



March &
April
2015

Walnut Creek Neighborhood News

Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association

WCNA North Boundary
Now Yager Lane!

Social Media/Listservs:

Yahoo: <http://goo.gl/vU5wJL>

NextDoor: <http://goo.gl/UbLiAu>

Facebook: <http://goo.gl/4G41rS>

Annual WCNA Meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7th! Meet, Greet, Eat; Nominate and Elect Board Members for 2015!

Special Opportunity:

Meet Leslie Pool, Our New City Council Representative!

Well, look: It's been about a year since the last Annual Meeting of your Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association. That means it's time to review the actions and events of this past year, consider plans for the year ahead, and nominate and elect new board members. This upcoming meeting is going to be even more interesting than most years, as we will get to meet face-to-face with Ms. Leslie Pool, our

District 7 City Council Representative! We elected Ms. Pool in a December runoff, and she now will represent us (well, about 180,000 of us) in meetings at city hall under the new "10-1" council structure (reps from ten distinct districts plus the mayor). Leslie actually resides in the Rosedale area, which has some issues identical to ours and some quite different. She has a strong neighborhood orientation, but has worked on many city-wide issues as well (e.g., <http://liveablecityatx.nationbuilder.com/>). Send your questions for Ms. Pool to Robert Meadows (see contact info for both on Page 6).



The meeting will be in the Lawshae Building of St Mark UMC, 601 W. Braker Lane, which has been our venue for most meetings, located to the east side of the main church building. Parking near Lawshae is reached by going to the end of Motheral Drive (between the Palm Car Wash and the church) and turning left. Refreshments will be provided, and you will be able to join or pay WCNA dues via cash or credit card onsite.

Our president, Robert Meadows, will officiate the meeting, which typically lasts for a 1.5 - 2 hours. There have been a number of zoning and other issues during the year past, and he will summarize those and the resolutions or status of each. Other WCNA activities (Neighborhood Night Out, park days, interactions with/about the trail improvements, etc) will be presented.

If time permits, a second speaker will discuss some upcoming grade-school education opportunities. We note that our bylaws are being rewritten, but discussion likely will require more time than available.

And of course we will perform the formal duties of the meeting: Nomination and election (or re-election of board members whose terms are expiring) for two-year terms. It's going to be a good one: Don't miss it!

Leslie Pool Gets Committee Assignments

With the new 10-1 structure of the Austin City Council comes definition of ten committees, and the process of matching the new council members with appropriate ones for their primary interests and experiences (to some extent these facets were involved in naming the committees). The committees are 'Audit and Finance'; 'Austin Energy'; 'Economic Opportunity', 'Technology, Innovation and Creative Industries'; 'Health and Human Services'; 'Housing and Community Development'; 'Mobility'; 'Planning and Neighborhoods'; 'Public Safety'; 'Public Utilities'; and 'Open Space, Environment and Sustainability'. As of mid-February our rep, Leslie Pool, is chairman of this last one (a topic she has extensive experience with and of obvious importance to us) and she also is on the Austin Energy (as vice chair), Audit and Finance, Economic Opportunity..., and Public Safety Committees. Two of the committees of particular interest to us are chaired by District 6's Ann Kitchen (Mobility) and District 4's Greg Casar (Planning and Neighborhoods). Clearly intercommunication between these committees will be vitally important, as the heavy multiple membership implies.

In case you missed it on television news, one of our longest resident couples – and almost surely the oldest – celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary on March 1st. The Browns – John and Myrtle of north Oakwood – were interviewed on KXAN TV, where it was revealed that they are 94 and 96 resp. If it is still up, you can watch the interview at <http://kxan.com/2015/03/01/austin-couple-celebrates-75-years-of-marriage/>. And you can give them a thumbs up if you see them on the street in a wheelchair or scooter, using a walker, or driving.

This is an amazing feat: almost a Ripley's story!

Congratulations John and Myrtle!

**John, Myrtle and best friend
joining the neighborhood
4th of July parade in 2014.**



**FREE SEMINAR – Remodel Solutions for Walnut Creek
Wednesday March 25th, 6:30pm at Santorini’s Café**

Come learn about remodeling trends, challenges, & solutions specific to our Walnut Creek Homes. Visit with remodel experts & interior designers as they discuss how to make the most of your improvements and to plan for any remodel project. Also visit & hear from neighbors who have successfully navigated through WCN remodel projects. Got questions? Contact Jill Leberknight – jill@agentjill.com

Create – Grow – Connect – The Third Annual North Austin Garden Tour

By Jill Leberknight

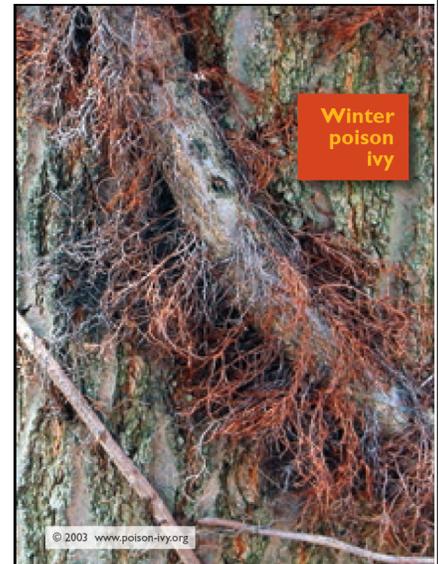
Started back in 2013 by the Love North Austin organization, the NXNA Garden Tour is celebrating its third annual event Saturday May 2nd. According to the Love North Austin organization’s website it is the only event that is truly North Austin. Its mission is to support the artists of North Austin and its rich cultural assets, to celebrate the unique green spaces of North Austin -no matter how big - and to provide information as well as celebrate the wonderful diversity that is North Austin. Suggested ticket donation is \$10 and will give you access to three community gardens, fifteen private and school gardens, access to meet and support many North Austin artists, and events and demonstration at Earphoria – Austin’s Music Hostel. Proceeds from the 2015 tour will go to fund a mural for McBee Elementary School, and much needed repairs and beautification for Walnut Creek Metropolitan Park. Previous years events helped provide support for North Austin Community School alliance and garden beautification projects at other north Austin area schools. If you are interesting in helping spread the word about this event, posters and cards will be available by March 20th. One community – Three schools – Many hands! The NXNA Garden Tour, an annual North Austin event that recognizes the beauty in North Austin and works to bring the love of North Austin back into the community! For more information or to get involved visit their website at <http://www.lovenorthaustin.com/nxna-garden-tour.html> .

Poison Ivy Forever (and all the time)

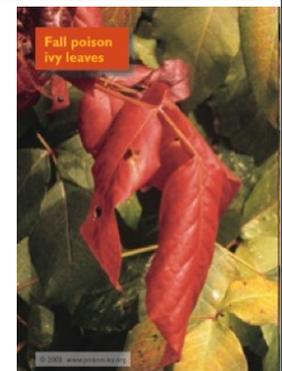
You may think that poison ivy season is over, but you can experience its pleasures about any time of the year. And it changes its appearance to try to keep you from avoiding it.

If you haven’t noticed, the Walnut Bluffs Trail area is loaded with the stuff. Some of it is so old and big it forms small trees. Since those groups of three leaves of green are gone you may feel relatively safe, but the winter plant is still potent, and is a much harder to recognize vine. The picture at right shows an example of how the plant may look right now.

While the general shape of the leaves is the same over all variations, the leaf edge can vary considerably, as seen in the pictures immediately below. The shapes in the upper and lower right are the most common around here, and we’ll be seeing them emerge soon. For more see: <http://www.poison-ivy.org> .



In the Fall our leaves can become shades of red, yellow and brown, which can be quite attractive.



Animal Safety

Very recently a male cat in the neighborhood was found to test positive for Feline Leukemia (FeL). This black cat was estimated to be about five years old, and most recently roamed on both sides of Skunk Creek (runs between Oakwood and Whitewing) toward the north end. He was being fed in at least two places - and very probably more - over his tenure in the neighborhood. He was becoming quite friendly at the time of his capture and testing, and was not seriously aggressive with other cats.

FeL is a fairly contagious disease transmitted through saliva. There is no treatment for it, and expected life span after infection is typically just a few years, usually with an unpleasant end. Thus cats found to be infected usually are euthanized immediately unless they can get into a colony of similarly infected cats who are cared for until euthanasia is appropriate.

If you have an outside cat in this area of the neighborhood you may consider testing for infection, though it is unlikely to have been contracted without close contact with this cat. The virus is usually believed to be contracted via mutual grooming or other extensive physical contact, but possibly through common eating or drinking bowls, though the virus is fragile in the open. There are two important considerations here: If your cat has been vaccinated against FeL the likelihood of contracting the disease is very low, and testing is not possible because the antibodies used for testing are present from the vaccination. On the other hand, it can take as long as six months from infection for the disease to progress to the point of producing a positive test, so immediate testing may not be conclusive. Recommendations from veterinarians can vary from immediate to periodic testing to testing about three months after exposure, and then again after six months for maximum confidence.

This is the third cat (to our knowledge) that has been found to have the FeL infection in this area of the neighborhood in about eight years. It was several years between each of these cases, so it's unlikely that there is a connection between them. All the infected cats were feral males. Undoubtedly there have been cases in other parts of the neighborhood as well but we haven't been informed about them; Most cases go undetected, unidentified and/or unreported. If you know of actual or suspected cases of FeL in the neighborhood over the last 10 years, we would like to record whatever is known: approximate time period (season/year) and whether confirmed. Please email wcn.contact@gmail.com or call Pat Pitt at 512 837-6620.

Use of Poisons: Last year at least one cat – a pet - was reported killed after ingesting a poisoned mouse or rat. For this reason it is recommended that such poisons not be used, and especially not the type that cause the rodent to go looking for water outside, putting it at risk of being caught by a cat, dog or other wildlife (esp. hawks, owls, coyotes and foxes).

Report Animal Cruelty: The Austin Police Department has established a dedicated Animal Cruelty Unit Tip Hot Line at (512) 978-0523. Here is the message you'll hear when you call the number:

“You have reached the Austin Police Department Animal Cruelty Tip line, please leave a detailed message describing your concerns or an incident that occurred. You can leave an anonymous complaint although it is helpful if you leave your contact information just in case we have any questions. If you have reached this tip line and you feel the animal or animals need immediate assistance, or this is an emergency, please hang up and call 911. Thank You”

The Austin Police Department has determined that in many cases concerned citizens do not want to leave information with the City of Austin 311 non-emergency contact number due to fear of retaliation or not wanting to be perceived a bad neighbor. It is the goal of the Austin Police Department that through the Animal Cruelty Unit Tip Hot Line all dogs, cat and other animal abuse cases will be reported. For situations like dog fights, dogs in distress, dogs left in cars or any other incidents that are in progress, call 911.

On a sad note, we lost one of our earliest residents, Margaret Tolbert (Chonga), on Feb 11th at just under the age of 95. Chonga and her husband built their home on a double lot at the SE corner of Oakwood and Covington in 1954. They had the back of the lot, which backs up to Skunk Creek, shored up with loose rock hauled in by horse and wagon (and by some miracle it's still there: Look to the right as you cross the creek heading east toward IH35).

Margaret had a geological sciences degree from UT (1942), and in her 80s she started traveling all over the world. She was an avid gardener, her yard a glorious showplace until the drought of 2011. She loved wildlife, especially birds, and was thrilled to have a family of hawks in the big oak tree in her backyard until the tree had to be removed because of oak wilt.



She was one of the founding members of the Shady Oaks Garden Club, and was actively involved almost to the end. It took complications from a respiratory illness finally to stop her. Rest in peace, Chonga!

InstaCart Comes to Austin: You now can say that Austin is just like San Francisco. That is, only SanFran and we have the new service company InstaCart. This operation will bring you stuff you order from (currently) four businesses: Whole Foods, H.E.B., Costco, and Tomlinson's Pet Supplies. Their site (www.InstaCart.com/) shows almost everything you can buy in each of the stores. Like most online stores, you put your items in a cart and check out, then they deliver what you've bought to you, usually (they say) within two hours for a fee of \$3.50. At typical gas prices, most of us can't drive to Tomlinson's and back for that (of course, a tip is expected by the driver. We'll have to wait to see if this business model holds up.) Some neighbors use this service and (so far) swear by it, so if you hate to drive in Austin to shop for the basics, you might want to check it out.

New Registration Stickers: From now on a single registration sticker will replace the two windshield stickers - registration (license plates) and inspection - that we have been using, unless you have a physical inspection sticker at the time of registration. The "gotcha": You must have had performed and "recorded" an inspection within the previous 90 days to be able to acquire this new sticker, and of course you need proof of insurance to have an inspection.

Also from now on, your inspection will be recorded in a restricted online database and you will be given a printed version of the report. The registration offices will have access to this database, so when you apply for your new registration sticker the clerk will be able to check your inspection status online. In case something goes wrong with this electronic process (what are the odds?), the printout given you will suffice to complete registration (so remember where you put it!). For details see <http://twostepsonesticker.com/>.

Pet Stories: The Saga of Binky the Cat by Pat Pitt

It's obvious from the activity on our social media that we live in a pet-friendly neighborhood, and with our large green space we're somewhat of a wildlife-friendly bunch as well. If you have a pet or wildlife story you would like to share with the rest of us, I'll make an effort to get it into a newsletter. Send your article to WCNA.contact@gmail.com, or call me at 512 837-6620.

As an example, below I describe the history of one of the (many) cats we've "homed" - or had pass through - over the 52 years of residence in the same house in the neighborhood. Binky was a real character, an obvious choice for a "first story".

The black cat who became "Binky" was born in early Spring of 1985, in the back of an inoperative station wagon at a neighbor's house across the street. His mama Tam (because she looked like she was wearing one) brought him over to our front porch along with his siblings when he was very young, so we felt we had no choice but to adopt most of them ourselves. Alison gave him his name, not knowing that this was what a baby's pacifier is called in the British Empire countries. It proved to be prescient when we found a tiny kitten in a woodpile after a heavy rain and brought him in to nurse and raise. He kind of named himself "Pootie", and turned out to be ADHD, or at least hyperactive, requiring much more of our time than we really had. When he met Binky he immediately attached himself, and Binky would allow Pootie to suck on his neck for long periods of time, allowing us to go about our business. So the super-laid-back Binky established himself as a favorite early on.

Binky was an outdoor cat. He never liked being inside, though he was quite social. He never succumbed to the eating habits of modern cats, so was always lean and agile. By the time he died he had far outlived the dozens of stray cats we adopted over the years, several of whom lived nearly 20 years.

When Binky was approaching 20 he disappeared. He was gone for several days, during which we searched and called for him frequently, so I assumed he had met the same end some of our and our neighbor's cats apparently had: killed by a coyote(s). Then when working in the yard one day he walked up from the creek - and I couldn't believe my eyes. I examined him carefully - he was even skinnier than usual - and found a pair of puncture wounds in his neck. Our vet couldn't find anything wrong with him, and agreed that the punctures looked like an animal bite. My conclusion is that Binky must have been caught by a dog or coyote and carried off, but survived either by offering too much resistance for such a small cat or because his captor decided there wasn't enough there to make a decent snack. Whether he was lost all that time or lying low going through some kind of recovery process, he eventually found his way back home, creating great joy and relief in the process. He began to come in the house more often at this point.

When Binky was about 23 he fell out of a tree and apparently got his right rear leg caught between two sheets of metal roofing, producing a compound fracture. He dragged himself up from the back yard using his forelegs, not even complaining about it. From our vet he was referred to a specialist in south Austin who wanted to put a pin and plate in to try to give him use of the leg, but the cost and likelihood of success didn't seem worth it for him or us. The doc agreed to amputate his leg, and within a few days Binky was getting around almost as well as ever.

But Binky must have decided it was time to move indoors: He became basically an indoor cat at that time. And he lived several years as such, finally succumbing to old age, hyperthyroidism and failing kidneys at or near 25 years of age.

Don't make'em like that anymore...



**Binky in his later years,
occupying as many chairs as he
felt he was due.**

Road-Rage in the Neighborhood. Within the last 2 months, two incidents of “street rage” have been reported in the neighborhood. Both incidents were directed toward women, one driving slowly so as to allow her parents to see a particular house and the other walking her dog on Caddo. Both “ragers” were young men, one in a big hurry who decided the woman driver needed to be dressed down for slowing his progress, so he flew around her, slammed on his brakes and backed up toward her, got out of his car, came to her window and cursed her for interfering with his freedom to drive. In the case of the walker, the driver saw the woman mouth words at him when he sped by very close to her, so he stopped and cursed at her. When she told him he should not be cutting through our neighborhood, he claimed to live here, but couldn’t name a street in the ‘hood. Then he threw a large, nearly full soft drink cup at her head, which she had to duck to avoid. In the first case the license plate was recorded and reported, generating a case with the police. Unfortunately, in the second case the woman was too shaken to remember to read and remember the number, so nothing could be done. A call to 311 or 911 with a license number is certainly in order.

It’s likely that both incidents are related to cut-through drivers, a situation that has been discussed at most WCNA meetings and many board meetings, with city officials involved in some of them. Some of the cut-through traffic problem should be mitigated when a road connecting Park ThirtyFive and TCEQ to Lamar is finished, in conjunction with new apartments to be built north of Walnut Creek near Lamar.

The Drought Continues

We remain under Stage 2 water restrictions, as shown at right.

For residences, Stage 2 means **use of hose-end sprinklers only between 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. on Sundays for houses with even-numbered addresses and on Saturdays for odd-numbered addresses.**

Automatic systems are allowed to water **before 5:00 a.m. and after 7:00 p.m., for even addresses on Thursday and Odd addresses on Wednesday.**

Hand and drip watering can still be done anytime.

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

Currently no burn ban in Travis County

| 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 | | | |
| Odd Address Saturday | Odd Address Wednesday | Odd Address Friday | | | Monday |

STAGE 2 WATER RESTRICTIONS
WATERING ONE DAY PER WEEK

Some Interesting/Useful Links

| | | |
|---|--------------|---|
| http://www.austinwildliferescue.org/ | 512 472-9453 | They take most injured or abandoned animals |
| https://www.catalogchoice.org/signup | | Stop many unwanted mailings & phone calls |
| http://goo.gl/feXV6z | | Weather info for the ‘hood. Current conditions, realtime precip & other data, forecast and history. |
| http://www.austintexas.gov/department/animal-services | 512 974-2000 | Austin’s no-kill animal shelter, open 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. weekdays, 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. weekends. |
| http://austintexas.gov/department/residential-services-overview | 311 | Trash, Recycle, Brush, Bulk pickup info & schedules |
| http://www.capmetro.org/schedmap/main.aspx?svc=2&f1=550&s=3&d=1 | 512 474-1200 | Bus and train info and schedules |
| http://propaccess.traviscad.org/clientdb/?cid=1 | 512 834-9317 | Appraisal, status, history and tax info on all properties in Travis County |
| http://www.co.travis.tx.us/fire_marshall/news/burn_ban.asp | 512 854-9020 | Can you burn stuff outside or not? |
| http://library.austintexas.gov/ | 512 974-7301 | Everything about your libraries |
| http://wcnanews.com/ | | Web site for WCNA (in progress) |
| https://wcnanextdoor.com/neighborhood_feed/ | | Main neighborhood social media site: Must live in the ‘hood to join. |
| https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/wcnanews/info | | Original - and still going - neighborhood media site. |
| https://www.facebook.com/groups/wcnanews/ | | Most extroverted and active neighborhood social media site |

| | | |
|---------|---|---|
| March | 1 | The Browns on Oakwood celebrate their 75 th Wedding Anniversary! |
| | 1 | Single Sticker Auto Registration/Inspection Starts |
| | 7 | My park workday |
| | 8 | Daylight Savings Begins: Set clocks ahead one hour (7:00 a.m becomes 8:00a.m. and 10:00 p.m. becomes 11:00 p.m.) |
| | 11 | Curbside Recycle Collection |
| | 16 – 20 | UT Spring Break |
| | 13 - 22 | SXSW (Avoid downtown!) |
| | 16 | Large Brush pickup begins; Ends when all piles present during pickup are gone, usually within 3 days. Next brush pickup in about 6 months. |
| | 25 | Curbside Recycle Collection |
| | 25 | FREE SEMINAR: <i>Remodel Solutions for Walnut Creek Jill Leberknight; Santorini Café at 6:30 p.m.</i> |
| 28 – 29 | Zilker Garden Festival, Zilker Gardens; Booths/Shows 10:30 – 3:30 | |
| April | 5 | Easter |
| | 11 | Austin Clean Sweep; Volunteers will clean up Walnut Creek |
| | 13 | Fifth Annual East Austin Urban Farm Tour; 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.; http://eastaustinurbanfarmtour.com/ |
| | 25 | Eeyore's 52 nd Birthday, Pease Park; 11:00 a.m. 'til dark |
| May | 2 | North Austin Garden Tour (NXNA); http://goo.gl/pMqIQS |

Curbside Recycling: Now accepting “hard plastics”, such as plastic chairs, trays, etc.

New, Improved Household Hazardous Waste hours!

Mon – Fri 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Saturday from 7:00 a.m. - Noon

Used or damaged electronics now accepted at Austin Resource Recovery Center

3810 Todd Lane, 8 a.m to 4 p.m. on weekdays. Wear closed toe shoes. TVs, computer monitors (including cathode-ray tubes), computer equipment, mobile devices and fax machines. Batteries do not have to be removed from the electronics. Computers and mobile phones will be “stored securely”, so data doesn't need to be “wiped”.

Austin City Council

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

City of Austin: All services, codes & code violations, animal reports: **Call 311**

Online: <http://austin-plcsrprod.cwi.motorolasolutions.com/Home.mvc/Index>

Adam Soliz, APD District Rep (512) 974 8143
adam.soliz@austintexas.gov

Adan Ballesteros, County Constable, Pct 2 (512) 854-9697
Adan.Ballesteros@co.travis.tx.us

Austin Police Department Animal Cruelty Unit Tip Hot Line: (512) 978-0523

North Austin Coalition of Neighborhoods Newsletter is now a blog site, following a wide range of general city as well as neighborhood issues and events.

Read and Comment:

<http://www.lovenorthaustin.com/>

WCNA Board and Officers

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Robert Meadows | President |
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To place an ad, contact Jim Letchworth - jimletchworth@yahoo.com. The rate is \$90 for the full year (six bi-monthly issues).

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Facebook: Santorini Café, Music & Entertainment

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Mar :: Apr 2015



**Quince on Oakwood
Chonga (RIP), Feb 2015**

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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/5iQlk>

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 Yager Lane.

To contribute content to the newsletter, send contributions via email to wcna.contact@gmail.com or contact Pat Pitt, 512 837-6620.

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



Narcissus on Whitewing