



# Walnut Creek Neighborhood News

Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association

Sept  
Oct  
2016

## Join Us!

Dues and P.O. Box are shown in this newsletter on the back page below your address label, along with the PayPal address for credit card payment.

## Social Media/Listservs:

Yahoo: <http://goo.gl/vU5wjL>

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

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



which runs just east of the car wash. Activities will start at 6:30, with the Pizza, salad, liquids, watermelon, ice cream and anything you might like to bring to add to the feast served in the Fellowship Hall, behind and on the east side of the main church. There are parking places behind the Hall as well as beside the main church, and also space on Motheral Rd. Tables and chairs will be set up both inside the hall and outside on the grass, where a bubble machine, games and a bounce castle will provide distractions for adults and kids (and adults acting like kids).



In appreciation of their generosity, WCNA requests that you bring a non-perishable food item or two for St. Mark's pantry, which feeds the local needy.

Officials from the City of Austin will drop by to describe and/or demonstrate the tools used to counter crime and the effects of crime: Austin Police Department brings vehicles, as does the Austin Fire Department. Austin Code brings information about what constitutes City code violations and what and how to identify and report such. The kids (ahem!) frequently get to see the lights, hear the sirens, and see and hear how these things are deployed by the professionals who do so. Literature will be provided explaining what you can do to protect yourself, your family and your property at your home. Representatives of our Neighborhood Watch also will be present with information, as well as



members of the Walnut Creek Cat Coalition. You might also meet a politician or two, and you will be able to join WCNA, pay dues or donate, and/or sign up for Association activities.

**Prizes will be awarded** to the attending neighborhood residents who have lived in the neighborhood for the longest time and for the shortest time (our newest resident).

Prizes will also be awarded to the oldest and youngest neighborhood residents present.

It's always a great opportunity to meet new neighbors and chew the fat - I mean pizza - with old ones. And of course it's always the kids who have the best time!



## Neighborhood-Wide Garage Sale Coming!

Then on **Saturday, Oct 22nd** our annual **Walnut Creek Neighborhood Garage Sale** will be held, coordinating garage sales at all homes who choose to participate. This coincides with St. Mark's Fall festival "St. Market Day and Pumpkin Patch", so it's a "twofer". WCNA will be advertising the event in several media and generating a map of participating homes for distributing to "garage salers" when they enter the neighborhood.

Here are a few features of this sale: No commission or fees of any kind are owed to the Association; the garage sale held by the individual participant is held at the participant's own property (no central site); the Association puts ads in the local newspapers; the Association publishes a map of participants; the Association puts up sandwich signs at the subdivision entrances and other signage within the subdivision; and of course the participant may hold their sale on the corresponding Friday and Sunday, but without Association involvement.

You may of course hold a garage sale without being on the map, but if you wish to be on the map, please contact me, Robert Meadows, by about noon, Friday, October 21, 2016. I will drop off copies at your home. In the past, incoming buyers have said that they like the map, even if they do not use it. The map gives the garage sale a bit more of a professional appearance. Please call me at 512 339 0229 or use my email: [ROBERTL@meadows.com](mailto:ROBERTL@meadows.com).

## Water, Water, Everywhere...

**Who'da thought** we would get more than 8 inches of rain in a week in the middle of August? Fortunately it fell gently enough not to cause serious (reported) flooding in the neighborhood, and the temperature and lawn-watering relief was fantastic. And it provides a great lead-in to our flooding and watershed improvement issues.

### Flood Mitigation Task Force (FMTF) Report

A City-commissioned study of the risks and possible remedies for flooding in endangered parts of the city was documented by the FMTF, on which our own Dorsey Twidwell - with significant help and support from his wife Bunnie - served from the end of last year until recently (see the May-June newsletter). These results were summarized in presentations at a meeting hosted by our District 7 councilperson Leslie Pool at the Northwest Recreation Center on August 10th, with Watershed Protection director Joe Pantalione and engineers Kein Shunk and Matt Hollon in attendance, as well as County Commissioner Brigid Shea. Dorsey and FMTF members from Council Districts 4 (Carol Olewin) and 9 (Elloa Mathews) took turns summarizing findings of the task force while taking questions, comments and suggestions from the standing-room-only audience. They then listed some of the resulting recommendations; e.g. (1) The City should adopt a city-wide flood mitigation prioritization policy based on loss of life, general health and safety, and property damage; (4) Watershed Protection Department's Operations and Maintenance budget should be funded...(at a level commensurate with the scale of the problems). This is the most obvious need: Addressing existing issues "on the books" with current personnel and funding would require at least 75 years. I.e., there can be no "catch-up". Without additional bond money in 2018 the undersized, decaying infrastructure and increasing impervious cover from development will certainly result in more - and more serious - flooding problems. Members of the FMTF are continuing to push for this.

### Update on the watershed work reported in the last issue

Work to straighten, widen and "armor" the stretch of Skunk Creek from about 11408 to 11500 was completed in August. The work entailed machines from Bobcat-sized to pretty large backhoes, and large dump trucks capable of hauling sizable loads of very large limestone rocks. The drainage easement between Whitewing Ave. and Skunk Creek at the south edge of 11408 Whitewing was widened to allow the larger machines and trucks to get down to the creek. Both sides and the bottom of the creek were "straightened" and lined with rocks large enough to - it's fervently hoped - prevent washing of same down the creek. The most recent heavy rains then provided an initial test of the results, which were very impressive.

The erosion that ultimately invoked this project was at the back of property on Oakwood, where dams caused by tree roots and large objects - trees, brush and auto parts - caused water to flow rapidly toward and against the creek bank on that side. This erosion can be seen in the top picture on the right, after the creek has been straightened and initial rock deliveries have been moved down beside the large indentation seen to the left. This erosion took more than 15 feet of the backyard, as seen in the picture. Note the temporary chain-link fence running close to the tree near the center of the picture.

In the bottom picture on the right the finished yard reconstruction is obvious behind the square-cut rocks forming the new west side of the creek. Note the water running smoothly over the big rocks (Gary Brewer explains that this rough boundary actually produces smoother flows during heavy events because of the air introduced into the stream) shortly following a total of more than 3 inches of rain on August 16th. The repaired backyard can be directly compared to the previous erosion using the fence and tree for reference points. The original fence ran near those stones forming the left edge of the new creek bed.

The other Watershed project in the neighborhood (see the July-Aug newsletter) is more complex, involving large concrete culverts and other concrete structures. Work continues sporadically in the early days of September, with much remaining to be done.



**22 June 2016, near the beginning of the Skunk Creek watershed project.**



**16 August 2016, after completion of this section of the Skunk Creek project & after intense rain.**

### Important Elections Coming!

Of course we all know there's a big national election happening on November 8th (first Tuesday after the first Monday in November), since we can't listen to or watch any news source without being barraged by the latest bull.., I mean status. But the more important elections to most of us involve the City of Austin (CoA) and Austin Independent School District (AISD). The ballot will be at <http://lwvaustin.org/voter-guide/> before 24 October.

**First order of business: make sure you're registered by 11 October.** Here's a handy way to check: <http://www.votetravis.com/vexpress/display.do>.

The currently anticipated vote which will likely affect us the most will be on the largest mobility bond issue ever approved by the Austin City Council: 720 million dollars large. At this time the primary focus is on "fixing" the most important transportation corridors to and around downtown. \$482 million is earmarked for these "Smart Corridors", to be divided (by the city staff) between seven main streets in the city: North Lamar and South Lamar boulevards and Burnet Road (the heaviest-traveled), Airport Boulevard, East Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, Guadalupe Street, East Riverside Drive and either William Cannon Drive or Slaughter Lane, or perhaps both. Changes on those corridors would include one or more of the following: adding bike lanes, wider sidewalks, medians where they don't exist, curb cutouts for buses and signals to allow buses to get back into traffic from same, more turn bays at intersections, some bus priority lanes, and technology upgrades. North Lamar obviously ranks highest for us, and the improvements which would help most - and which we were supposed to get from the 2012 mobility bond - would be long, dedicated turn lanes ("bays") at the Braker intersection and sidewalks.



The bond issue includes \$137 million for "local mobility": \$65 million for sidewalks; \$26 million for urban trails; \$20 million for bikeways; \$15 million for "fatality reduction strategies" on roads, and \$11 million for street repairs on at least 10 streets. In addition \$101 million is planned for "regional mobility": \$46 million for improvements to five intersections on Loop 360 (a Texas Department of Transportation road); \$17 million for improvements to a two-lane section of Spicewood Springs Road east of Loop 360; \$30 million on Anderson Mill Road, RM 620 and Parmer Lane; and \$8 million on Old Bee Caves Road.

**Also of importance to us:** We will elect - or re-elect - our District 7 City Council Representative. Our current rep, Leslie Pool, drew one of the five short straws and thus is serving for only two years. She is running for re-election this Fall and is being opposed by Natalie Gauldin. Watch for forums on radio/TV.

And especially to those of us with kids in school: On the November ballot will be candidates for Austin School Board trustee. Our Single Member District 3 trustee, Ann Teich, is up for re-election this time. At-large Position 8 is held by Gina Hinojosa, who has resigned to run for the Texas House District 49 but will remain until after the November elections. Watch for candidates for this position between now and then.

And then there's that presidential thing. Early voting starts 24 October and ends 4 November.

#### A Break in Electric Rates in 2017, but...

increases in fees for all city services more than makes up for it. After very intensive analyses of Austin Energy's costs to provide service to each of the five "tiers" (levels of usage) of customers, and extensive negotiations among the stakeholders and AE reductions in cost to all consumers was negotiated, to start in January. The reduction is very small for the lowest-level users - and highest for the mid-level users, with the heaviest users getting less "relief". This formulation was near-unanimously accepted, and makes rates correspond closer to costs to provide the services.

But...the table to the right (from the Austin Chronicle) reflects Council's effort to cover the costs of all programs budgeted for CY2017 after all anticipated costs were at least tentatively known. The electric rate reduction above is a separate action. In the end, the costs of all services to "us" - residential customers - is going up because of additional fees added to cover the budgeted costs. What's given with one hand is more than taken away with the other...

FEE	PROPOSED INCREASE	WHAT'S A TYPICAL RATE PAYER?
Austin Energy	\$1.74	Residential customer using 895 kWh
Austin Water	\$2.95	Residential customer using 5,800 gallons of water and 4,000 gallons of wastewater
Resource Recovery	\$1.00	Residential customer with a 64-gallon can
Clean Community	\$.40	Per single-family home
Transportation User	\$1.75	Per single-family home
Drainage User	\$.98	Residential customer with 3,100 sq. ft./37% of impervious cover
Property Tax Bill	\$3.66	FY 2016-17 median non-senior homestead with an assessed value of \$278,741
<b>Total Monthly Impact</b>	<b>\$12.48</b>	<b>Combined projected increase of 4.0%</b>

## Get Ready to Get Your Green On! NXNA Garden & Artist Tour Returns For 2017

You probably remember the North-by-North Austin (NXNA) garden tours in previous years, the last one in 2015. Besides allowing us gardening freaks the pleasure of admiring the efforts of neighbors - and providing an opportunity to show off our own - the tours produce funding for local community beautification projects. Carole Goltze and E. J. Brown in Gracywoods are organizing the tour for 2017, currently planned for Saturday the 13th of May. Carole issued the following call on social media:

Attention all artists, gardeners and plant enthusiasts! Do you live in the area between 183 and Parmer, I-35 to Mopac? If so we want YOU!

We are in the process of planning for the **2017 NXNA (North by North Austin) Garden and Artist Tour**. We are looking for gardens and artists (you do not have to have your own space, you can be paired with a garden). Also planned for that day is a plant sale, so plants, pots, and volunteers to start plants are all needed.

Besides gardeners and artists, volunteers are also being recruited for 3 committees:

1. Sponsorship - finding sponsors to help fund the project.
2. Publicity
3. Computer: Knowledge of dropbox and updating files, maps, spreadsheets.

Proceeds from the garden tour and plant sale will benefit local community beautification projects.

You can email questions or suggestions to Carole Goltze, [cgoltze@yahoo.com](mailto:cgoltze@yahoo.com), or EJ Brown, [mizejbrown@gmail.com](mailto:mizejbrown@gmail.com). For information on garden issues contact [cgoltze@yahoo.com](mailto:cgoltze@yahoo.com); For the art component contact Stephanie Frogge, [stephaniefrogge@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stephaniefrogge@sbcglobal.net); For plants and plant sales: [mizejbrown@gmail.com](mailto:mizejbrown@gmail.com).

The application process will be through a website under construction. Applications will be coming out soon, with a likely requested completion date of January 31, 2017.

## Dream Becoming Real: Walnut Park Crossing Under Construction!!!

As you can see from Lamar, serious work is now in progress establishing the "base" for the upscale development by Larry Peel Co. called Walnut Park (just look to the right after you cross the bridge over Walnut Creek when you head north out of the neighborhood on Lamar. The first obvious construction activity will be the southmost entry/exit into the complex. Then you see some massive rock retaining walls through the trees, finally coming to a large entrance with the beginning of a road heading east. This road will be **Walnut Park Crossing**, curving around the large development comprising high-end apartments, clubhouse, fitness center, swimming pool, and other accoutrements. Walnut Park Crossing will connect Park 35 Circle to North Lamar, providing a direct route to northbound Lamar for commuters from businesses and state offices there, as well as inhabitants of Limestone Canyon Apartments. This is the long-awaited (>30 years) bypass we're hoping to reduce our cut-through traffic.

President Robert Meadows reports that Peel anticipates completion of the road in about three months, with opening for public use following CoA blessing.

## Protect Our Kids: School Bus Rules of the Road

Articles - and a quiz - in the Austin Statesman recently noted the traffic rules regarding school buses which are stopped to load and unload students. Also noted was the now-uniform presence of cameras mounted on buses to record traffic around the bus when stopped with lights flashing and/or other signals indicating the presence of students. These cameras resulted in about 6,600 tickets mailed to violators before the summer break this year, and recently recorded two students hit by drivers who illegally failed to stop in the first week of school. Fortunately neither student was seriously injured.

Here's the bottom line:

**You can pass a loading/unloading bus ONLY if there's a median separating the lanes and you are driving in the lane(s) opposite the bus. The fine for violation can be up to \$1250 for a first offense.**

The percentage of drivers who don't know or ignore the law is shocking: Please don't be one of these!



### Thinking of Using Rat Poison? Please Don't!

Rodenticides - rat poisons - are now in "second generation". The first generation was/is deadly to wildlife, both directly from ingestion and indirectly from eating a poisoned rodent or other poisoned animal. Second generation versions are even more deadly, designed to kill from a single feeding of the bait. These Second-G poisons also are toxic for longer times in the body and are more acutely toxic to other forms of wildlife than previous compounds.



Of course "wildlife" may include your or other folks pet cats and dogs, as well as other animals who control mice and rats naturally. Thus this form of rodent control can be self defeating because of its effect on our natural predator ecosystem: owls, hawks, crows, vultures, foxes, raccoons, skunks, opossums, etc. Animals poisoned either directly or by ingesting a poisoned mouse or rat die from internal hemorrhaging, which can take several days. This mortal internal damage may not be evident even when the poisoned animal is actually near death, a particularly terrible way to die.

### It's Too Late to Trim Oak Trees Safely

We are now at a time in the year when trimming oak trees increases the risk of development of Oak Wilt, because of increased activity on the part of the vector that spreads the disease. This vector is less active during periods when the high temperature for the day is consistently above 90 (think August) or during the coldest part of winter. As a general rule of thumb, January is the next period of reduced risk. When in doubt, consult our CoA arborist.

While we enjoyed the cooler, rainier days this August, tree limbs grew heavier and many neighbors are looking at limbs on their roofs or broken branches, and planning tree trimming to prevent roof damage. If this is you and the tree is a Live Oak or Red Oak the increased risk of having your tree contract Oak Wilt does not mean you cannot do necessary trimming, but it does mean scrupulous attention should be paid to practices like sterilizing tools between trees and immediately sealing wounds.

Remember that the CoA has an arborist dedicated to Oak Wilt mapping who also knows our neighborhood well. For questions about a specific situation, contact:

Chris Dolan, Environmental Program Coordinator  
Arborist for Oak Wilt Suppression Program  
City of Austin – Development Services Dept.  
Urban Forest Division  
505 Barton Springs Road, 4th floor  
512/974-1881 <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-arborist>

**Canopy Comments  
by Sharon Porter**



#### Canopy replacement:

October is considered a good month to plant trees for restoring lost canopy. Where oak wilt is a concern, consider trees from the White Oak group, or non-oaks native to this area: e.g. Pecan or Cedar Elm.

### Social Media: We Got It!

If you haven't yet joined any (or all) of the methods used in the neighborhood for communication among ourselves, you should check out the opportunities. Because of the evolution in this area over the last ten years or so, we have adopted the most relevant each time "better" ones came along. As a result you can stay in contact with what's happening in the neighborhood with each one or all of them. They were adopted at different times over the years, so the interface to the user is notably different in each.

Our original news group was established long before the others on Yahoo, and has about 367 members: <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/wcnanews/info>. Many joined this group and have not joined the newer ones, so there is no overlap of a sizable subset of these members in the ones below. To join this group just go to the site and request to join. The moderator should have you connected quickly, and you can choose how you want to receive notices and other preferences using the "?" (help) button on the upper right side.

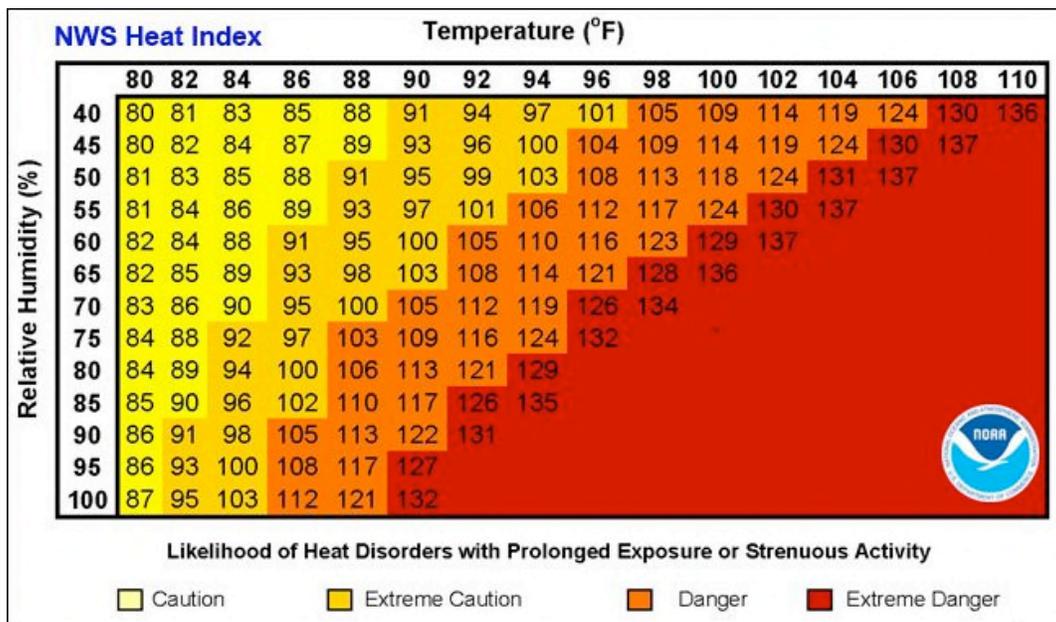
Our primary group application is limited to residents within the WCNA boundaries. It is Nextdoor: [https://wcna.nextdoor.com/neighborhood\\_feed/?is=sidebar](https://wcna.nextdoor.com/neighborhood_feed/?is=sidebar), with about 510 members representing 350 households. You must live within the boundaries of WCNA to be a member. This can be done in several ways, the easiest of which is to be invited by a current member. Contact a board member listed on the page below or find a neighbor to send you an invitation. Otherwise you can go to the site and request to join, then choose the methods given there.

We also have a Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/wcnanews/> with about 235 members. To join this group you must have a Facebook account (i.e., you must join Facebook, which is very easy to do at Facebook.com). Then go to the link above and request to join. The moderator is likely to make this happen very quickly. If you're already on Facebook you will note functioning in the wcnanews group will be very familiar.

### Why does it feel so hot when it's not: The Heat Index

The weather in Austin for the last couple of years has been some of the strangest on record. So far this year in our neighborhood we have had about 40 inches of rainfall, compared to our average in the low 30's for an entire year. And in the last 12 months we've received about 58 inches. The result of all the moisture and clouds has been cooler weather much of this year, and yet this summer has felt as hot or hotter than years with many days with temperatures greater than 100 degrees (Fahrenheit, of course). As the weatherpersons say, this is the "Heat Index", and they now routinely state this index with their weather reports and forecasts. When they do this they are using the National Weather Service model for this measure, which tries to produce a "temperature" value that relates to how our bodies sense the temperature-humidity combination at hand; i.e., how we "feel". Higher humidity impedes evaporation of the sweat from our skin, thus preventing the cooling effect we would have in drier air. To the right is that NWS model in a tabular format.

**Note especially the warning legend for the color coding under the table**



#### 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  
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- Ann Kitchen, 512-978-2105  
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- Sheri Gallo, 512-978-2121  
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**EMERGENCY:** Police, Fire, EMS, Animal Control: Call 911

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

**Get the smart phone 311 App:**  
Austin311 on Google Play and iTunes

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                      [robertl@meadows.com](mailto:robertl@meadows.com)
- Theresa Jones                      Vice President  
832-0404                      [tjones72@austin.rr.com](mailto:tjones72@austin.rr.com)
- Pat Pitt                      Treasurer  
837-6620                      [s.pitt@earthlink.net](mailto:s.pitt@earthlink.net)
- Kay & Joel Klumpp  
491-0934                      [kayklumpp@yahoo.com](mailto:kayklumpp@yahoo.com)
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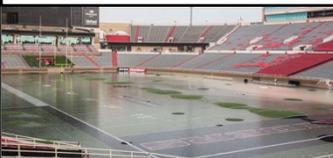
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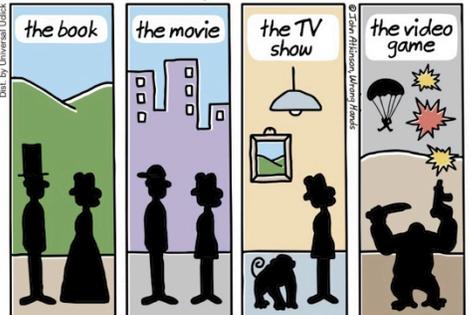
Lunch Specials  
 Monday to Friday  
 11:00am - 2:00pm

Happy Hour  
 Daily 5-8pm




Crepe Myrtles on Tedford

adaptations



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Sept :: October 2016

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**Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association**

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

**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/5iQIk>

**WCNA News** is sent to every household within the Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association boundaries: 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 Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association, Inc.

**Calendar of Events**

Sept	12-16	Big Brush Pickup; Starts on Monday and ends on Friday or when all is picked up
	18	Austin Museum Day; <a href="http://www.austinmuseums.org/museumday/">www.austinmuseums.org/museumday/</a>
	19	Talk Like a Pirate Day! Aarrrrr...
	21 Wed	Blue Recycle Container Picked Up: Curbside by 7:00 a.m.
	22	First day of Fall
	23-24	St. Elias Mediterranean Festival ; <a href="http://www.facebook.com/MedFestAustin/">www.facebook.com/MedFestAustin/</a>
	24-25	Pecan Street Festival, Sixth Street
	30 - 2 Oct	ACL Music Festival; Zilker Park (first weekend of two)
Oct	4	National Neighborhood Night Out: See lead article in this issue
	5 Wed	Blue Recycle Container Picked Up: Curbside by 7:00 a.m.
	7-9	ACL Music Festival; Zilker Park (second weekend)
	10	Columbus Day
	11	Last day to register to vote!!!
	19 Wed	Blue Recycle Container Picked Up: Curbside by 7:00 a.m.
	22	St. Mark United Methodist Church "St. Market Day Fall Festival & Pumpkin Patch"; 9-4 pm
	22	WCNA Neighborhood Garage Sale
	24	Early voting begins
31	Halloween, of course...	
Nov	2 Wed	Blue Recycle Container Picked Up: Curbside by 7:00 a.m.
	4	Early voting ends
	6	Daylight saving time ends (set clock one hour backward)
	8	Voting day!!