

Police Appreciation Event



On Tuesday the 26th of February, Mesa Park residences hosted our 15th annual Police Appreciation Event at Covenant Methodist Church, Fellowship Hall. Balcones Woods and Angus Valley residences also participated in this year's event, helping to make it very successful. This has been a Mesa Park tradition for over 14 years and has now expanded this event with the help of our neighbors. John Baylor, presi-

dent of Angus Valley Neighborhood Association introduced Chief of Police, Art Acevedo and Commander, Jim O'Leary and 20 or more officers of the North West Area Command. There were six large tables of "goodies" for the officers. This event brings home the message more personally to our officers and staff that they are really appreciated.

Special thanks goes to the following Mesa Park residents for their generous contributions whether it was baking cookies or contribution of "goodies." Each and every one made this a successful event: Harriett Hogle, Gail and Carl Miller, Bob and Jesse Grissom, Susan Serna, Ruth Kidwell, Val Schroeder, Roger and Shirley Evans, Linda Cotner, Pam and Charles Fisher, Dorothy White, Leslie and Charles Mueller, Claudia and Adam Ullrich. Thank you many times over. Special thanks to Costco for a gorgeous cake, HEB and Sam's for a generous gift card for various goodies.

Austin Partners In Education, 2008

by Terry Tevis

APIE creates and fosters effective community and school partnership that provide all AISD students preparation for college and career. Our current focus is implementing and expanding programs that utilize the talents of corporate and community volunteers in an effort to significantly improve the academic success of high needs students while also preparing them for college/career. Close to 1,000 students were served in weekly classroom study groups with great success. These programs, based on the Study Group model that brings volunteers into the classroom to create small learning communities, will be greatly expanded next year.

This presentation was made at the last Commander's Forum, and what impressed me was her illuminating description on how to volunteer. Go to the website www.austin-

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The Outdoor Cat, From Franny Syufy Safe Alternatives to an Indoors-Only Lifestyle for Cats

Cat lovers who want their cats to enjoy fresh air, sunshine, and the ambience of trees, bushes, and plants, often feel guilt by confining their cats to the indoors. This was the mindset in my generation, that cats are free and independent creatures, and should not be confined. That they can not be healthy, happy, and active, if not allowed to experience all the glories of the outdoors.

Today, we understand the hazards of allowing cats to roam freely, either by personal experience, hearsay, or through the media, including the Internet. Here are just a few of the outdoors dangers, although not an exhaustive list.

- The risk of contracting killer diseases, including FIV, FeLV, and FIP
- Injury and/or death from attacks by dogs, other cats, or predators
- Injury or death from vehicles
- "Cat-napping" for profit, or personal gain
- Trapping and disposal by cat-hating neighbors
- Torture and/or killing by psychopaths
- Confiscation by animal control authorities



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It's My Park Day April 12, 2008

It's that time of the year again, and April 12th is our annual It's My Park Day. We really need some help this year with getting mulch on our trails and the trash picked up. A big portion of the debris in the park is down tree limbs that just need to be dragged to the curb of the park. The City of Austin will deposit three big loads of mulch and provide tools, equipment and trash bags. The Austin Parks Foundation will provide t-shirts, water and some snack. Please come join us in keeping our park a pretty place to play. All ages welcome. If you cannot join in the physical activity, bring some sandwiches or snacks and just chat. We will have our "headquarters" at the park pavilion. Any questions, please give me a call.

Don't Prune Those Oaks Until A Safer Season!

Because spring has arrived, some tree trimmers might have you convinced that it is time to whip all of your trees into shape. But there can be devastating consequences of pruning certain types of trees now.

In Central Texas, Live Oaks and those trees in the Red Oak group, including Spanish Oak, Shumard Oak, and Blackjack Oak, are extremely susceptible to oak wilt, says Jim Rooni of the Texas Forest Service.

Pruning in the spring is a problem because that's when sap-feeding nitidulid beetles increase throughout Central Texas. Almost simultaneously in established areas infected with the fungal disease oak wilt, scattered dying trees develop fungal or spore mats beneath the bark. When sap beetles crawl on fungal areas, the spores stick to their bodies.

Beetles are attracted to freshly cut wood, and as they come into contact with fresh tree wounds, they pass on the oak wilt fungus. The fungus quickly reproduces within the vascular system of oaks, distributing the water transport system, thus causing the oak to wilt and die. Oak wilt can wipe out trees in a very short time.

Rooni says that the production of fungal mats and increased insect activity typically happen from February through June. This would be the time to avoid oak tree pruning, in general.

It's best to prune oaks during the coldest days of winter and the hottest days of summer, according to the City of Austin's Watershed Protection Development Review Department.

If you absolutely must trim, Rooni offers this advise:

- Keep your instruments sharp.
- Sterilize cutting surfaces on saws and pruners with a spray disinfectant such as Lysol before trimming the first tree and again before moving on to other trees, and
- Seal the wound using a light coat of a tree wound dressing spray, found in hardware stores and garden centers. Rooni says that if you are not sure about the species of your trees, paint wounds on any oak.

City tree experts recommend consulting certified arborists about your trees before pruning. Looking for pruning experts? Visit the Texas Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture's Web site www.isa.texas.com.

City of Austin tree information: www.ci.austin.tx.us/trees and www.texasoakwilt.org. You can also call the Travis County Agriculture Extension Service Office (512-854-9600) for Oak Wilt information.

Get more mileage from your gas

This letter was sent to me by a friend, I thought this info should be shared.

I don't know what you guys are paying for gasoline.... but here in California we are also paying higher, up to \$3.50 per gallon. But my line of work is in petroleum for about 31 years now, so here are some tricks to get more of your money's worth for every gallon.

Here at the Kinder Morgan Pipeline where I work in San Jose, CA we deliver about 4 million gallons in a 24-hour period thru the pipeline. One day is diesel the next day is jet fuel, and gasoline, regular and premium grades. We have 34-storage tanks here with a total capacity of 16,800,000 gallons.

Only buy or fill up your car or truck in the early morning when the ground temperature is still cold. Remember that all service stations have their storage tanks buried below ground. The colder the ground the more dense the gasoline, when it gets warmer gasoline expands, so buying in the afternoon or in the evening....your gallon is not exactly a gallon. In the petroleum business, the specific gravity and the temperature of the gasoline, diesel and jet fuel, ethanol and other petroleum products plays an important role.

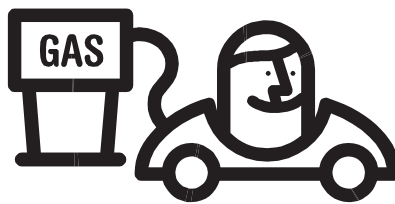
A one-degree rise in temperature is a big deal for this business. But the service stations do not have temperature compensation at the pumps.

When you're filling up do not squeeze the trigger of the nozzle to a fast mode. If you look you will see that the trigger has three (3) stages: low, middle, and high. In slow mode you should be pumping on low speed, thereby minimizing the vapors that are created while you are pumping. All hoses at the pump have a vapor return. If you are pumping on the fast rate, some other liquid that goes to your tank becomes vapor. Those vapors are being sucked up and back into the underground storage tank so you're getting less worth for your money.

One of the most important tips is to fill up when your gas tank is HALF FULL or HALF EMPTY. The reason for this is, the more gas you have in your tank the less air occupies its empty space. Gasoline evaporates faster than you can imagine. Gasoline storage tanks have

an internal floating roof. This roof serves as zero clearance between the gas and the atmosphere, so it minimizes the evaporation. Unlike service stations, here where I work, every truck that we load is temperature compensated so that every gallon is actually the exact amount.

Another reminder, if there is a gasoline truck pumping into the storage tanks when you stop to buy gas, DO NOT fill up--most likely the gasoline is being stirred up as the gas is being delivered, and you might pick up some of the dirt that normally settles on the bottom. Hope this will help you get the most value for your money.



On the other hand, there are some safe compromises to offer your indoor cat the best of both worlds, without the potential hazards of free roaming outdoors.

Carrying Your Cat

Gary Loewenthal, former host for the About Cats forum used to carry his cat, Mike around their back yard, allowing him to sniff and explore at will. Mike's nose led Gary on their walk, and each outdoor expedition was a bit different than the last. These explorations are best kept to a very short time—10 or 15 minutes—as most cats will become too eager to jump down and explore on their own. I'd suggest starting with just a minute or two for a timid cat who has never had an outdoor experience. However, carrying your cat is a great way to accustom him to the initially scary world of the outdoors, and a good preface to the next step:

Leash Training

Any cat can be trained to a harness and leash, using a gradual method of training. Many cats will initially feel confined by the additional weight of the harness, and their first attempts at walking on a leash will appear to be more of the “slinking” or “belly-crawling” variety. However, given time and patience on the part of the trainer, most cats will enjoy leash walking. Basic training instructions can be found in my lesson, “How to Train Your Cat to Walk With a Leash.”

Your cat may prefer to just “lie around” outdoors on his leash, as does our Jaspurr, who is a beginner in “leash etiquette.” Although Jaspurr is at the “belly-walking” stage, he eventually will progress to walking with us. It's all a matter of time and patience.

Please note that tying a cat outside on a leash is not a substitute for personal interaction and supervision. Cats should never be left alone outdoors on a leash or a rope extension. There is too much danger of their becoming tangled up, with the possibility of choking.

I recommend a sturdy harness or walking jacket, as opposed to a collar. Collars can be slipped too easily, which will most likely happen at times of danger, as when meeting a strange dog or cat on the street. Also try to buy as lightweight a leash as possible, consistent with safety. The additional “drag” of a bulky leash will slow your cat's walking progress.

More Ways to a Safe Outdoor Experience

A Personal Carrier

Soon after adopting our kitten, Billy, we decided we'd like to make him our “travelling cat,” and to that end, purchased a personal vest-style carrier, called “Pet Pocket 2,” manufactured by Global Pet Products. We bought the basic version, with a black mesh “pocket” that comfortably holds Billy safely with a drawstring adjustment and a metal clip that attaches to his harness. Billy has been on several outings with us, and has become quite accustomed to being ‘oohed’ and ‘aaahd’ at by strangers.

The PetPocket 2 is not intended to be used as a car carrier, because of the hazard of air bags. However Global Pet Products also manufactures a Pet Stowaway car seat for safe travel in the back seat.

Wheeled Walker or Stroller

Drs FosterSmith.com sells the Kittywalk Stroller, which provides both a durable nylon netting “cage” so kitty can enjoy the outdoor experience, and a water-resistant canvas shade for protection from the sun. Also, Global Pet Products manufactures the Wheel Away, which converts to a backpack, car carrier, and bed. Look for upcoming reviews of both of these products on this site.

Outdoor Enclosures

For cats who would prefer to “free-roam” (within limits), outdoor enclosures are ideal. They can be built from scratch, with your own or purchased plans, or assembled as modular enclosures. Kittywalk makes a whole series of light-weight containment modules, including a Kabana, a Penthouse, and a Climber.

Feline Funhouses provide a roomy enclosure suitable for patio, balcony, or deck, using black nylon mesh netting for fresh air, sunshine and view.

Your experiences may vary with any or all of these means of providing a safe outdoor experience for your cats, but you've been given enough alternatives here to get you started.



Education *continued from page 1*

partners.org, and find a school. There is a quick background check, and then you plan on spending about 45 min a week with a group of 4-5 kids working on either reading fluency or comprehension or math. She described how much fun it was to partner the younger kids in a school. You volunteer with the same group of kids every week, so you actually get to see all of them improve, with this study group environment. They also have programs that range from getting high school kids ready for college, and several technology programs. Helping these kinds of children, helps our future.



Mesa Park Neighborhood Garage Sale

Our neighborhood Garage Sale will be on April 26, 2008. The cost of the Garage Sale will be \$4.00 and maps will be provided. We will also be advertising in the *Austin American Statesman*.

To participate in the Garage Sale, please call Lynda at 794-8258. Please sign up by April 12.

Maps can be picked up at 11500 Elk Park Circle.

If anyone can help with placing the signs, please let me know.

Baby-Sitter

Ingrid, 15-year-old high school sophomore, lives in MPNA, Red Cross certified baby-sitter.

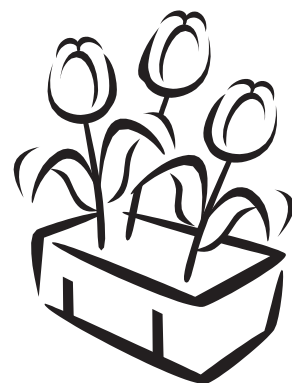
Cell: 586-8496.

Mesa Park Neighborhood Association Yahoo Group

We call it the "Push/Pull" method of communicating with our neighbors here in Mesa Park. To "Push" information, we send out Yahoo Group emails with upcoming information that you might find relevant. We have documents (Austin Police Dept Resource Manual) filed there. To "Pull" information, you access our website (Save to favorites) <http://www.main.org/mpna/> to "pull" information on our neighborhood calendar, Davis Elementary news, By-laws, contact information, etc. Come join today. And if you are impressed by our website, please feel free to send a note to our webmaster, Julie Kennedy at julie@digitalcitydesigns.com.

Volunteers for Newsletter Delivery

We need volunteers to deliver about 45 newsletters on Spotted Horse, about 15 newsletters from the curve to the end of Red Cloud. I have done it a couple of times, and with the weather so nice, it takes about 30 minutes (when we get a newsletter done). You also get to meet some nice people!



Neighborhood contacts:

President: Terry Tevis, mpnapres@yahoo.com, 736-8469
Volunteer Coordinator: Susan McVicker, susanmcv@att.net.
Board Members: Cindy Lindsay, TreeTopProp@prodigy.net, 346-2232
Gina Mattiza, gmattiza@austin.rr.com
Claudia Ullrich, claudia.mpna@gmail.com
Lynda White, lynda@texas-star.net

Emergency: 911

Police Non-Emergency: 311

NW Austin Police District Representative: SPO Joe Maciel, joe.maciell@ci.austin.tx.us, 974-4289

Reminder: The MPNA is not an HOA (Homeowner's Association). If you have a complaint or need to report a violation, please contact the appropriate city official for assistance. Thank you!