



November
December
2014

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>

National Neighborhood Night Out: New Neighbors Spur Activity!

The initial rush at the start of the evening showed we (WCNA) weren't quite as ready as we should have been, even after all these years. But then we haven't had this many folks in several years, so we were pleasantly surprised if a little discombobulated.

Several estimates varied between 125 and 150 attendees – including the many active kids who made counting difficult. And the weather was good enough to choose outside as well as inside dining and dishing, I mean discussing, so it was tricky not counting folks twice or missing them altogether as they traveled back and forth.

Organizing and obtaining the pizza was done (as usual) by board member Jean Ramsey. Alison Brown provided the salad, dressing and brewed tea, with “BlueBell Bob” - usually called (President) Robert Meadows - producing the ice cream and associated toppings. Gary and Margaret Brewer and board member Christian Ninaud did most of the “dipping”, and the weather cooperated by being hot enough to assure that the taste was optimal.



The bounce castle was well-used – and carefully watched by the parents of those users. The theme of “Superheroes” seemed to go down well with the younger crowd. Bubbles from the bubble generator wafted in the area, fascinating the even-younger attendees as well as those of us at, let's just say, more mature ages.

Prizes were awarded to attendees for the oldest, the youngest, the most recently arrived, and longest in the neighborhood. Longest in the ‘hood was taken – like last year - by Anna and Harold Hans (on Whitewing since '57). The newest arrivals had just moved in on Pollyanna about two weeks earlier. Shown in the picture below are the oldest (88) and youngest (2 months) residents.

The annual NNNO Silent Auction, organized

and run by Theresa Jones again this year, successfully raised a record amount - \$410 - to benefit the 100 Club of Central Texas. Fifteen items were donated by neighborhood residents, including one of Theresa's husband Mike's metal dinosaurs, a ceramic mosaic garden stone from Monica Meadows, and artisanal jams & salsas from Tim Mateer and Sara Breuer. 100 Club is a non-profit organization that provides immediate assistance, both financial and emotional, to injured or killed first responders and their families. Just six weeks ago - on September 18th - Sheriff's officer Jessica Hollis died when swept into a flash flood while checking on the risk to the public at a low water crossing, and the 100 Club instantly moved to comfort and provide support to her family. This is a charitable organization well worth our support.



The weather, the refreshments, and our Walnut Creek neighbors were just about perfect this year. And we're all looking forward to even “more perfection” next year!

Annual WCNA Garage Sale A Success

Shopper traffic was excellent in most of the neighborhood, with the exception of the north end of Walnut Forest (Meadow Lark to Wren). Reports from many participants indicated lots of junk, I mean good stuff, disposed of, I mean sold. Access from Braker and Lamar seemed to be the predictor of traffic, so plans are already in progress to make it easier for “garage salers” to find all the registered participants next year. It was noted that the “pros” – especially vendors at the Citywide Garage Sale – hit the area very early and made off with the most re-sellable stuff. So it paid to start early this year with Citywide happening on the same day. St. Mark Methodist’s Market Days event was also happening on this weekend, with both events hoping each would help traffic to the other.

Christmas? Already?

Even though the “stuff” has already started showing up in stores, it’s way too early to worry about Christmas, isn’t it? Well, since this publication comes out every two months, this (Nov – Dec) issue must be the Christmas Issue.

We will mark our **Third Annual Christmas Caroling** and we want to make each one better than the one before, so some planning is appropriate, at least “pretty soon”.

Last year we motorized the operation in the form of a hayride, and we want to do something similar this year. Having a truck-pulled trailer (with some cars following) allowed most of the carolers to cover a much larger percentage of the neighborhood than walking as in previous years. But we need more carolers and a bigger trailer. And we’d also like to add some decorations and lights, as well as some instruments and/or a sound system to augment our talents.

Jill Leberknight once again will be the organizer, and the target date is Saturday, December 20th (weather permitting. A shift to Sunday will be made if needed).

Watch for information on Nextdoor, Yahoo and Facebook, or contact Jill at jill@weemus.com or (512) 294-7296 to join the fun, volunteer help, etc.



Gathering to start Caroling in 2013

Our Local Election: It Ain’t Over ‘til It’s Over

Besides the rail/road bond failure, not many final decisions were made on Nov 4th. As in all but two of the new city council districts, runoffs are required in our District 7 race (**Boyt vs Pool**)the mayor’s race (**Martinez vs Adler**), school board at-large (**Pace vs Procknow**), and ACC board Place 2 (**Sheppard vs Bryant**).

Boyt and Pool will participate in a debate at St. John’s Episcopal Church - at Parkfield and Braker - on Dec 1st from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m. Elections are on **December 16th**.

Shady Oaks Garden Club Notes Fall Yards

The Club toured our Walnut Creek Neighborhood a the end of September and saw a number of neat yards!.
But two yards stood out:



11305 Indianhead



11406 Oakwood, enlivened by Halloween decorations.

Neighbors Business Voted Chronicle's 2014: "Best Place for Sweatin' With The Oldies"

Modern Salvage, owned and operated by Roy Tompkins and Cathy Brigham on Rennalee Loop, made the 2014 "Best Of" list voted by patrons, in the Chronicle. Their treasure house of things from the past is a great place to

spend an afternoon reminiscing, finding that special item for a spot in your home, or trying to figure out "what the hell is this thing?".

Modern Salvage is at 7718 Springdale, 512 215-4425, www.modernsalvage.net.

The Chronicle writer's wording for the award:

We love to thrift. But sometimes we get frustrated with our options: limited, possibly overpriced vintage establishments or true junk stores that feature eclectic goods in dusty jumbles with undertones of toxic mold. Both can be as packed as a Hoarders house, though without the tragedy and gross things. Not so at roomy, organized Modern Salvage, which sells some prized stuff: vintage furniture, Snoopy things, terrific clothes, box handbags, a modern player piano (what?), the odd Hobart dishwasher, landline phones, record albums, and



Roy and Friend at Modern Salvage

a healthy amount of Texana, including a stuffed pony with a tricolor Texas "brand" on its hindquarters. The airiness might have something to do with the fact that the warehouse isn't air-conditioned, but some of us prefer to have to sweat for our treasures.

How Big is Your Home, Exactly?

By Jill Leberknight

As a REALTOR I work intimately on a regular basis with home measurements. I've also found homeowners frequently are not aware of the exact square footage of their home. Here are two important reasons why you should make sure you know the accurate value and, more importantly, have the measurement verified by a recognized third-party.

1. **County Appraisals** – With the ever-rising values of our properties, measurements can be vital to make sure the tax man doesn't overcharge you. Since county appraisals are largely based on the size of the living area of your home it is important to make sure the number they are using is accurate. I have seen homes in our area that have been misrepresented for decades; situations such as builders or lender appraisers who accidentally included garage square footage in the "livable" measurement or didn't include a utility room or closed-in porch. (Note: The value used by the county for property tax purposes can be found on <http://propaccess.traviscad.org/clientdb/?cid=1>. Use the up/down arrows to choose to search by owner name or address (use only the main part of the street name; e.g., "whitewing", or get your account number from your tax statement. Click on "Improvement / Building").)
2. **Home Sale** - Due to the competitive and fast-moving sellers' market in Austin the subject of living area square footage is becoming a hot legal topic these days. With buyers having to bring more money to the table to win the chance to purchase a home in our city, they are wanting assurance that they are indeed getting what they paid for. Austin is seeing an increase in lawsuits specifically concerning living area and it is becoming very important to make sure you have reliable verification of your home square footage to limit your risk after the sale.

How to be prepared. If you recently re-financed or purchased your home, your lender appraisal will list the square footage of your home. Accurate measurement of the gross building square footage and gross livable square footage is a required step in the formal bank appraisal. If you have not had an appraisal completed since your purchase and suspect that your square footage is incorrect you can hire local floor plan measuring companies (e.g., Floor Plan Graphics, <http://www.floorplangraphics.com/>) to come out and provide you with a measurement for a reasonable fee. This measurement can be used as third party evidence of accurate estimation of home square footage which is cooled and/or heated, the legal definition used for tax purposes.

Many homes here in the neighborhood have had additions or changes made to the structure of the property over the years that have added or deleted square footage. If you have data from reliable sources you'll do better at tax-time, you'll limit your liability during and after a sale, and you'll be prepared as our Walnut Creek home values continue to jump up every year. As always, I'm available to visit further about this subject if you have questions.

Getting to Howard Lane: The first time may be counterintuitive!

The Parmer Lane exit off northbound IH35 is now also the Howard Lane exit. If you're heading for Howard from Braker (via the access road) you never need to physically get on -35. As you start to enter IH35 just before Yager, just stay in the entry lane and pass under Yager. You'll immediately see the sign telling you to exit for Parmer **and** Howard at the Parmer exit in the lane you're already in. After you exit, **stay in the left lane**, no matter what your brain tries to tell you, and you'll see it drift off to the left and under Parmer just before you get there. You'll wind up merging onto the access road where the old -35 entrance ramp once did. This has now become a three-lane access road, the left lane merging back on to -35 and the middle and right lanes going on to Howard.

Won't You Join Us, Neighbor?

Are you a member of the Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association for 2014? It's time to renew your membership for 2015, and help support the services that protect and improve the quality of life for all of us. Fewer than a third of us are current members, which establishes/limits the things we can do. We have a long list of projects that have been proposed – and in some instances explored for feasibility – but can't be done without more resources, both people and money. WCNA annual membership dues are \$15.00, a bargain for all of the services and events that make us a neighborhood and give us a voice in pertinent City of Austin decisions.

Our neighborhood: The Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association is dedicated to promoting the health, welfare, and safety of residents, and to improving the overall quality of life in our neighborhood. Here's what we do:

The Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association maintains three internet groups for inter-neighborhood communication. Residents may join one or all three: Nextdoor, Yahoo or Facebook. (Note: Each of these groups contains members not common to the others, so widest distribution is achieved by posting to all three.)

- **Nextdoor** (wcnanextdoor.com) is a relatively new site with membership designed to be restricted to people who live (have physical addresses) within the defined boundary of the neighborhood (for some types of communication a member can choose to share with some adjoining neighborhoods). Postings on this site are reasonably assured to be communicating only with neighbors of choice. Residency is controlled by the membership and a small number of "Leads", together with Nextdoor monitors.
- Our **Yahoo** group (www.groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/wcnanews/info) has been around longer, has a different "look" than Nextdoor, and has less restrictive requirements for membership.
- Facebook (<http://goo.gl/em57E2>) is, well, Facebook. This is a group site and membership is screened, but the "visual security" is not well understood. It (probably) is the most active of the sites, but not limited in content to the extent the others are (e.g., political activity).

One of the most important WCNA activities is monitoring commercial development around – and sometimes in – the boundaries and representing the neighborhood at planning, zoning and city council meetings concerning the appropriateness of the activity to our single family residential character. This is our primary defense against development and businesses that would negatively affect property values and the neighborhood in general.

Another important activity of WCNA is sponsorship of Neighborhood Watch to improve home security. The NW coordinator has traditionally been a board member, but the slot is unfilled at this time due to circumstances of members. The normal process would be maintaining the "block structure" through which abnormal/suspicious activity in the neighborhood is monitored and reported. Our social media has changed the potential and logical structure of NW, but it is currently being done ad hoc by individuals who are at home during the day and by patrols run by board members (look for cars with magnetic signs on the doors). Here is a volunteer opportunity!

This neighborhood newsletter, Walnut Creek Neighborhood News, is delivered to each neighborhood residence bi-monthly, offering articles and current reports on local events, issues, and reference and contact information.

Consider the social events sponsored, supported, and/or organized by WCNA and members: The annual meeting (for election of board members and summary of activities and accomplishments); The annual National Neighborhood Night Out; The annual neighborhood garage sale; The annual Fourth of July Parade and Pot luck Picnic; Trailhead events; and the annual Christmas caroling.

Animal advocacy: the Walnut Creek Cat Coalition helps control feral populations and find homes or care for lost cats, while Pack Team 4 Street Dog Rescue helps with capture and adoption of dogs who are lost, abused, or neglected. Loose animals are reported on the neighborhood groups to help find owners. (Note: Our greenbelt is home to wild or feral animals - help us to learn about them and coexist safely).

Not a member in 2014? Take advantage of the enrollment period - November through February - to join for 2015. Our goal for 2015 is to increase membership by (at least) 10%. Please be one of those who join, and support the services provided by the neighborhood. Return envelopes will come in the Nov-Dec and Jan-Feb newsletters, which contain a "coupon" for listing your contact information and the opportunity to donate to the several ongoing projects as well as dues payment. Also consider the convenience of paying using PayPal, at

<http://goo.gl/jdGO0o>

WCNA Dues and Contributions Form for Calendar Year 2015

This form is included in both the Nov-Dec 2014 and Jan-Feb 2015 newsletters, so please check to see whether you sent in your dues in November or December to prevent accidentally paying again with the January issue.

Please make checks out to "WCNA" and return in the envelope provided - or your own - to
WCNA, P.O. Box 82746, Austin, TX 78708-2746

Note: You can use PayPal to charge dues at www.goo.gl/5iQIk

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL _____

DUES (\$15 per year): \$ _____

DONATION: General Fund \$ _____ Walnut Bluffs Trails (park) \$ _____ Cat Coalition \$ _____

TOTAL INCLUDED: \$ _____

I would like information about participation as/in:

WCNA Board or Officer ___ Newsletter Production ___ Park Projects ___

Neighborhood Beautification ___ Oak Wilt Abatement ___ Cat Coalition ___

January 1st: No Hand-Held Electronic Devices While Driving City of Austin Hands Free Law – Vehicles and Bikes

Unless using a hands-free system such as Bluetooth or headphones, or a permanently affixed GPS system, use of portable devices while moving in a car or on a bike will be a citable offense beginning **Jan. 1, 2015**.



Hand held cell phone use is permitted in the event of an emergency such as calling 9-1-1 or 3-1-1 to report a crime or an accident. Even in an emergency situation, it is best to pull over and come to a complete stop before using or operating any mobile or hand-held device.

FCC-licensed, radio frequency use, including commercial two-way communication, is not affected by this law.

See: <http://goo.gl/kEAgzq>

The Continuing Drought and Watering Schedules in Austin

Lake water inflows have continued to be too low to add significant depth to lakes Travis and Buchanan. As a result we are again within "spittin' distance" of reaching the combined lake volumes at which Stage 3 water restrictions will be required. An anticipated El Nino event in the Pacific is turning out to be less than expected, though a bit more precipitation than normal is still anticipated. And the good watering rains since midsummer have resulted in **cancellation of the County Burn Ban** until further notice.

For residences, Stage 2 means **no use of hose-end sprinklers between 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., for Houses with even-numbered addresses on Sundays and odd-numbered addresses on Saturdays.**

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>

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**

Nov	5	Curbside recycle collection
	15-16	East Austin Studio Tour See www.bigmedium.org
	19	Curbside recycle collection
	22-23	East Austin Studio Tour See www.bigmedium.org
	23	Austin Empty Bowl Project: Buy a bowl, feed the hungry... www.austinemptybowl.org
Dec	3	Curbside recycle collection
	1	Runoff election debate, Leslie Poole & Jeb Boyt, 8 – 9:30 p.m., St John Episcopal Church, 11201 Parkfield at Braker
	16	Runoff Elections: Our City Council Rep & Mayor, ACC and AISD
	17	Curbside recycle collection
	31	Curbside recycle collection
Jan	1	Hand-held Cell Phone use becomes illegal in cars and on bikes!
	7	Curbside recycle collection

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

Urban Forestry Program: URL & Newsletter (*The Austin Treebune*).

Subscribe at: <http://www.austintexas.gov/urbanforestry>

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”.

TDPS offers a free mobile app for iPhones, iPads and Android phones & tablets. It provides instant access to the TX Sex Offender Registry, TX 10 Most Wanted program and info about fugitives and sex offenders. iWatch Texas allows users to report suspicious activity to DPS.

iTunes: <http://goo.gl/6LGb0L>

Google Play: <http://goo.gl/h4pikS>

City/County Contacts:

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County Commissioner Pct 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-plcsrprod.cwi.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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512 974 8143
adam.soliz@austintexas.gov

Sam Lindsey, County Constable
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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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Nov :: Dec 2014

Last of the Summer Flowers
Esperanza Shedding



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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 a board member.

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.

Ghoul & Friend on Jetta Court

