



May &  
June  
2015

# Walnut Creek Neighborhood News

Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association

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## You Shoulda Been There: Report From the Annual Meeting

Our meeting was held on a beautiful afternoon, April 7<sup>th</sup>, a few weeks later than usual so we could meet our own new District 7 city council representative, Leslie Pool. And we also did the usual business things, of course, with the president reviewing activities and results from 2014, and electing or re-electing board members for the next two years.

Council Person Pool gave us a much better insight into what's involved in running for and serving as an active councilperson. Just hearing it made most of us tired, but she was energized (and not even resentful about all the campaigning, meetings, and endless hours debating)! She is the chair for the Parks and Public Space Committee, which includes the libraries. She is a firm believer in the importance of our libraries, which are going to be the "fiberhoods" for the ultra-high-speed Google network being installed in Austin. She is working toward reinstating funding to keep them (libraries) open, perhaps even to the hours they had before the budget crunches.

Ms. Pool is also co-chair of the Austin Energy Committee, and is meeting with other committees of great interest to her and us. And she is actively working on forming a Community Action Task Force: Clearly this isn't a part-time job and she is becoming a great ally: Let's try to help her keep her energy level up!

CP Pool announced the setting up her first Town Hall Meeting, now scheduled for Saturday, 17 May, 10:00 a.m. to noon, at St. Albert Catholic Church at Metric and Bittern Hollow. The meeting will include representatives from several important departments, including Budget and CapMetro, so come and bring your questions.

Ms. Pool introduced Public Works rep Annie Kansei, who provided answers to questions about status of the 2012 Transportation Bond Election, which included \$15M for Burnet and Lamar improvements. The process of deciding which components of the plan will be implemented is just now in full motion (after not much more than two years! Wow?), and we should be able to follow progress via CP Pool's office as well as some city websites.

Information about changes to the Public Works Department working on our section of the North Walnut Creek Trail were described, and contact information was given (report from the resulting meetings on Pg 4). Our District 7 CP Pool made it clear - and is following up on it - that she intends to be an active advocate for our issues.

President Meadows then presided over election of board members under the new WCNA bylaws. These require officers to be selected from the board. Further, we had two long-serving members resign recently: Brad Wilcox and Jean Ramsey. Sharon Porter has been serving in place of Brad, and Kay and Joel Klumpp were nominated for membership on the board at the meeting. All officers and the remaining serving board members agreed to and were nominated for re-election and elected by voice vote, and Kay and Joel also were elected by voice vote. All officers were then re-elected at the subsequent WCNA board meeting on May 5<sup>th</sup>. The current lineup of board members and officers, with contact information, is shown on Page 6.

Following the election, Mr. Alex Moir presented efforts ongoing by Education Austin to improve effectiveness and efficiency of public school function by combining talents of parents, teachers and pupils to institute better communication with administration and provide hands-on augmentation of important school activities.

Angie Pineyro, President of River Oak Lake Estates (between Old Cedar Lane and Parmer, and Willow Wild and Lamar) then talked about their recent charter and the critical issue behind forming it. A new development is underway in their neighborhood, at the Northeast corner of Walnut Creek Metropolitan Park. The developer is lobbying to get a street built from Metric to IH 35 using Old Cedar Lane, which likely would produce the same cut-through traffic problems we have on Covington. We will be standing by them in their fight to prevent this.

## **Oh, Great: Property tax appraisals are here...**

You should have your appraisals from Travis Central Appraisal District (TCAD) by now, where you probably found that the same place we've been living for as long as 60 years is now at least 10% more valuable than it was last year. No doubt the primary reason for this is the red-hot real estate market of the last few years, since for most of us the property has actually deteriorated. This may be an even better year to protest our appraisals than last year. Note below that Jill Leberknight is holding workshops this year again in May to help us learn the latest scuttlebutt as well as hearing experiences from neighbors who have already interacted with TCAD. Remember your protest has to be submitted to TCAD by midnight, May 31<sup>st</sup>, unless waivers are granted.

**It may not feel like it, but the Fourth is with us!**

**Announcing: The Fourth(!) Annual Walnut Creek Neighborhood Independence Day Parade!**

Kay and Joel Klumpp will be graciously hosting again this year. At this point the plan is to meet around 10:00 on the morning of Friday the 4th at the Klumpp's home at 11813 Indianhead - with pot-luck contributions if you like - to prepare for the grand start of The Peninsula Parade. At a signal - probably about 11:00 a.m. - participants will begin the journey around "the peninsula" formed by north Indianhead, Caddo and Oakwood, ending - usually within 30 minutes - back at the Klumpps front yard for a pot-luck picnic lunch and meet/greet/schmoozefest with our neighbors and visitors. (By the way, 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!). And if you would like to help in any way, please contact Kay at [kayklumpp@yahoo.com](mailto:kayklumpp@yahoo.com)



**Two of Last Year's Paraders Wait to Start**

**Lamar Residence Being Converted to Recovery House**

You've certainly noticed the work going on at the property at 11711 N. Lamar. Looking at a recent picture, it's clear the the old residence is becoming a business operation. It has been zoned for LO (neighborhood office) for some time, and is now owned by Texas New Leaf, LLC. According to our current information, the property will



be a 15-bed temporary residence for recovering alcohol/drug dependents, operated by Benchmark Recovery Center. Benchmark has a large "residential" facility east of Austin and a number of recovery residences - or "sober homes" - inside Austin, and this looks to be one of these (residents have been through a

"resident" program). They state that their facilities conform to state and national standards for such recovery-oriented residences, which are claimed to greatly reduce rates of relapse. Dates for occupation are not yet known.

**A Day in Paradise: The 2015 NXNA Garden Tour** By Jill Leberknight

Started back in 2013 by the Love North Austin organization, the NXNA Garden Tour was held on Saturday, May 2nd. The weather was perfect, the gardens and environs were gorgeous, the artists who participated with each garden were fantastic, and all participants were enthusiastic!



The only disappointment was the total amount raised to fund some much-needed repairs and beautifications at Walnut Creek Metropolitan Park (Parks and Recreation's budget has been reduced significantly over the years) and a mural for McBee Elementary School. But it's not too late to contribute to the effort. Just go to <http://www.lovenorthaustin.com/nxna-garden-tour.html>.



**Property Appraisal Protest Workshops**

Tuesday May 19th & Wednesday May 27th 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.

We all gain from each other's experiences at these events. Come share, come learn, come ready to exercise your right to a fair property appraisal.

**NOTE:** This year's TCAD mailing included a flyer noting the ability to file our protest online (eFile) (apparently this has been the case for years but has not been highlighted). Not noted in the flyer is that if you do this you waive your right to the informal hearing, which is the face-to-face meeting wherein a TCAD agent decides whether an adjustment is warranted, makes the change and explains his/her logic to you "on the spot". If you disagree with the result from your eFile you go directly to a formal hearing, where positive results are "rare".



**Delays and Big Changes in the City Program for Our Park Trail** by Dorsey Twidwell

The Walnut Creek Trail, Northern Section, Phase 2, the portion of the urban "mobility" trail that extends from Walnut Creek Metropolitan Park through our neighborhood via our park (Walnut Bluffs Trailhead) to IH 35 remains in the design stage, but there have been significant developments in the last month. This "trail" will be a concrete path 10 feet wide with 5-foot shoulders, and will meet Americans with Disabilities Act specifications.

The Project Manager has changed recently and communications with impacted neighbors has improved, allowing serious consideration of some troubling design elements. Also we now have confirmation that the part of the plan to place a 12-car parking lot (with a concrete path connection to the main trail) at our trailhead just off Cedarbrook Court has been eliminated. It will remain essentially as it is: a trailhead with "natural" access to the new concrete trail.

Our District Council Person, Leslie Pool, has gotten actively involved and neighborhood representatives have had two meetings with city staff from Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Watershed Protection, and the contract engineers to discuss the current design.

Unfortunately, the current plan includes trenching and dredging out the creek to re-channel the water flow. It's very likely that this design would significantly destroy the riparian nature of the creek and has the potential for "very negative" impact downstream of the planned construction.

Walnut Creek Neighborhood was represented in these recent meetings by Robert Meadows, Gary Brewer, Bunnie Twidwell, Dorsey Twidwell, Kate Hamilton, and Chris Feldman. The new Project Manager, Jessica Salinas, has promised to reexamine the design to look at alternatives to certain features, such as the current plan to place a 16-foot-wide concrete bridge anchored in the 10-year flood plain between two of our homes.

Neighbors presented alternative suggestions for several "simpler" bridges that maintain the functionality and connectivity of the new trail without increasing flood risks to our homes as well as some of the apartments on the north side. The increased communication with city staff and participation of our Council Person, contrasting with reluctant interchange earlier in the project, is a positive sign for the future.

According to Ms. Salinas, the design phase should be at 60% completion by August/September 2015, and she is planning to hold a public stakeholder meeting at that time. (Note that this represents a further delay of the project, which was expected to go to contract at about that time (<http://wcnanews.com/>).

We are greatly encouraged and continue to be hopeful that a quality trail with a minimum of negative impact to the environment and the homes in our neighborhoods can be achieved.

**The annual Keep Austin Clean Sweep Day** was held on Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>. This year volunteers from Texas Commission for Environmental Quality (TCEQ) selected Walnut Bluffs Trailhead and Walnut Creek for their efforts, so our undertaking, organized by Board Member Tasha Bowser, was centered around our Pollyanna entrance from Braker, and included the old historic cemetery beside the Texan Market, too often littered from use by transients. The band of neighbors gathered over 17 bags of garbage from the area!

Kudos to all the volunteers for making our neighborhood more attractive and, best of all, for contributing to making us a better community!

Volunteers from all over Austin were treated to a KAB party at Fiesta Gardens at the end of the morning efforts. The party included food, drinks, games, prizes, music, tee shirts, bike valet and more. This sounds like a real incentive to being a good citizen as well as a good neighbor, so keep an eye on the neighborhood social media for announcements about the event next April!



**Shown in the picture are our intrepid workers (left to right): Sharon Porter, Tasha, Gary Brewer, Riaz and Mary Khan, Dorsey Twidwell, Laura Hampton, and Paul Birdsall. Lisa Todd also participated and also took the picture.**

### Calling all golfers!

We know golf is fun all on its own, and even better when it's for a good cause. On Saturday, May 30th, 2015 St. Mark United Methodist Church will host its first annual Golf Tournament at Star Ranch Golf Club in Hutto, TX. The events of the day include 18 holes of golf, carts, and range balls with catering provided. Awards will be given for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place, closest to hole and longest drive (wins a prize), hole in one (wins a truck). There will also be a silent auction and door prizes. You can create your own team of 4 players, or simply sign up and our coordinator will match you with other golfers. Cost per player is \$100. Email or call Shawna Cardona to register or ask questions – [cardonashawna@gmail.com](mailto:cardonashawna@gmail.com) or (512) 487-0509. All proceeds will benefit the ministries of St. Mark UMC, including our Food Pantry, Youth and Children's Programs, and many others.

### Screech Owl Family Live on Your Computer!

Quail Hollow neighbors Mark and Lyndon have a pair of owls living near them in an "owl box" they set up to attract them. They also set up a camera which monitors activity at what has become a nestbox 24 hours a day. You can watch Ollie and Olivia as they feed their chicks, or click on the images on the left side to show clips previously recorded when there is activity going on (times between such activities in realtime may be quite long). Go to [www.goo.gl/HYbqLq](http://www.goo.gl/HYbqLq) for the login, and use "wcna" for both user and password boxes.

### Despite the rain, the water supply remains low.

Rainfall has been heavy but "spotty", with little effect on our reservoir lakes, still under 40% of normal levels. Thus we remain under Stage 2 water restrictions, as shown at right.

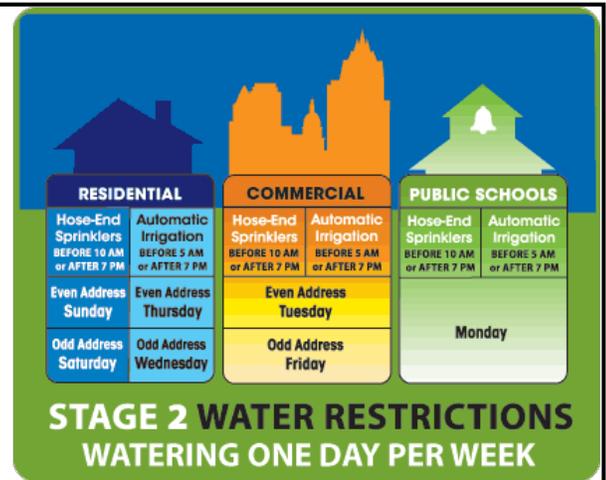
For residences, Stage 2 means **use of hose-end sprinklers only between 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. on Sundays for houses with even-numbered addresses and on Saturdays for odd-numbered addresses.**

For automatic systems: **before 5:00 a.m. and after 7:00 p.m., on Thursday (even) and Wednesday (odd addresses).**

Hand and drip watering can still be done anytime.

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

### Currently no burn ban in Travis County



### Some Interesting/Useful Links

<a href="http://www.austinwildliferescue.org/">http://www.austinwildliferescue.org/</a>	512 472-9453	They take most injured or abandoned wild animals
<a href="https://www.catalogchoice.org/signup">https://www.catalogchoice.org/signup</a>		Stop many unwanted mailings & phone calls
<a href="http://goo.gl/m2ijkE">http://goo.gl/m2ijkE</a>		Weather info for the 'hood. Current conditions, realtime precip & other data, forecast and history.
<a href="http://www.austintexas.gov/department/animal-services">http://www.austintexas.gov/department/animal-services</a>	512 974-2000	Austin's no-kill animal shelter, open 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. weekdays, 11:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. weekends.
<a href="http://goo.gl/9K1Qnq">http://goo.gl/9K1Qnq</a>	311	Trash, Recycle, Brush, Bulk pickup info & schedules
<a href="http://goo.gl/RdWNv2">http://goo.gl/RdWNv2</a>	512 474-1200	Bus and train info and schedules
<a href="http://propaccess.traviscad.org/clientdb/?cid=1">http://propaccess.traviscad.org/clientdb/?cid=1</a>	512 834-9317	Status, history and tax info on private properties in Travis County
<a href="https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/fire-marshall/burn-ban">https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/fire-marshall/burn-ban</a>	512 854-9020	Can you burn stuff outside or not?
<a href="http://library.austintexas.gov/">http://library.austintexas.gov/</a>	512 974-7301	Everything about your libraries
<a href="http://wcnanews.com/">http://wcnanews.com/</a>		Web site for WCNA, available, under development
<a href="http://goo.gl/UbLiAu">http://goo.gl/UbLiAu</a>		Main neighborhood social media site: Must live in the neighborhood to join.
<a href="http://goo.gl/vU5wjL">http://goo.gl/vU5wjL</a>		Original Yahoo neighborhood listserv, still available.
<a href="http://goo.gl/4G41rS">http://goo.gl/4G41rS</a>		Most extroverted and active Walnut Creek Neighborhood social media site
<a href="http://www.austintexas.gov/urbanforestry">http://www.austintexas.gov/urbanforestry</a>	512 974-9540	All about trees and related events in Austin. Subscribe to <i>Austin Treebune</i> , the online magazine.

May	6	Curbside Recycle Collection
	14	Classes begin for National Alliance Mental Health Peer-to-Peer. St. Johns United Methodist; 5908 Wynona; 6:30-8:30 p.m.
	17	Farmers Market at the Domain; 3225 Amy Donovan Plaza; 3:00 - 6:00 p.m.
	19	Property Appraisal Protest Workshop; Santorini; 6:30-8:00 p.m.
	20	Curbside Recycle Collection
	23	UT Commencement
	24	Farmers Market at the Domain; 3225 Amy Donovan Plaza; 3:00 - 6:00 p.m.
	27	Property Appraisal Protest Workshop; Santorini; 6:30-8:00 p.m.
	30	St. Mark UMC Golf Tournament at Star Ranch Golf Club, Hutto, TX Contact Shawna Cardona <a href="mailto:cardonashawna@gmail.com">cardonashawna@gmail.com</a> or (512) 487-0509
June	31	Farmers Market at the Domain; 3225 Amy Donovan Plaza; 3:00 - 6:00 p.m.
	3	Curbside Recycle Collection
	5	Last day of class for AISD
	10	SRP Event: Music for Kids: Staci Gray @ Little Walnut Creek Branch Library; 2:00 p.m.
	11 - 14	Republic of Texas (ROT) Rally (time to leave town or wear earplugs)
	20	Curbside Recycle Collection
July	21	First day of Summer; Fathers' Day
	1	Curbside Recycle Collection
	4	Walnut Creek Neighborhood 4th of July Parade & Pot Luck Picnic Gather 10:00 -11:00 a.m. at Kay & Joel Klumpps; 11813 Indianhead

**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**

**Austin City Council**

Mayor Steve Adler, 512-978-2100  
[Steve.Adler@austintexas.gov](mailto:Steve.Adler@austintexas.gov)  
Ora Houston, 512-978-2101  
[Ora.Houston@austintexas.gov](mailto:Ora.Houston@austintexas.gov)  
Delia Garza, 512-978-2102  
[Delia.Garza@austintexas.gov](mailto:Delia.Garza@austintexas.gov)  
Sabino “Pio” Renteria, 512-978-2103  
[Sabino.Renteria@austintexas.gov](mailto:Sabino.Renteria@austintexas.gov)  
Greg Casar, 512-978-2104  
[Gregorio.Casar@austintexas.gov](mailto:Gregorio.Casar@austintexas.gov)  
Ann Kitchen, 512-978-2105  
[Ann.Kitchen@austintexas.gov](mailto:Ann.Kitchen@austintexas.gov)  
Don Zimmerman, 512-978-2106  
[Don.Zimmerman@austintexas.gov](mailto:Don.Zimmerman@austintexas.gov)  
Leslie Pool, 512-978-2107  
[Leslie.Pool@austintexas.gov](mailto:Leslie.Pool@austintexas.gov)  
Ellen Troxclair, 512-978-2108  
[Ellen.Troxclair@austintexas.gov](mailto:Ellen.Troxclair@austintexas.gov)  
Kathie Tovo, 512-978-2109  
[Kathie.Tovo@austintexas.gov](mailto:Kathie.Tovo@austintexas.gov)  
Sheri Gallo, 512-978-2121  
[Sheri.Gallo@austintexas.gov](mailto:Sheri.Gallo@austintexas.gov)

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**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](mailto:adam.soliz@austintexas.gov)

Adan Ballesteros, County Constable, Pct 2 (512) 854-9697  
[Adan.Ballesteros@co.travis.tx.us](mailto: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
339-0229	<a href="mailto:robertl@meadows.com">robertl@meadows.com</a>
Theresa Jones	Vice President
832-0404	<a href="mailto:tjones72@austin.rr.com">tjones72@austin.rr.com</a>
Pat Pitt	Treasurer
837-6620	<a href="mailto:s.pitt@earthlink.net">s.pitt@earthlink.net</a>
Kay & Joel Klumpp	
491-0934	<a href="mailto:kayklumpp@yahoo.com">kayklumpp@yahoo.com</a>
Jill Leberknight	
294-7296	<a href="mailto:jill@weemus.com">jill@weemus.com</a>
Dorsey and Bunnie Twidwell	
339-0412	<a href="mailto:bunnie@mail.utexas.edu">bunnie@mail.utexas.edu</a>
Tasha Bowser	
731-6863	<a href="mailto:Bowser.Tasha@gmail.com">Bowser.Tasha@gmail.com</a>
Christian Ninaud	
971-7628	<a href="mailto:mtbrider007@yahoo.com">mtbrider007@yahoo.com</a>
Sharon Porter	
656-7586	<a href="mailto:sharonmporter1@gmail.com">sharonmporter1@gmail.com</a>

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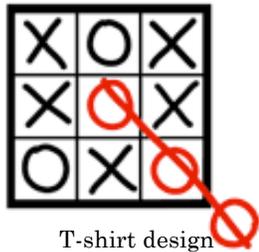
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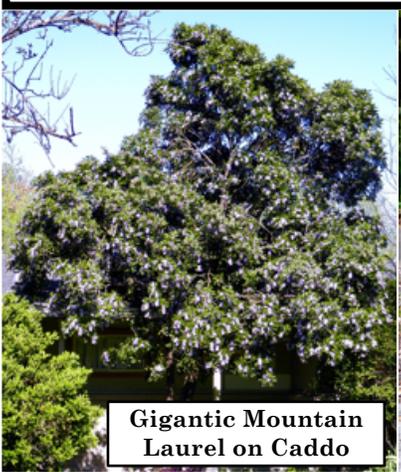



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One of Laura Hampton's  
Magnificent Irises  
("Busy Being Blue") on Hilltop

## 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

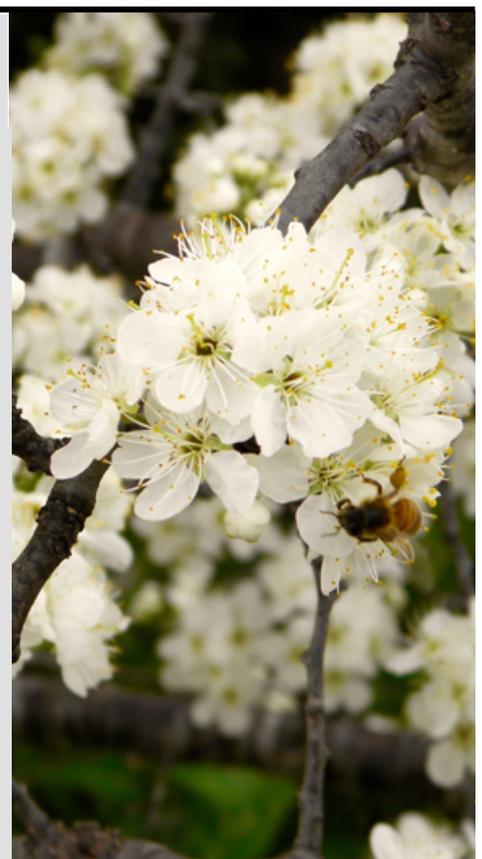
Dues notices and payment envelopes are included in the Nov-Dec and Jan-Feb newsletters each year.

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](mailto: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.



Fruit Tree Blossoms on Tedford