FREEZE PHOTOS and a CREEK MONSTER! IT'S SPRING IN CHERRYWOOD



JOIN US VIRTUALLY! **GENERAL MEETING**

MAY 2021 | VOLUME 27 | NUMBER 1 // NEWSLETTER OF THE CHERRYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Helping Our Community Get Vaccinated

ifteen months of pandemic have been challenging, heart-breaking, frustrating, and revealing. One of the silver linings has been an increase in camaraderie and neighborhood support systems. In Cherrywood, we've seen countless examples of residents supporting each other through difficult times.

In the early days of lockdown, neighbors kept each other company outdoors, shared baked goods, and went all out decorating



Cherrywood residents Unji Udeshi, Parke Gregg, and Kristy Gregg volunteering at COTA

their homes with extra-festive holiday cheer. Cherrywood residents also came together to help each other and vulnerable community members get vaccinated.

As vaccines first became available to Austin elderly and healthcare professionals, appointments were extremely difficult to secure. Neighbors started a thread on

Nextdoor, helping 1A and 1B community members find and secure vaccine appointments. The thread offered tips, information, and even directly booked appointments for those who asked for help.

Simultaneously, a broader effort was underway to scale what well meaning citizens were trying to do informally on Nextdoor. The Austin Vaccine Angels group was formed to help residents source and book appointments in Central Texas. Founder Jodi Holzband told KUT that approximately 100 people have volunteered since February to book almost 3,500 appointments. "Finding an appointment in the Austin area during the early days of vaccine distribution was a bit like winning the lottery. I really enjoyed the thrill of hunting for these rare spots." said Unji Udeshi, a Cherrywood resident who volunteered with the Vaccine Angels group.

Cherrywood residents Parke and Kristy Gregg volunteered multiple times at the Circuit of Americas vaccine clinics. Kristy reflects, "It was such a heartening experience to see so many people getting vaccinated."

"I volunteered because I was fortunate enough to receive my first dose from the "extras" at a COTA clinic during one of the first weekends it was open," Parke says. "It felt like a good way to share my thanks was to volunteer on the day of my second appointment. It was such a fun and rewarding time, I did it again (with my wife) the next weekend."

In mid-April, Texas expanded vaccine eligibility to all adults over eighteen years of age at more than 350 sites across Travis County. Many sites are now supporting walk-up opportunities, especially now that the Johnson and Johnson vaccine has been reintroduced to the market,

By the end of April, the Austin Public Health Department saw a decline in demand for vaccine at its large vaccination sites and began moving toward a community-based

model of delivery, says Priscilla Ebersole, APH Mobile Vaccine Program Manager (and Scheiffer-Willowbrook Neighborhood resident). If you know of homebound individuals still in need of vaccinating, please call 311 and request a home visit.

Cherrywood's "Buddy System," developed to support residents through the isolation of the pandemic, is still in place to help residents in need of vaccination or other support. If you or someone you know needs assistance with vaccination, transportation to an appointment, or other assistance, please reach out to buddysystem@cherrywood.org.

Even with the vaccine rollout expanding, health officials at every level still encourage residents to continue to mask and social distance, especially indoors with strangers and even for those already vaccinated. If you are choosing not to receive any of the vaccines, please continue to wear a mask around others in respect of their health. Many believe we are now closer to the end of this pandemic than to its beginning, but with concerns about variants of the virus and global hotspots, no one really knows when the pandemic will end. What we can control are our own actions and how we respond, support, and engage with each other in trying times.

Opportunities to volunteer and the needs of our neighbors may change in the coming months, and many of the groups organizing volunteers a year ago are pivoting their efforts. But volunteers are still needed. We'll share links to the organizations listed in this article at cherrywood.org. We welcome your suggestions for others. We'd also like you to send your own stories of volunteering.

Volunteering to share bread or distribute vaccines or just offering your time in (masked) conversation with a neighbor certainly strengthens our community in challenging times and may also help you get through it too.

Cherrywood Neighborhood Association: Get Involved

hether you have lived in the neighborhood for decades or just a few weeks, the Cherrywood Neighborhood Association (CNA) is a great way to get involved in a wide variety of efforts and activities. On the formal side, we'd like to introduce you to the committees-longstanding and brand new-that guide CNA's decisionmaking efforts. For now all meetings are virtual, but we hope to resume meeting in person as soon as it is comfortable for most residents.

You're likely familiar with the Steering Committee, a group of Cherrywood residents who are tasked with neighborhood association governance and policy-setting. During monthly SC meetings (second Wednesday, 6:30 pm) committee members discuss issues ranging from I-35 to development of the neighborhood buddy system. Steering committee actions are governed by the will of the membership as expressed at general and special membership meetings. There are currently two vacancies on the Steering Committee. If you would like to self=nominate, please email steering@cherrywood.org.

Cherrywood's Land Use and Transportation (LUT) Committee has historically gathered at Los Altos Taqueria on the first Wednesday of the month to discuss issues such as demolition and new construction permits, neighborhood design guidelines, and other planning-related concerns. The LUTC is the first forum for rezoning and variance requests from developers and property owners, and transportation and mobility projects from the City of Austin. LUTC meetings are open to all who are interested.

Maybe you're less familiar with CNA's Nominating Committee, which meets as needed to approve nominations to the steering committee. The Nominating Committee selects a slate of candidates for the steering committee election prior to the October general membership meeting. Committee members are tasked with balancing the membership of the steering committee with respect to geographic residence, age, gender, occupation, and areas of expertise.

The nominating committee, which has five vacancies, would love to convene soon to approve new nominations! If you would like to self-nominate, please email steering@ cherrywood.org.

A new addition to the slate, the Communications Committee has been created to develop a strategy to unify and amplify CNA's communications to neighbors across diverse platforms. The Communications Committee will manage content and production of Cherrywood's quarterly Flea newsletter as well as other means of disseminating information to neighborhood residents, including Cherrywood.org, the Groups.io listserv, NextDoor, Facebook, and Instagram. The Communications Committee is newly created and there are many vacancies. Join us! If you would like to self-nominate, please email chair@cherrywood.org.



CHAIR Jim Walker VICE CHAIR Brandy Savarese SECRETARY Sharon Lynch TREASURER Allen Hah STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS Matt Harriger, Girard Kinney, Stefan Schuster, Cara Bertron, Sean Griffin, Adam Packer, Jeri Spence, Unji Udeshi, Jules Vieau Contact us: steering@cherrywood.org

FLEA MANAGING EDITOR Jim Walker PHOTOGRAPHER Jennifer Potter-Miller LAYOUT EDITOR Brandy Savarese AD MANAGER Allen Hah Contact The FLEA: flea@cherrywood.org

CHERRYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Quarterly Meeting

Join us virtually! Wednesday, May 19, 6:30 pm Zoom meeting ID 254-172-8972

> 1. Update on TxDOT CapEx Central public scoping process

2. Post-Prop B discussion 3. Open Forum

Stay Connected

CNA WEBSITE www.cherrywood.org **NEIGHBORNET** groups.io/g/cherrywood/topics FACEBOOK www.facebook.com/cherrywood78722 UBC WEBSITE upperboggycreek.com

CITY WATCH

Development Updates

t has been a busy spring in Cherrywood, with a variety of projects happening across the neighborhood. In this new City Watch section of the *Flea*, we'll bring you updates on demolition and construction permits, roadways, bikeways, and sidewalk projects, I-35 CapEx news, and other planning and development issues that may be of importance to residents.

Cherrywood Bikeways Project



City staff presented and answered questions about the Cherrywood bikeways project at the March CNA Steering Committee meeting. Among several planned improvements, neighbors will see a substantial redesign of the triangle intersection of Wilshire Boulevard and Schieffer Avenue, just west of Cherrywood Road. After two rounds of public input, the project will move forward to implementation. New bikeways will help expand the All Ages and Abilities Bicycle Network between I-35, Airport Boulevard, and E. 38 1/2 Street. Implementation of the project will occur in phases and begin in spring 2021. Austin Transportation is coordinating closely with Austin Water to align with nearby utility work planned for 2022–2024. Check out the map details and sign up for the City's email list for updates at AustinTexas.gov/ CherrywoodBikeways.

City Projects

Street rehabilitation (Project ID: 12981.001) work is scheduled to begin this spring along Manor Road east of French Place, and on Airport Boulevard south of Schieffer Avenue.

Up to \$4 million in planned spending on renovations to the Pharr Tennis Center will begin this summer (Project ID: 9864.003), to include installations of public art. Neighbors will hear more about this project at the quarterly meeting on May 19.

Tree trimming

Austin Energy and its contractor, Davey Resource Group, will begin tree trimming around power lines. They will be working the area bounded by Hemlock, the railroad, and Manor Road.



The tree trimming process begins with contractors visually assessing how close tree limbs are to power lines. Since many power lines in Cherrywood are located on the rear property line, contractors may enter a backyard. They are permitted to do so in your agreement as an Austin Energy customer.

If they determine that some tree pruning or tree removal is needed, they will attempt to contact the property owner, including by leaving a card on the front door as well as placing lime green marking tape on trees that need pruning, pink marking tape on trees that need to be removed, both colors of tape will have the Austin Energy logo on them.

Property owners should expect to see a card left on their door announcing the visit and providing contact information. If you have questions, contact the planner on the card or Austin Energy (512-494-9400 or austinenergy.com/ae/residential/residential-services/tree-pruning/tree-pruning).

I-35 CapEx

TxDOT's CapEx project continues at a much faster pace than traffic on the roadway itself most hours of the day. In response to the second public scoping period that closed on April 9, CNA sent its feedback to TxDOT and many local governmental representatives.

Due to there being minimal difference in the design alternatives since the first scoping period, CNA's primary feedback was to reinforce and amplify its concerns submitted in December 2020. In terms of physical concerns, we are focused on improved land-use and miminal roadway encroachment into the right-of-way, increased multi-modal transportation facilities, and enhanced east-west connections across the roadway. We have also reinforced calls for equity and diverse representation in the planning process. If you would like read CNA's letters to TxDOT, visit Cherrywood.org.

CNA encourages Cherrywood resdents to keep an eye on CapEx North and CapEx South projects, as they are closely related to the Central project. My35.org is a one-stop location for all things CapEx. You might also want to check in with Reconnect Austin (ReconnectAustin.com) and the North Central 1-35 Neighborhood Coalition (NCINC.org) for I-35 advocacy.

GREEN SPACES

Improvements Are Coming to Patterson Park

hanks to the generosity of friends, neighbors, and sponsors, the Friends of Patterson Park Amplify Austin campaign in early March was a success! FoPP raised \$7,425 and is in a great position to keep working on updates to Patterson park and to begin restarting community events when the pandemic winds down. FoPP is so grateful for the support of Austin Parks Foundation and business sponsors Nature's Treasures, Franklin Barbecue, and Jade Construction.

Park Improvements

Just a few weeks ago the City of Austin's Neighborhood Partnering Program awarded Patterson Park a \$134,741 grant for athletic facility improvements to the park. The damaged backstop at the baseball court was recently replaced with the support of an ACL Music Festival grant from APF; this new grant will complete the project developed in 2019. The funds will be used to install a new shade structure over the basketball court, two new youth-height basketball baskets, replacement basketball backboards, new park benches behind the baseball backstop, and new limestone seating along the trail next to the baseball field. The improvements will increase opportunities for residents of all ages to play and exercise at Patterson Park.

The other BIG news from Patterson Park is that the Pharr Tennis Center will undergo a complete renovation scheduled to begin this fall. The project is funded by a \$4M bond passed in 2018. It includes refurbishing the courts, building a new pro-shop, and installing energy efficient sports lighting, new fencing, accessible parking, shade structures, and more. It even includes new public art! Rakhee Jain Desai and Melissa Knight, the artistic duo behind the project, will hold a community meeting later this

spring. For details and other updates, check out friendsofpatter-sonpark.org, follow Friends of Patterson Park on social media, email fopp.atx@gmail.com.



Grackle Green is in Bloom

Grackle Green celebrated many firsts over the last few months. A string of visitors stopped by during SNOWVID to collect snowball supplies. Neighborhood volunteers planted and mulched twenty-five drought-tolerant, pollinator-friendly trees and shrubs with lagniappe wildflower seeds. Expanding Austin's urban forest through community is one of the park's founding missions. The new Anacacho orchid trees expressed gratitude for their new home with seemingly endless display of white blossoms for several months.

The neighborhood is responsible for park stewardship and maintenance, the Green's first cohort of regular volunteers has kept the park looking fresh. Thank you, team! A growing network of volunteers has helped minimize time commitments.



If you can spare fifteen to twenty minutes a month to help-please join us! Email gracklegreenatx@ gmail.com for volunteer assignments. Kiddos can help by picking up sticks and rocks off the playground service and making sidewalk art. Please remember that dogs-yes, even leashed dogs-are not allowed in the small fenced area. Willowbrook Reach is a great alternative for dogwalkers. Keep an eye on Grackle Green's Facebook and Instagram accounts (both @gracklegreenatx) to stay in the know of what's going on!

KIDS CORNER

Maplewood Elementary News

pring has sprung for the Maplewood Mustangs! Class chicks are hatching, new gardens have been planted (and are flourishing), and kiddos and teachers have been enjoying more time outside playing and learning. Now, with about 50 percent of students returning to in-person learning, the faculty and staff have continued doing an amazing job keeping everyone on campus safe and healthy. Ms. Braziel, Maplewood's librarian, has opened her library window for book check-outs and helped provide home libraries for families in need of books. Ms. Kirk, Maplewood counselor, has led successful food and clothing drives to provide resources to Maplewood families. With just about a month remaining in the school year, there is plenty to do to finish the year strong - and to begin looking ahead to the next.

Older Maplewood students have completed their STAAR Testing, and the PTA is working on plans for an end-of-year virtual dance party and commencement celebrations for the soon-to-be promoted fifth grade class.

Maplewood Principal Jacboson would like our community to know that families can now enroll their kids in the 2021-2022 school year online, and that Maplewood is now open (for the first time in years) to transfers. Maplewood families will soon hear from the PTA about opportunities to sign up for committee and leadership positions for the next school year so, be on the lookout for ways to get involved coming soon!

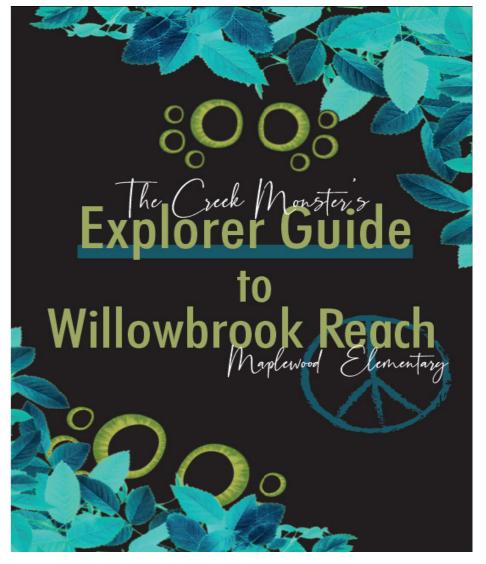
We are so proud of our Maplewood Mustangs are grateful for the faculty and staff who have weathered this unconventional year with grace, optimism, and unwavering support for our entire school community!

There's a Creek Monster at Willowbrook Reach!

herrywood resident Karen Maness is a faculty member in the UT Austin College of Fine Arts. For the last couple years she has worked with several classes of students to create the Waller Creek Monster to highlight local environmental research and to create a space for the community to connect with Waller Creek as an active, living ecosystem. Their work has premiered in several Waterloo Greenway Conservancy events.

They have now turned their exploration to Willowbrook Reach and created The Creek Monster's Explorer Guide to Willowbrook Reach, first shared with Maplewood Elementary and now available to all at www.cherrywood.org. Here's an excerpt from the guide, check it out!

Welcome to Willowbrook Reach. You are standing along one of the forks of Boggy Creek that begin in your neighborhood, join together just north of Manor rd. to run south through Rosewood Park where it turns east and eventually empties into the Colorado River just past US 183. The Boggy Creek watershed drains just under 14 square miles of Austin. Urban creeks serve as a vital resource for life in our city, and there are many interesting things to see, hear, smell, and feel along Boggy Creek. Students and researchers in the Urban Ecosystems research group at the University of Texas at Austin have chosen a few plants and animals for you to look for in Willowbrook Reach and other places in Austin.



---- NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

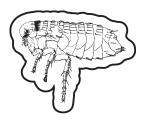
HYDE PARK POST OFFICE CLOSING

In mid-April, central Austin residents received notice that the Hyde Park Post Office will close because the landlord, 43rd Speedway LLC, has chosen not to renew the lease for the U.S. Postal Service.

Several Cherrywood residents with post office boxes have received letters indicating the closure is official and boxes will be relocated to the Northcross Post Office.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Your friendly neighborhood *Flea* team is need of a Managing Editor, and also production assistance (we use InDesign). For more information on the time commitment, resources available, and what heights of personal satisfaction are possible, please email flea@cherrywood.org.



OUR UNHOUSED NEIGHBORS

Over the last two years, the conversation about how to approach homelessness has grown fierce. It recently marked a new milestone with the passage of Proposition B on May I to reinstate the ban on public camping (among several provisions). Undoubtedly the conversation will continue.

In the early days of the pandemic, the Austin City Council also sought new ways to support unhoused individuals. The Days Inn on the northbound frontage road of I-35 between 31st Street and 32nd Street is one of five hotels being leased by the City of Austin as "protective lodges," or ProLodges, to provide safe facilities for homeless individuals who are at increased risk for negative outcomes of COVID-19 and who are unable to practice social distancing in their current location.

Whatever your stance regarding Proposition B and the homelessness issue, we encourage you to attend a special meeting on Wed, May 26, 6:30 pm, to discuss solutions to Austin's homelessness. The Cherrywood Steering Committee is committed to hearing all views. We'll also discuss neighborhood-level actions and opportunities to support persons experiencing homelessness.

THE LEGE IS IN SESSION

Cherrywooders who want to rid their property deed of unconstitutional, yet longstanding, racial discrimination clauses will have an easier mechanism to do so should legislation under consideration at the State Capitol pass before the session adjourns May 31. Senate Bill 30 would replace the current lengthy and complicated process and instead authorize a county clerk to remove these restrictions within 30 days of receiving a simple form submitted by the property owner. Enjoying widespread support, the bill is likely to pass and become effective January 1, 2022.

THANK YOU, JENNIFER!

Many of you know Jennifer Potter-MIller through Friends of Patterson Park and Maplewood activities, but for the last nine years, Jennifer has volunteered in every role in producing the *Flea* newsletter four times a year, from photographer to editor and everything in between. She continues to coordinate the Green Spaces page in the *Flea*. Thank you, Jennifer!

MR. G'S BARBERSHOP: COMMUNITY CENTER AND WITNESS TO HISTORY



Mr. Gerald Carter is retiring from running Mr. G's Barbershop at 2917 Cherrywood. The business opened in the 1970s and has long served as gathering place for Austin's Black community. While Mr. G provided cuts and counsel to barbershop visitors, his wife, Catherine Williams Carter, served the community as principal of Brentwood Elementary for thirty-three years. Cherrywood will miss the Carters, but we wish them the very best.

The structure that has been home to Mr. G's was once occupied by John A. Gronouski. In 1960, Gronouski became

the Wisconsin State Commissioner of Taxation, and supported John F. Kennedy for U.S. President. In 1963, he was appointed U.S. Postmaster General, the first Polish-American Cabinet officer. As Postmaster General, Gronouski promoted the original five-digit zip code system and worked to end racial discrimination against postal employees. After he left the Cabinet in 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed him to be Ambassador to Poland. When Nixon took office in 1969, Gronouski became the founding dean of the UT Austin LBJ School of Public Affairs through 1974.

While this property is now for sale, we celebrate its place in Cherrywood and American history. If you have a bit of history about people or places in Cherrywood to share, send it to flea@cherrywood.org.



NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

The Great Winter Freeze of 2021

n the February 2021 *Flea*, we shared an article to guide people through the aftermath of the "snow day" in January. Little did we know that February was planning to one-up its calendar neighbor with a week-long deep freeze—affectionally called SNOWVID or "Snowpacalypse 2021"—that would have a long tail of effects on the neighborhood!

We appreciate the Cherrywood shutterbugs Kevin Koch, Kathy Murray Jones, Andy Liddell, and Jim Walker, who ventured out to document Snowpocalypse 2021. If you have photos of the storm or any other neighborhood pictures, please consider sharing them to our Flickr (flickr.com/photos/cherrywood_78722) or our Facebook page (facebook.com/cna.austin).









I live in the neighborhood I work in the neighborhood

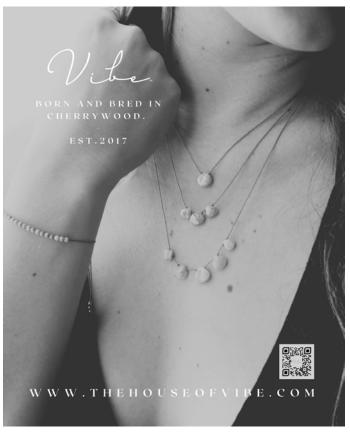
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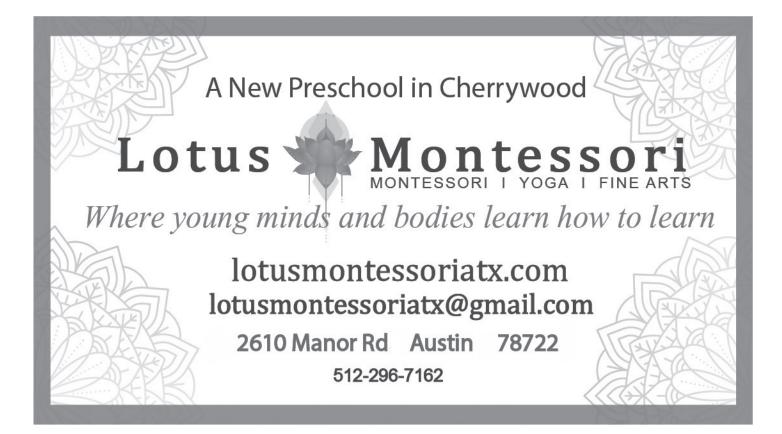
Friendly neighborhood newsletter seeks creative types for quarterly adventures.

Could it be you? Email me: flea@cherrywood.org





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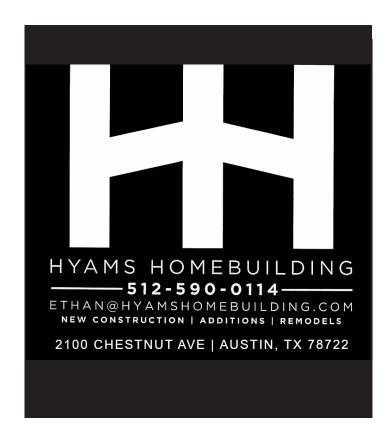


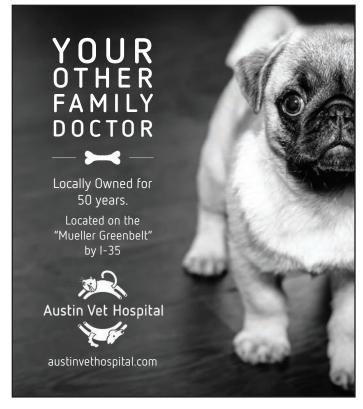
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