

Westcreek Neighborhood ASSOCIATION

June, 2004 — Published Quarterly for our Westcreek Neighbors

Log on at westcreekna.org

Wm. Cannon toll to be decided next month

The fate of a future Loop 1 tollway at William Cannon could be determined within the next few weeks. Members of the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) are scheduled to vote Monday, July 12 on a massive plan to build new toll roads and convert a significant number of Austin area freeways into tollways.

At the May CAMPO hearing on the plan, the WNA was among a number of neighborhood organizations opposing tolls for the Loop 1 freeway section adjacent to our subdivision, which is now under construction. The two-miles of construction at Wm. Cannon and Loop 1 is already paid for with appropriated tax dollars but was added to the toll road scheme anyway.

The plan for the tollways is being pushed by the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, a board of unelected officials with ties to development interests, and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

As a result of citizen complaints about the toll road plan, CAMPO postponed final action on the recommendation by a month. One CAMPO member, county commissioner Karen Sonleitner said she had received more than 600 email messages the day of the tollway hearing.

CTRMA and TxDOT contend the toll road projects, which would be financed with bond money, are the only viable approaches to bringing relief to Austin's growing traffic congestion.

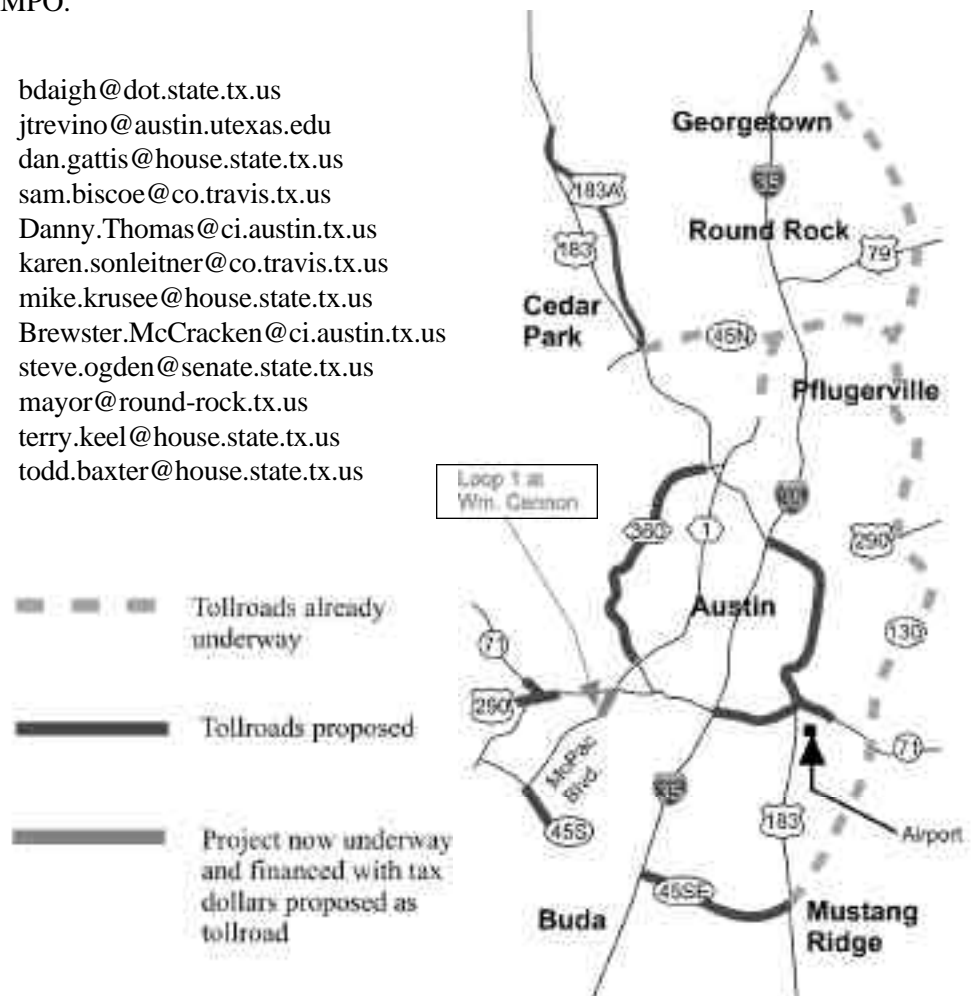
If you wish to voice your opinion on the Loop 1-William Cannon toll plan or the entire toll road proposal, below are the email addresses for each member of CAMPO.

Daryl.Slusher@ci.austin.tx.us
cityhall@westlakehills.org
gonzalo.barrientos@senate.state.tx.us
eddie.rodriquez@house.state.tx.us
dawnna.dukes@house.state.tx.us
elliott.naishtat@house.state.tx.us
Richard.Arellano@ci.austin.tx.us
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burnett@co.hays.tx.us
jack.stick@house.state.tx.us

bdaigh@dot.state.tx.us
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dan.gattis@house.state.tx.us
sam.biscoe@co.travis.tx.us
Danny.Thomas@ci.austin.tx.us
karen.sonleitner@co.travis.tx.us
mike.krusee@house.state.tx.us
Brewster.McCracken@ci.austin.tx.us
steve.ogden@senate.state.tx.us
mayor@round-rock.tx.us
terry.keel@house.state.tx.us
todd.baxter@house.state.tx.us

If you don't want to copy all of the email addresses, you can go to the transportation planning page at the Oak Hill Association of Neighborhoods web site, <http://ohan.org/transport.html>, scroll down to the middle of the page, and select "Click here to send email to all CAMPO members at the same time."

Whether for or against, it's important we let our representatives know our views on this important transportation issue.



UPDATE ON STATUS OF SOUTHWEST MARKETPLACE

As reported in several of our earlier newsletters, the large tract of property located on the Southwest corner of Brush Country and William Cannon is the subject of a request for zoning change. The new development will be known as The Southwest Marketplace.

Representatives for the development met with the Executive Committee in February and gave a presentation at the March Quarterly meeting of the Association. After the presentation, the Westcreek Neighborhood Association voted unanimously to support the development. A letter of support is shown on the right.

The development will be anchored by Costco, and will include several restaurants and many local merchants. The plan proposed will not only reduce the amount of overall square footage originally proposed to be developed, but will also reduce the impervious cover to 34 acres. A 200-foot natural screen buffer will run most of the length of Brush Country. The plan also includes a pond, an eight-foot-wide crushed granite walkway and social gathering areas such as a plaza and an arbor.

The Executive Committee expressed concerns about an increase in “cut-through” traffic and speeding through Westcreek, and has asked that the developer consider means to address those concerns. Mr. Drenner’s staff facilitated a meeting with the City of Austin traffic planning staff and the Executive Committee. Kim Sherman attended the meeting, which included Mr. Drenner and his staff. Many ideas were placed on the table, including

“rumble strips”, more speed limit signs, “Slow, Children at Play” signs, a portable radar machine, better lighting and additional crosswalks around the school. Any traffic-calming solutions require a traffic study by the City of Austin, which will take months, if not years, to complete. The Executive Committee will be requesting a study by the City. Some of the ideas that can be used more immediately, re: additional crosswalks around the school, a portable radar machine and better lighting at the bridge on Brush Country. Mr. Dremmer’s firm will be facilitating another meeting with the traffic engineering department for the City, and will assist Westcreek with these items. Mr. William Chaffe, a representative for the developer of Southwest Marketplace, will be assisting financially when possible and needed. Individual neighbors can place “Slow, Children At Play” signs in their yards, as long as the sign is NOT in the City right-of-way (on the curb between the sidewalk and street). The Executive Committee will be discussing this item further.

The Environmental Board for the City will consider the request for rezoning June 2, the Neighborhood and Zoning Commission on June 18 and the City Council sometime later in the summer. If the request is approved, the development will be complete sometime in the year 2005.

Mr. Chaffe has asked for Westcreek’s suggestions on local merchants and restaurants, which can be forwarded to Kim Sherman at ksherman@residentrealty.com.



JOIN THE WNA & SUPPORT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Mail your check (make check payable to “WNA”) for \$12.50 for the remainder of the calendar year of 2004 to:
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Home & Office Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

_____ I (we) are willing to serve on a committee (see descriptions of committees on our website at westcreekna.org)

_____ I (we) want to be added to the WNA Yahoo eGroup list
 (you will receive updates on the WNA and can participate in neighborhood discussions with other Westcreek residents automatically via email if you check this box)

What could improve in our Westcreek Neighborhood during 2004?: _____

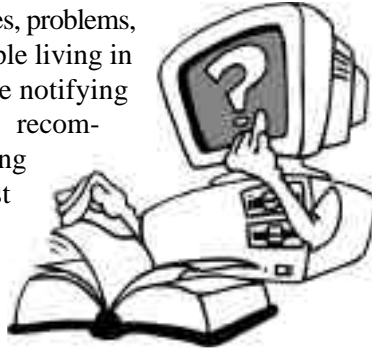
Using WNA Web Services

The Westcreek Neighborhood Association uses two web-based services for better and faster communication with our members. Open to supporting members is the Westcreek Yahoo Group, primarily an email list for contacting subscribing members about issues, problems, and other messages of interest to the people living in Westcreek. We use the list for things like notifying members about zoning issues, locating recommended fencing contractors and finding neighborhood babysitters. Use of the list for promotion of personal commercial ventures or non-neighborhood-related activities is prohibited.

Westcreek property owners and residents with paid membership are automatically subscribed to the Westcreek Yahoo Group if they check the appropriate box on their membership form. If you fail to check the box and want to subscribe later or you want to add or change an email address, simply send email to westcreek-subscribe@yahoogroups.com or go to the web site at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/westcreek/> and click the "Join" button. You should receive a reply message from a moderator asking for your name and street address so that we may verify your eligibility for membership.

Email traffic is not heavy on the Westcreek group, ranging from 10 to 49 monthly messages during the past 12 months. If you are a member of the list, however, it is important that you check your email on a regular basis. If your email box is filled by incoming mail from other sources, additional Westcreek messages will "bounce" back to Yahoo. Eventually you could be placed on "hard bounce" status, meaning Yahoo would no longer forward Westcreek messages to that email box.

Many members have visited the website and set up a



Yahoo Profile. Taking advantage of this option allows members to make changes in how Westcreek email is received, provides access to archived email messages, files and poll participation. If you elect to establish a Yahoo Profile, please scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the Yahoo privacy policy button. Here you can turn off Yahoo's collection of marketing information.

The other neighborhood resource for residents is the WNA website at westcreekna.org. There you'll find links to city resources, maps and background information on development in the area and other valuable tools.

If you're trying to decide what plants would work well in our soil, check out our landscape and gardening page with planting recommendations from the county's master gardener.

Follow the link on the home page to the City of Austin's new crime statistics map. Westcreek was one of the first neighborhood associations to participate in the City's compilation of crime statistics by neighborhood. Within the last few weeks that service has been extended citywide with the introduction of their interactive mapping system.


Coming soon to a website near you — the Westcreek Resource Listing!

We're compiling a Westcreek resource listing to be available on our website for use of all Westcreek residents. Categories include roofers, construction and repair contractors, yard maintenance, plumbers, baby sitters, etc. Listings are open to firms recommended by residents of Westcreek and services provided by people who live in our neighborhood. If you wish to recommend someone, please send the relevant information to Bob Shrader by email at bshrader@swbell.net or by mail to 4702 Summerset Trail, 78749-1668.

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Protect the Value of Your Home with Regular Maintenance!

What a wonderful feeling to have a beautiful home! Now's the perfect time of year to take care of those things that seem to accumulate. Clutter in our garages and yards deteriorate the integrity of our homes. Consider making a list of things to accomplish over the next two months so the job will not be overwhelming. Start by taking advantage of the Westcreek annual garage sale to be held the last Saturday in June! Any items that do not sell in the garage sale can usually be donated to Good Will or some other charity organization.

The exterior of your home needs regular maintenance, just like your car. Westcreek is full of beautiful oak trees, but these same trees shed their leaves right into our gutters. Improperly-maintained gutters will not be effective in diverting water, and can invade the roof system, rotting wood along the way. Clean the leaves and debris from your gutters and inspect them for leaks. Apply roofing cement over leaks inside the gutters or patch with flashing. Consider purchasing a cover for your gutters. Replacing heavily damaged gutters is not for the inexperienced and is usually well worth hiring an expert.

The majority of homes in Westcreek have some type of siding. Unfortunately, many homes were not originally built with the best siding available. Damaged siding that is left unattended can result in the spread of rot and can turn into a much bigger problem. If areas of the siding on your home are brittle, warped, cracked or rotten, have your home inspected and repaired by a professional. Complete replacement of the siding may be necessary. Consider replacing the old siding with "hardy plank", which is a composite that resists rot and is considered masonry by most insurance companies.

Inspect the exterior of your home for other areas of possible rot, including the fascia and soffits. A new paint job, in addition to the replacement of any rotten wood, can add significant protection, value and beauty to your home.

Last year, Westcreek was hit by a significant hail storm. Hail damage is difficult for the untrained eye to detect and can cause the roof to leak. An undetected leak can cause significant

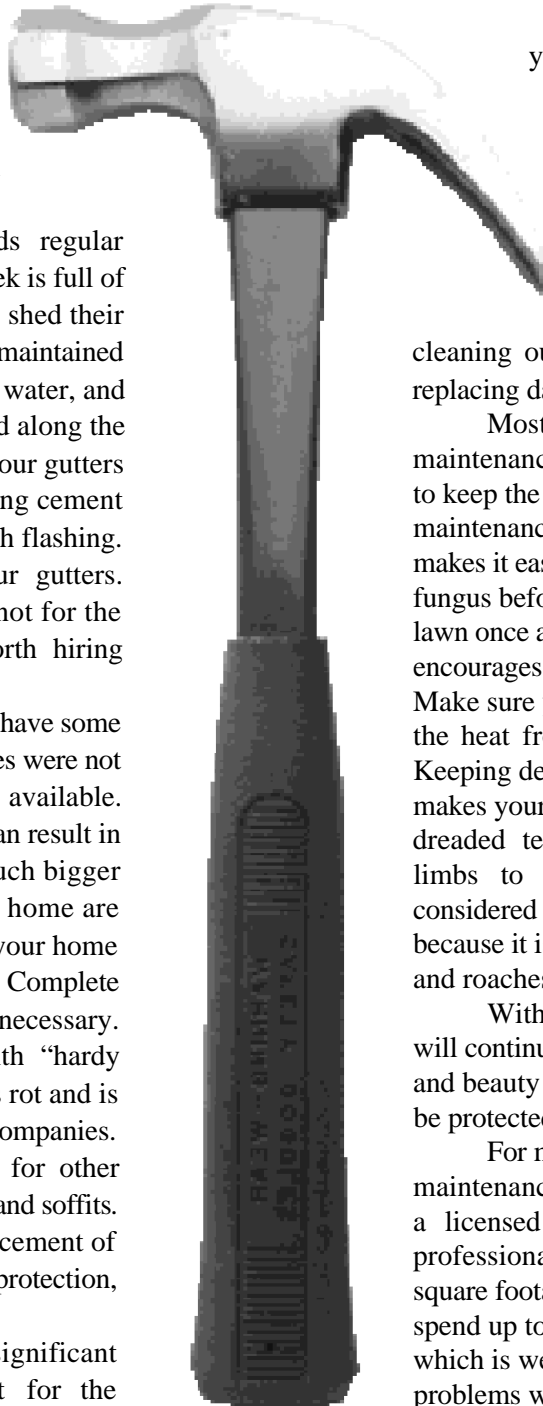
damage to the interior of your home and is the number one cause of mold problems. If you have not already done so, have a roofing company inspect your roof for hail damage. If you do have hail damage, contact your insurance company. Most will cover the cost to replace the roof, minus your deductible.

Maintenance of the interior of your home includes having the air conditioner and heater serviced by a professional at least once a year, regular changing of the filters in your system, draining the water heater once a year to rid it of build up, checking for and repairing leaky faucets and toilets, cleaning out the dryer vent and repairing or replacing damaged flooring.

Most people realize that regular maintenance of their yard is important in order to keep the job from becoming too big. Regular maintenance also helps a lawn stay healthy and makes it easier to detect problems with pests and fungus before they get out of hand. Mowing the lawn once a week during the high growth season encourages a healthier, thicker and denser lawn. Make sure you do not clip the lawn too short or the heat from the sun will damage the lawn. Keeping debris away from your home, not only makes your home prettier, it also helps keep the dreaded termites away! Allowing trash and limbs to build up around your home is considered a health hazard by the City of Austin because it is a breeding ground for termites, rats and roaches.

With regular maintenance, your home will continue to provide you the warmth, shelter and beauty you desire and your investment will be protected as well!

For more information on what repairs and maintenance your home might require, contact a licensed home inspector. The cost for a professional inspection is usually based on the square footage of your home. You can expect to spend up to \$350 for a 2,000 square foot home, which is well worth the cost if you discover the problems when they are small, before extensive damage has been done.



Some Quick Lawn Mowing and Lawn Mower Tips

Mowing your lawn is essential to its health because it trims away the oldest part of the plant and also encourages a lawn to spread and thicken to choke out weeds.

Mow on the high side. A higher cut helps ensure a deeper root system. For bluegrass and fescue, mow at about 3 to 3 1/2 inches. For Bermuda and centipede grass, mow at 1 to 2 inches. Mow St. Augustine grass at 3 inches. Before you even start the mower, walk your lawn and search for objects that could be thrown by the mower blade.

A well-maintained mower is not only safer, it will also serve you longer. Read the operator's manual and follow these tips.

Mud and stuck-on grass clippings can alter your mower's performance, so give your mower a bath with the outside hose, and then check for loose hardware.

Drain the old crankcase oil and replace it with clean oil. Also replace the oil filter and fuel filter according to the maintenance schedule in your owner's manual.

If your mower won't start, the spark plug could be fouled or damaged. Use a socket wrench with a deep socket to unscrew the old plug. After you pull it, inspect the porcelain area for cracks. If it's damaged, replace it. If the electrode end is dirty, clean it, and then be sure to set the gap for the proper distance. The operator's manual should give you all the information you need.

Use regular unleaded gasoline with 87 octane. For two-cycle engines, you'll have to mix the gas with oil according to the manufacturer's directions.

Don't sharpen your mower blade to a razor's edge because the metal edge will crack and peel back and will shred (not cleanly cut) your grass.

An investment in your lawn can reap countless rewards, increasing both your enjoyment and your home's resale value.

WNA QUARTERLY MEETING NOTICE

The next Quarterly Meeting for Westcreek residents will be held on Monday, June 14 at the Will Hampton Library, 5125 Convict Hill Road, from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. As always, a door prize will be given away!

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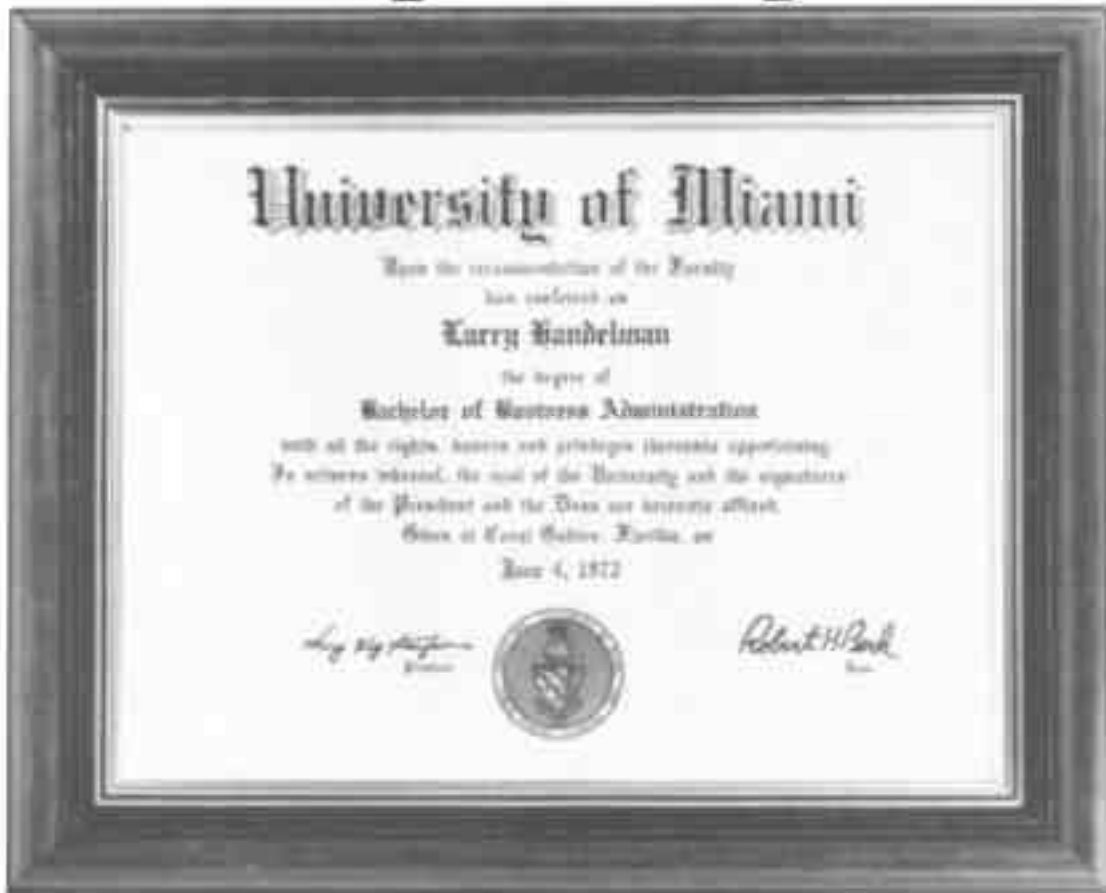
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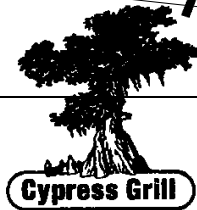
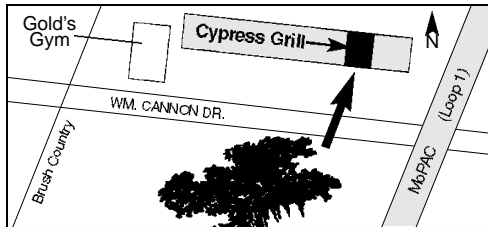
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De-junking our Neighborhood: We're Getting Better, But There's Room for Improvement

The Westcreek Neighborhood Association conducted its Annual "Sweep" of the neighborhood during the month of April. The purpose of the Sweep is to identify those residents of Westcreek who are violating City of Austin Codes so that our area is kept free from looking junky, therefore keeping our home values higher. Westcreek also has deed restrictions for many of these violations, but chooses to go to the City for enforcement.

The good news is that this year, the violations dropped again. There were a token few who still are violating the boat parking and RV parking ordinances. Also, we found several violators who are parking vehicles, boats and trailers on their lawns. That is also against the law. There were several piles of old brush that were spotted (fire hazard) that have also been reported. Here's the total breakdown of violations: Boats and Recreational Vehicles parked illegally: 6; Junk and Trash accumulation: 3; Junk cars: 3.

Just to put all this in perspective, we are doing an "Ugly Center Spread" for this newsletter. Although not illegal, the numerous flatbed trailers that have been showing up in neighborhood driveways is contributing to the "junky" look we are working so hard to avoid. Please look at these photos. You may be one of the "junky people." Please respect the rest of the neighborhood and park these vehicles in your garage or so they are not seen from the street. Our whole area will thank you!

OFFICIAL APOLOGY

The photo that was in this position was not taken during the April Sweep, but taken in the middle of May, right before the newsletter was put together. This photograph was from residents here in Westcreek who had recently taken their RV out of storage for a trip, and was included as a violator. This was NOT the case, and it is this newsletter editor's job to correctly identify true violators before publishing them. This is my official apology to these Westcreek residents, who have taken great strides to make sure they are not one of the people who let the neighborhood look "junky". They pay to have their RV stored correctly. I regret not checking the facts before publishing the photo.





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WNA CONTACTS

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Sandra Baldrige, OHAN Representative.....891-8779
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Bob Shrader, CAMPO Representative.....892-1768
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Karen Gregory, Member-at-Large and
Newsletter Editor.....899-1292
email.....kgregory1@austin.rr.com



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- Use overdrive gears. Overdrive gears improve the fuel economy of your car during highway driving.
- Use cruise control. Using cruise control on highway trips can help you maintain a constant speed and, in most cases, reduce your fuel consumption.
- Anticipate driving situations. If you anticipate traffic conditions and don't tailgate, you can avoid unnecessary braking and acceleration and improve your fuel economy by 5 to 10 percent.
- Avoid unnecessary idling. Turn off the engine if you anticipate a lengthy wait. No matter how efficient your car is, unnecessary idling wastes fuel, costs you money and pollutes the air.
- Combine errands. Several short trips taken from a cold start can use twice as much fuel as one trip covering the same distance when the engine is warm.
- Remove excess weight from the trunk. Avoid carrying unneeded items, especially heavy ones. An extra 100 pounds in the trunk reduces a typical car's fuel economy by one to two percent.
- Keep your engine tuned. Studies have shown that a poorly-tuned engine can increase fuel consumption by as much as 10 to 20 percent depending on a car's condition.
- Keep your tires properly inflated and aligned. Underinflated tires cause fuel consumption to increase by 6 percent.
- Change your oil. Clean oil reduces wear caused by friction between moving parts and removes harmful substances from the engine.
- Check & replace air filters regularly. Your car's air filter keeps impurities in the air from damaging internal engine components. Clogged filters can cause up to a 10% increase in fuel consumption.
- Buy only the octane level gas you need. Remember, the higher the octane, the higher the price. Check your owner's manual to determine the right octane level for your car.
- Own a fuel-efficient vehicle. The difference between a car that gets 20 MPG and one that gets 30 MPG amounts to \$1,500 over 5 years.

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“Turn on the Porch Light and Lock Up, Honey... We’re Going to National Night Out!”

Yup. It’s that time again...time to plan your Block Party for National Night Out. It’s a national event held once every year to help prevent crime and get to know your neighbors. **This year’s date is Tuesday, August 3.**

In the last couple of years, Westcreek has had great success with their parties. We may be getting complacent, however. Crime is on the rise, and many new residents have moved into the neighborhood recently. Now’s your chance to meet them and have a good time, too.

The Austin Police Dept. and Fire Dept. are always willing to drive their “rigs” up to your party, so the kids (and adults) can check out the equipment and learn who is fighting crime in their area. In the past, we’ve had ice cream parties, bar-b-ques and just good old-fashioned picnics as party themes. **Show your neighbors that you care: sign up to have a block party this year. Contact Karen Gregory at kgregory1@austin.rr.com or call 899-1292.** She’ll make sure you get on the list.

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Solar Rebate Program Offered by City

On March 25, the Austin City Council made a historic move for the City by unanimously approving the first Rebate program in the State of Texas for the installation of Solar Electric Systems. This is the first step in following through with their aggressive and highly public plans to obtain 20% of their electricity from renewable resources by 2020 and make Austin a leader in another progressive industry. In Solar Energy, Texas is behind other states such as California, Colorado and even New Jersey which already have Solar Rebate Programs. But this is a beginning and a bold step for the Capital City of the state synonymous with oil wells.

In order to meet these lofty goals and kick start the use of solar energy, the City has allocated very generous rebates that will pay up to \$15,000 to each residential customer or up to \$100,000 for each commercial customer who install a solar electric system on their property. With current solar technology these rebates can reduce customer electric bills substantially especially for those who are already using energy efficient appliances. Although these are some of the largest rebates ever offered to utility customers, the City has only allocated \$1 million for the remainder of this fiscal year, and will re-evaluate it the next fiscal budget. Interested home and business owners may want to take advantage of this offer before the money is gone.

If you are interested in learning more about this program, you have several options, including contacting Austin Energy, visiting their website at austinenenergy.com, or contacting one of the solar electric installers listed on their website under "Energy Efficiency". All of these contractors have registered with the City and meet their requirements of insurance and must provide a 5-year warranty on their installations along with a final inspection of their work by a City inspector. Another way to learn more about solar energy is to attend a free workshop offered locally by Armadillo Solar. Their phone number is 809-0690 and web address is armadillosolar.net.



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Neighborhood Garage Sale

Mark your calendars! The next Westcreek Neighborhood Garage Sale will be **Saturday, June 26**. The Neighborhood Association will place an ad in the *Austin American-Statesman* and the *Oak Hill Gazette*. You are responsible for your own directional signs; PLEASE make sure you take them down after the sale. Last time we had a neighborhood garage sale there were several signs left up for days on end.

Yards of the Month



The Westcreek Neighborhood Association Enhancement Committee selected the yard of Constantin and Georgeta Dzac, 6307 Steer Trail, as our initial 2004 WNA Yard of the Month. The Dzac's have done a wonderful job, with native plants and flowers, to make a truly beautiful yard that blends well into the Westcreek neighborhood.

Our May Yard of the Month has a kind of "old Austin" look. This delightful yard belongs to Elizabeth Lunquist, 5606 Porsche Lane.

The Enhancement Committee received several good



nominations for both the April and May Yards of the Month, making the final decision truly difficult. It was a pleasure though, for the Committee to see all the gorgeous flowers across the neighborhood and to know that so many residents love living in Westcreek.

All WNA Yard of the Month winners are presented a \$50.00 gift certificate from Emerald Garden and a \$25.00 gift card from Randalls.

Please take the time to drive by the Dzac's and Lunquist's homes and enjoy the views!

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Jan Boswell, Treasurer

MEET OUR NEW TREASURER

After moving to the Westcreek neighborhood six years ago, Jan has served on the WNA Communications Committee and now joins us as our full-time treasurer. Please welcome her much-needed help! You can reach Jan at eifel60@msn.com.

The WNA also extends our thanks to our "retiring" Treasurer, Sandra Baldrige, who has served for the last year. Sandy is continuing to serve on the Executive Committee in the position of Member-at-Large, OHAN representative.

Mark Your Calendar for the 5th Annual WNA Picnic

Our annual picnic is scheduled for **Sunday, October 3rd, 2004, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Dick Nichols Park, 8011 Beckett Lane.** The WNA is working to make this our best one yet. We plan to have contests with prizes, games for children (and adults that wish they were children), a moonwalk for kids, lots of good food, and the most important thing, FUN!

As always, we encourage you to bring your favorite side dish or dessert. We will furnish everything else. If you would like to volunteer to help with preparations, please call Ben Coughran at 892-5364, or email: bcoughra@ev1.net. We hope to see you there.



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HOMEOWNERS TIP OF THE MONTH

Interior painting: before you start painting, always check for water spots, ink and crayon marks, or any other stain that might be on the wall. These will need to be coated with a sealer before you paint, or they will bleed back through. Apply Klitz brand sealer or white shellack (each paint store will have their own brand). Let the areas dry and begin painting. And remember, always use proper safety glasses and work clothing when working with chemicals.

Good luck with all your home improvement projects!

— *Austin Remodeling*



Call Greg Albrecht **707-1412**