



# Walnut Creek Neighborhood News

Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association

A pdf version in color is available at [www.WCNAnews.com](http://www.WCNAnews.com)

July  
Aug  
2023

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## The Eleventh WCN Parade and Picnic was the Biggest (so far)!

**Kay and Joel Klumpp's** organically-grown neighborhood event filled the yard and street with people and cars (they stretched up Indianhead and around the corner on Caddo!). The "usual bunch" was joined by many first-timers, ages ranging from not-quite-zero-yet to octogenarians. This has become the seminal event in the neighborhood since the Klumpps first invited their neighbors to join them in 2012. It's clear why: Great fellowship and fun! And patriotism!



Master Enabler and neighbor Adrienne Arter with Master Hosts Joel and Kay!

After weeks of unbearable heat, with heat indices up to 120 degreesF, Independence Day 2023 actually seemed almost pleasant. With some overcast and an occasional gentle breeze, it only reached about 97 degrees, and during the parade and picnic it started in the low 80s and never hit 90. Actually, it don't get much better than that in Austin in July!

The magnanimous hosts cooked hot dogs and provided fixin's, surrounded by tables with dozens of contributions from participants and well-wishers. Always an amazing outlay!

Once again, Todd Johnson showed that he's a master brewer, this time bestowing on us an IPA and a delightful Meade, flavored with peppercorns and Sichuan peppers. Connoisseurs were universally impressed with both.

The parade was led again by Philip Bates, who played a wide repertoire of patriotic and popular tunes on his bagpipe while participants followed him around "The Peninsula" with "marchers" stretching almost the length of the Oakwood section. This was, once again, his second one of the day: His **Capitol City Highlanders** led a parade in Crestview before he returned to his/our neighborhood for this one; it's no wonder that he had changed shirts between parades! Philip's performance always elevates the event, amplifying its national and civic importance.

Since most of us carry cameras on our phones these days, there surely are thousands of pictures from the event "out there". Many of these can be seen at the end of the newsletter and on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/wcnaews>.



Philip leads the way down Caddo with dozens of followers. Photo by Eric



Joel & Kay's hot dogs and Todd's terrific IPA (left) and Meade

The neighborhood association set up a table to provide name tags, collect donations for the St. Mark Food Bank, enroll new members, meet new (and old) neighbors, and "take the pulse" of attendees concerning the event and the neighborhood in general. WCNA is always looking for ways to improve the sense of community in the neighborhood by gathering ideas and opinions, and meeting potential new board and/or committee members, or just talking with folks enthusiastic about making this a better place to live and play.

About \$400 in cash and many food donations were collected to help refill the food bank shelves and coffers.

While we had a slightly cooler day on the 4th than over the previous couple of weeks, July 4<sup>th</sup> turned out to be the hottest day ever recorded worldwide. That is, temperature averaged over sensors around the globe (including satellite data) showed the highest such value since such measurements started in the '80s. Then the next day was even hotter. And it's not lookin' all that great for us here in Austin for the coming days. We're told that water warming at/near the surface of the Pacific near South America, a condition called *El Nino* by weather people, is highly correlated with record high temperatures, and we're developing that condition as you read this.

### DPS Troopers Back in Austin

DPS troopers were deployed to the border by the governor in May, after also drawing criticism about the ratio of arrests of minority residents compared to white folks during their brief time in Austin starting in April. The surge of migrants anticipated by the governor did not happen – in fact the numbers have dropped significantly – allowing DPS to reestablish joint operations with some Texas cities.

A consensus among participants in establishing joint operations in Austin seems to have been reached that the statistics were skewed by the areas assigned for DPS to patrol, as a main focus at the time was reduction of violent crimes. A driving force behind high crime rates was – and still is – a severe shortage of trained police officers in the field, a problem being experienced in almost every mid- to large-sized city in the country. DPS deployment did result in significant improvement in some crime rates and officer response times. See <https://tinyurl.com/copstroops>



Until Austin training classes are able to graduate sufficient new officers, DPS troopers can alleviate the effects of insufficient community patrolling for as long as the agency and the city can agree on deployment details. Unfortunately, alleviating the severe shortage in personnel to handle 911 and 311 calls likely will take at least as long with the tight job market in Austin.

After a month and a half hiatus of the relationship, the City and DPS have now established different approaches to Trooper deployment, with the intent to make their arrest statistics look more like those for APD. This process involved the mayor, City Council and APD Chief Chacon (and surely a few others). The estimated time for redeployment of troopers was July 2<sup>nd</sup>, so we should now be seeing more DPS cruisers on the streets. And, we hope, lower rates of all types of crime and shorter response times to citizen reports.

We still have the severe shortage of 911 call answerers in the tight job market, and also of police officers, which will be alleviated some with the next graduating class of cadets.

### “Spring” Neighborhood Garage Sale & Craft Fair Produced Mixed Results *by Robert Meadows*

The neighborhood-wide garage and craft sale sponsored by the **Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association** was held on 20 May 2023. The Association provided promotional services in the form of advertisements in the Statesman and Chronicle, both print and online, and signage such as the sandwich signs at entrances, red-and-white garage sale signs, and arrows (distributed at strategic locations to guide lookers through the neighborhood to sales). The Association also provided each participant with maps that showed where the garage and craft sales were in our neighborhood. The theory here is that the maps can be provided to lookers in order to facilitate their movement about our somewhat difficult-to-navigate neighborhood.

There were 23 participants listed on the map; these participants were distributed throughout the neighborhood. There were some last-minute withdrawals, while others participated without asking to be on the map, so the precise actual number of participants is unknown. The Association spent about \$159 for ads in the Statesman and Chronicle, signage for the sandwich signs, and copies of the map.

The reports from the field were that there was good to very good traffic, with a sale on Covington performing very well. Others reported many lookers, but also many who passed by without stopping. This might be due to the looker's perception of a relatively small inventory, which would suggest that several adjacent neighbors might pool inventory into a single sale.

The Association is moving toward two sales per year from the previous one sale per year in October. The Association has been sponsoring this event for at least four decades. As was the case with this one, the Association is moving in the direction of having a joint garage and craft sale. To this end, some of the advertising and signage has been changed from opening/closing times of “8 am to 2 pm” to “8 am to ?” or “8 am to whenever”, since a craft sale may last much later into the afternoon than a garage sale normally would.

A garage sale/craft sale is planned for October, 2023, although the date is uncertain at this time. The date will be published on Facebook and Nextdoor, in the email blast, in this newsletter, and in the kiosk handouts. Your advice and feedback is welcome (Robert Meadows at [ROBERTTL@meadows.com](mailto:ROBERTTL@meadows.com) and 512 633 1459).



## **Find Inner Peace along the banks of Walnut Creek**

*by Tasha Bowser*

For thousands of years, our area of Walnut Creek and its natural springs have been a sacred space for the people that live here. That tradition continues today with semi-regular Morning Mindfulness meetings on Saturdays.

In today's fast-paced and stressful world, more and more people are turning to meditation as a way to find inner peace and balance. While practicing meditation alone can be beneficial, joining a meditation group can amplify the benefits and provide a sense of community and support.

One of the greatest advantages of being part of a meditation group is the supportive environment it offers. By joining a group, individuals are surrounded by like-minded individuals who share similar goals and aspirations.

Joining a meditation group adds a sense of accountability to your practice. The group's collective commitment to meditation helps individuals stay dedicated to their practice, even during times when motivation might waver.

Practicing meditation in a group setting can deepen your experience and focus. The collective energy generated during a meditation session can be contagious, making it easier to enter a meditative state. As participants sit together, their collective stillness and intention create a tranquil atmosphere that supports a deeper sense of calm and concentration. This shared energy can enhance the quality of your meditation practice and open doors to new levels of self-awareness and insight.

The support, guidance, and sense of community that a meditation group offers can enhance your practice, deepen your understanding, and provide the motivation needed to stay committed to your meditation journey. By coming together with others who share a similar aspiration, you embark on a collective voyage towards tranquility, clarity, and spiritual growth. So, if you're looking to enhance your meditation practice and enjoy the benefits of a supportive community, consider joining us at the trailhead to connect with nature and embark on a transformative journey towards inner peace. Here's how to join with the group:

Meet at trailhead entrance at 9:30am and walk to the creek.

We will do a short round of optional "check-ins" followed by 10 minutes of quiet time.

During the quiet time you can meditate, sit and observe nature, journal, or anything else that quietly helps you feel present and mindful.

After the first 10 minutes, we will spend a few minutes sharing about our experiences. Feel free to leave at this point, or stick around for another 20 minutes of quiet time.

Hang out for as long as you'd like afterward to continue reflecting and sharing about our experiences.

Blanket or yoga mat is recommended.



## **Hornsby Resurfaced!**

Exactly two years after the last WCN street (Whitewing) was resurfaced, one of the longest streets in the neighborhood has been redone the same way. But what a difference: The work on Whitewing was done in less than a week, whereas Hornsby was "scraped" on June 14<sup>th</sup> and was being surfaced on July 11<sup>th</sup>, giving us a bumpy and dusty drive any time we used it. But: How nice it is! (hope your Google Fiber survived.)



This is the monster machinery precisely scraping/grinding about 2" off the surface of Whitewing



Rolling the west half of Hornsby

### QR Codes Being Used for Scams: Consumer Reports

Stands to reason that QR codes would be adopted by scammers, since they are just another way to represent a URL; i.e., a web address. They've been reported in "snail mail" scams as well as on the web, and on such things as fake parking tickets left on car windshields. One of the most devious uses is on stickers that can be put on most anything, and that are easy to generate. So now we have another thing to be wary about. The basic advice is also the same as for online scams: Pay attention to the URL – digital address - that comes up when you scan a code (or see a link in an email or other attempt to get you to click). If the address doesn't start with <https://> followed by a correctly-spelled name, don't click! In fact, in general don't click on addresses sent to you. Instead open a window and find a correct address for whomever you're trying to connect with and click on that address (another clue about well-known company names being used for scams is they're frequently "subtly" misspelled, e.g. amazzon or amazonn). These kinds of scams have become so common that we should pay close attention to every address before we click. Note that if you click on the first letter of an address that starts with just a name the <https://> should pop up before the name if it is a safe address. Also you should see a "padlock" symbol before the name, and clicking on that should show a drop-down list that tells whether the site is secure.

Let's hope the scammers don't get so sophisticated that they can scam these safety features too...

**The 988 Lifeline data** for May 2023, including contacts from an LGBTQI+ pilot, shows an **increase** in overall volume compared to 2022. The 988 Lifeline answered **159,040 more** contacts (calls, chats and texts) and significantly improved how quickly contacts were answered. The average speed to answer across all contacts decreased from **140 seconds** to **35 seconds**. In May 2023 vs. May 2022, calls answered increased by **45%**, chats answered increased by **52%**, and texts answered increased by **938%**. See: <https://tinyurl.com/988-metrics>.

### It's Almost Certain that you've heard recorded "songs" of whales.

Anybody with acoustic experience in the ocean had heard sounds produced by denizens of the salt water by the 60's. But the sources of strange, long-lasting sounds weren't identified until Roger Payne, biologist and conservationist, switched from studying bats and birds to the ocean, heard these sounds recorded by a naval engineer from anti-submarine sensors off Bermuda, and with Scott McVay ascertained the source of many of these to be songs of Humpback Whales. He made recordings of these popular worldwide, leading to a powerful movement to preserve all undersea mammals, and to conservation of the ocean in general. He is clearly a pioneer in the modern environmental movement.

This is his obituary by colleagues at his institute.

#### Roger Payne

Founder, Ocean Alliance (<https://whale.org/>)

Born 29 January 1935; died 10 June 2023



It was with great sadness that we learned of the recent passing of our founder, Roger Payne. Over the course of more than six decades, Roger inspired students, scientists and citizens around the world with his work on the vocalizations of whales, showing us the depth and sophistication of their emotional lives. In doing so, Roger helped jump-start the modern environmental movement. By making people care about whales, he made them care about the planet. Roger was a generous, charismatic figure, willing to share his wonder and enthusiasm for the natural world. How very fortunate we were to have him as our founder and President — and we will continue to do our best to honor his legacy.

### Toilet Paper: It's Important!

Somebody's using my share! Statista (<https://www.statista.com/chart/15676/cmo-toilet-paper-consumption/>) says US population uses an average of about 3 rolls of toilet paper per person per week, so I'm not keeping up. (No wonder the shortage became a top issue at the start of the pandemic!) Note: Ours is the highest usage rate in the industrialized world, so sustainability is an obvious issue.

The carbon footprint / sustainability / recycle issues around production of TP, as well as the shortage we experienced, have effected production in the U.S. In the past most production involved harvesting of trees to make the ever-softier product the TV ads convinced us we needed. Now many – perhaps most – manufacturing companies are highly aware of the importance of environmental considerations to a large segment of the public. So, while all maintain a focus on the job at hand, most manufacturers produce an array of TPs which consider the "green" qualities. There are so many choices available now that the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) instituted a study (Somebody's using my share! Statista (<https://www.statista.com/chart/15676/cmo-toilet-paper-consumption/>) says US population uses an average of about 3 rolls of toilet paper per person per week, so I'm not keeping up. (No wonder the shortage became a top issue at the start of the pandemic!) Note that ours is the highest usage rate in the industrialized world, so sustainability is an obvious issue. *(continued below)*





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Of course, Consumer Reports ranks most consumer products using their own criteria, and their results are compared with the NRDC rankings here.

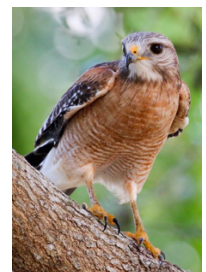
Finally, an environmentally oriented website - <https://www.thecooldown.com/shop/best-toilet-paper-alternatives/> - looked at the data and made their own top four picks considering all the criteria from NRDC and CR. Some of the results from each organization are shown here; Reports include rationale and relative prices.

<b>NRDC Sustainability champs</b>	<b>Consumer Reports “Best” choices</b>	<b>The Cooldown’s Overall Best</b>
Who Gives A Crap 100% Recycled	White Cloud Ultra Soft and Thick (WM)	Who Gives A Crap 100% Recycled
Green Forest	Nice! Premium Ultra (Walgreens)	Reel
365 Everyday Value, 100% recycled	Scott Extra Soft	Seventh Generation 100% Recycled
Natural Value	White Cloud Ultra Strong and Soft	Cloud Paper Bamboo Toilet Paper
Seventh Generation Unbleached Recycled Bath Tissue	Quilted Northern Ultra Plush	
Trader Joe's Bath Tissue	Cottonelle Ultra Comfort Care	

### **We Have Some Badass Mockingbirds in the Neighborhood**

Typically we also have nesting Red-Shouldered Hawks in at least one tree around the ‘hood. While many of us have been dive-bombed by the mockingbirds during their nesting season, I haven’t heard of the same with respect to any hawks. But in the Travis Heights area- near Milam Place and Kenwood Avenue - a hawk family has caused a halt in home mail delivery by dive-bombing people, including mail carriers, near the nest site. Residents in the area also are being hit, of course. The hawks and their nests are protected by law when they contain eggs, chicks or fledglings , so countermeasures are needed to go about daily routines. As suggested by AAC, umbrellas have become the chosen technology. Meanwhile residents must pick up their mail at the local post office, so it’s likely they’re combining destinations every time they leave the house:

<https://tinyurl.com/TravHawk>



A member of the pugnacious species

### **“Peptok” Pep Talk Hotline for When You Need an Uplifting Message or a Smile on Your Face**

This is copied from the link above, or if that connection is broken use <https://tinyurl.com/cheermor>

A pep talk hotline, dubbed “PepToc” (like Peptok, get it? Pep Tok, like TikTok) voiced primarily by elementary school children, offers pep talks and life advice for people feeling mad, frustrated or nervous (and who isn’t feeling one or more of those things in these times?), or who need life advice or just need some kind words of encouragement. Or you can just press 4 to hear “kids laughing with delight”.

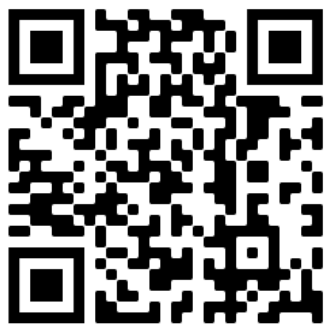
The PepTok pep talk hotline is an enrichment project of the West Side Union Elementary School, in Healdsburg, California, a small town in the San Francisco Bay area, north of San Francisco. Keeping in mind that old saw that all you need to know about life you learned in kindergarten (or at least Robert Fulghum did), it may not be surprising that the advice that these elementary school kids have to give is straightforward and can be quite effective despite (or because of) its simplicity. At the very least it can give you pause (even that a welcome respite from news of the world) and put a smile on your face (ditto).

When you call the PepTok pep talk hotline number (707-873-7862) you are greeted with “Welcome to PepTok, a public art project by West Side school. Please listen to the following for encouraging advice.” You are then presented with the following options: *(continued below)*

"If you are feeling mad frustrated or nervous press 1. If you need words of encouragement and life advice press 2. If you need a pep talk from kindergartners press 3. If you need to hear kids laughing with delight press 4. If you would like to make a donation to support this project please press 6."

When you press 1 (If you are feeling mad, frustrated or nervous) you hear various words of advice from the kids, including "Take 3 deep breaths and think of things that make you happy", "If you're frustrated just take 5 minutes off", "If you're feeling frustrated go to your room and punch a pillow", and "If you're feeling nervous take your wallet and go buy some ice cream". We think that last is particularly sound advice.

**If you haven't visited WCNAews.com lately**, you should check it out! We've recently updated the Safety pages to include tips and resources for personal and property safety as well as environmental safety; Does your household have a plan in case of an emergency, such as a fire, flood, or freeze? Do you know who to call if you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis? 988 is the new national number; Looking for guidance on when and how to report a crime? Find all this and more on **WCNAews.com safety pages**. While there, pay dues and sign up for biweekly emails.



QR Code to pay dues or donate

### **Join and/or support WCNA: You can use PayPal for both dues & contributions.**

**PayPal** is a popular way to become – or remain - a member, or to make a donation toward WCNA projects (shown on drop-down menus on the Donate site). You can use any credit card to make a payment via PayPal through the "join/donate" page on the WCNA website, <https://wcnanews.com/membership/>

Alternatively, with your smart phone using a QR code reader you can go to the same page using the QR code at left.

*Note: You don't have to join PayPal to use it for payments.*

#### **Austin City Council**

Mayor Kirk Watson, 512-978-2100

[Kirk.Watson@austintexas.gov](mailto:Kirk.Watson@austintexas.gov)

Natasha Harper-Madison 512-978-2101 1

[Natasha.HarperMadison@austintexas.gov](mailto:Natasha.HarperMadison@austintexas.gov)

Vanessa Fuentes, 512-978-2102 Dist 2

[Vanessa.Fuentes@austintexas.gov](mailto:Vanessa.Fuentes@austintexas.gov)

Jose Velasquez, 512-978-2103 D3

[Jose.Velasquez@austintexas.gov](mailto:Jose.Velasquez@austintexas.gov)

Jose "Chito" Vela, 512-978-2104 Dist 4

[Jose.Vela@austintexas.gov](mailto:Jose.Vela@austintexas.gov)

Ryan Alter, 512-978-2105 Dist 5

[Ryan.Alter@austintexas.gov](mailto:Ryan.Alter@austintexas.gov)

Mackenzie Kelly, 512-978-2106 D6

[Mackenzie.Kelly@austintexas.gov](mailto:Mackenzie.Kelly@austintexas.gov)

Leslie Pool, 512-978-2107 Dist 7

[Leslie.Pool@austintexas.gov](mailto:Leslie.Pool@austintexas.gov)

Paige Ellis, 512-978-2108 Dist 8

[Paige.Ellis@austintexas.gov](mailto:Paige.Ellis@austintexas.gov)

Zohaib "Zo" Qadri, 512-978-2109 Dist 9

[Zohaib.Qadri@austintexas.gov](mailto:Zohaib.Qadri@austintexas.gov)

Alison Alter, 512-978-2110 Dist 10

[Alison.Alter@austintexas.gov](mailto:Alison.Alter@austintexas.gov)

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

**The National Suicide/Mental Crisis Hotline: 988**

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

[Get the phone app: **Austin311** on Google Play and iTunes]

APD District Rep: **Adam Soliz**  
512 974-8143

[Adam.soliz@austintexas.gov](mailto:Adam.soliz@austintexas.gov)

County Constable, Pct 2

**Adan Ballesteros**, 512 854-9697

[Adan.Ballesteros@co.travis.tx.us](mailto:Adan.Ballesteros@co.travis.tx.us)

**APD Animal Cruelty Unit Tip Hot Line: 512 978-0523**

**Emery Sadkin**  
**CoA Animal Protection Officer, Wildlife**  
**Call 311 or 512-974-2000**

**Local Weather Station on Oakwood:**

<https://tinyurl.com/OakwoodWeather>

**Office of Police Oversight**  
[policeoversight@austintexas.gov](mailto:policeoversight@austintexas.gov)

#### **WCNA Board and Officers**

Robert Meadows, President  
512 633-1459 [robertl@meadows.com](mailto:robertl@meadows.com)

Dorsey/Bunnie Twidwell, Vice President  
512 924-7516 [dorsey@utexas.edu](mailto:dorsey@utexas.edu)  
512 924-7523 [bunnie@utexas.edu](mailto:bunnie@utexas.edu)

Pat Pitt, Treasurer  
512 837-6620 [s.pitt@earthlink.net](mailto:s.pitt@earthlink.net)

Karen Watkins, Secretary

Tasha Bowser  
512 731-6863 [Bowser.Tasha@gmail.com](mailto:Bowser.Tasha@gmail.com)

Theresa Jones  
512 832-0404 [jackrabbithcanyon@gmail.com](mailto:jackrabbithcanyon@gmail.com)

Clay Chip Smith  
512-589-7148 [\\_clay@claychipsmith.com](mailto:_clay@claychipsmith.com)

Sara Breuer  
512 560-3278 [sarabreuer@mac.com](mailto:sarabreuer@mac.com)

Siobhan Blackburn

Melissa Huber  
512 663-5864 [melissajhuber@gmail.com](mailto:melissajhuber@gmail.com)

John Hersey  
[hersey.j@gmail.com](mailto:hersey.j@gmail.com)

James Miller  
479 531-5823 [jameslynnmiller@gmail.com](mailto:jameslynnmiller@gmail.com)





Brothers Eric and Kevin with Stacy



Todd Johnson and his beautiful daughter Kaidyn



Kasee snaps hubby Phillip leading the parade



Flags Flyin' on Caddo



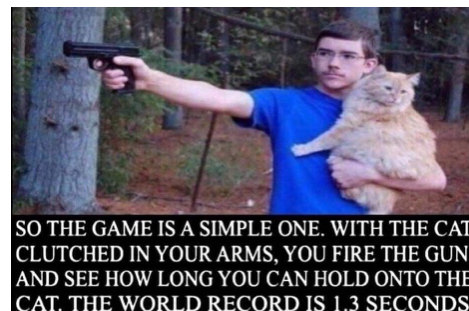
Sara w/ Susan's melon



Philip with "Mister Twister" Alex Graf and Wife



APPARENTLY, THIS IS THE ROUTE OUR PARENTS TOOK TO GO TO SCHOOL



SO THE GAME IS A SIMPLE ONE. WITH THE CAT CLUTCHED IN YOUR ARMS, YOU FIRE THE GUN, AND SEE HOW LONG YOU CAN HOLD ONTO THE CAT. THE WORLD RECORD IS 1.3 SECONDS.



# Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup>: AISD First Day of School!

## Walnut Creek Neighborhood

Association membership is open to any resident (owner or renter) or property owner within its boundaries:

Braker to Yeager and  
Lamar to IH35

Membership dues are \$25 per household for a calendar year. Send a check to: WCNA ; PO Box 82746; Austin, TX 78708-2746

Dues notices are included in the Nov-Dec and Jan-Feb issues.

Payment also may be via PayPal:  
<https://wcnanews.com/membership/>

To check whether you've paid your dues for this or next calendar year, call or text Pat at 512 659-8132 or email [s.pitt@earthlink.net](mailto:s.pitt@earthlink.net)

To contribute content to the newsletter, send contributions via email to [wcnanews@gmail.com](mailto:wcnanews@gmail.com) and/or contact Pat Pitt, 512 837-6620

### **Note:**

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.

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## Calendar of Events

July	14	Zilker Summer Musical continues - <a href="https://zilker.org">https://zilker.org</a>
	19	Blue Recycle Container Picked Up: Curbside by 7:00 a.m.
	22	Lady Bird Day - <a href="https://www.wildflower.org/event/lbd">https://www.wildflower.org/event/lbd</a>
August	2	Blue Recycle Container Picked Up: Curbside by 7:00 a.m.
	11-13	Texas Tax-Free Weekend: <a href="https://comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/publications/98-490/">https://comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/publications/98-490/</a>
	12	Zilker Summer Musical ends
	14	AISD First Day of School
	16	Blue Recycle Container Picked Up: Curbside by 7:00 a.m.
	22	UT classes begin
	25-27	Austin Fall Home & Garden Show - <a href="https://www.austinfallhomeshow.com">https://www.austinfallhomeshow.com</a>
	26	Bat Fest - <a href="https://www.austintexas.org/event/austin-bat-fest/372455/">https://www.austintexas.org/event/austin-bat-fest/372455/</a>
	27	Free Day of Dance - <a href="https://balletaustin.org/dance-fitness/come-dance/">https://balletaustin.org/dance-fitness/come-dance/</a>
	30	Blue Recycle Container Picked Up: Curbside by 7:00 a.m.
September	4	Labor Day - Banks and Post Office closed
	4	Free Day of Yoga - <a href="https://www.freedayofyoga.com">https://www.freedayofyoga.com</a>
	13	Blue Recycle Container Picked Up: Curbside by 7:00 a.m.
	16	Diez y Seis
	16-17	Pecan Street Festival - <a href="https://pecanstreetfestival.org">https://pecanstreetfestival.org</a>