic** on Braker Lane at Bluff Bend in 1983, then moved to larger quarters on IH35 south of the (current) Valero in 1990. His operation eventually grew too large for that location and moved to the current location just “up the road” on Tech Ridge Blvd. in 2009. Though still not far from the old ‘hood, the name didn’t fit anymore, so the operation became Tech Ridge Pet Hospital. But it still retains several of the outstanding staff who have been with him much, most or all of that history. This is a testament to Doctor Watson’s professionalism and personality, and he’s still going strong! The new facilities are superb - to match the personnel - so your pet will be treated like the family member it is.

You probably know how much trouble and how expensive it is (and hard on tires) to take stuff to “the dump”, but you can recycle your brush and clean yard waste for \$10 a pickup load at Whittlesey Landscape Supplies. They’re at 629 Dalton Ln, Austin, northwest off the interchange at 183 and 71.

Watering Schedules in Austin

As reported in our last bills, combined storage for Lake Travis and Buchanan are at 735,483 acre feet (A-F), or about 37% of “full” (which is well below the spillways). Current daily usage – which will be higher in the summer – for Austin alone is around 120 million gallons, or about 370 acre-feet. Since we’re only about 135,000 A-F (less than one year’s usage) above the 600,000 value where Stage 3 can be invoked, we likely will remain in Stage 2 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 (see graphic to the right).

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

STAGE 2 WATER RESTRICTIONS
WATERING ONE DAY PER WEEK

Wanna see how Austin has changed in the last (almost) 30 years?

This won't be a surprise, but still striking. You see how much "green" has disappeared in that time period. Some might be because of drought, but the effects of population growth is obvious. You can zoom to some extent, and if you pause you can step one year at a time by pointing at the marks. Also watch Lake Travis...

<https://earthengine.google.org/#timelapse/v=30.33576,-97.72808,9,latLng&t=0.00>

Section 4 Events and Contact List

May	7, 21	Recycle (blue) containers will be picked up along with trash
	17	"All Things Rice" Asian-American food festival (free); 10:00 a.m – 4:00 p.m. Asian American Resource Center, 8400 Cameron Road
	20	Free seminar: <i>Property Appraisal Protest Workshop</i> , Jill Leberknight 6:30 – 8: p.m. at Santorini Cafe
	19 – 23	Early voting, Democratic and Republican Primaries
	27	Vote! Democratic and Republican Primaries
	28	Free seminar: <i>Property Appraisal Protest Workshop</i> , Jill Leberknight 6:30 – 8: p.m. at Santorini Cafe
	26	Memorial Day
June	4, 18	Recycle (blue) containers will be picked up along with trash
Aug	25-29	Bulk Collection
Sept	15-19	Large Brush Collection

Large Brush and Bulk Collection Schedules: <http://austintexas.gov/departments/residential-curb-side-collection-schedule>

Neighbor-generated file of criminal activity in the neighborhood:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/cc?key=0Aj5ZBhBXL3ydHpOYmw3Vm5menktSXFVTHhSbmNJaEE&usp=sharing>

North Austin Newsletter for May: <http://www.icontact-archive.com/gV8wd5ityKfvqoWQQdiDT0xrDQSn-MzX?w=3>

City/County Contacts:

Mayor Lee Leffingwell, 974-2250
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Kathie Tovo, 512-974-2255
Kathie.Tovo@ci.austin.tx.us

County Commissioner Pet 2

Bruce Todd, 512-854-9222
Bruce.Todd@co.travis.tx.us

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

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

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

Report abandoned/suspicious vehicles: 512 974-8119

North Austin Coalition of Neighborhoods Newsletter:
<http://www.lovenorthaustin.com/>

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Neighborhood Irises photographed in April (not counting Laura Hampton's)

April Irises on East Covington



About WCNA and the newsletter

Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association 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: <http://goo.gl/jdG00o>

WCNA 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.

April Irises With Poppies on Tedford

