

**North Shoal Creek** Neighborhood Association



Designs for a bridge: Above, the mosaic design for the bridge's south railing; below, the north side. Though shown here together, the five panels that make up each design will be spaced out along the length of the railing.

# Steck Mosaics in the works for bridge over Shoal Creek

By Mary Jane Wier, Beautification Committee chair

A neighborhood collaboration is working bridge but also to serve as a neighborto add a series of colorful tile mosaics to the Steck Avenue bridge over Shoal Creek this spring.

The mosaics, designed by NSCNA President Kevin Wier, will be mounted on the railings on either side of the bridge, which is just west of the Daleview/Steck intersection. Part of the NSCNA's Neighborhood Partnering Program application approved by the Austin Public Works Department in October 2016, the mosaics are intended not only to beautify the

hood landmark.

(Continued on page 10): Mosaics



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#### **IMPORTANT DATES**

March 5: NSCNA membership meeting

March 21: NSCNA board meeting

April 17: Deadline to add garage sale sites to map

April 18: NSCNA board meeting

April 27: NSC annual neighborhood-wide garage sale

May 7: NSCNA membership meeting

May 9: NSC Contact Team meeting

May 16: NSCNA board meeting

## **Neighborhood News** Spring 2019

A quarterly newsletter of the North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Association (NSCNA)

Editor: Sharon Justice

Contributors: Sarah Brandon, Amy Culbertson, Dick Dunbar, Donna Eagar, Jon Menegay, Darlene Watson, Kenneth Webb, Kevin Wier, Mary Jane Wier, and Roger Wines

Color edition of newsletter available at www.nscna.org.

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# **President's Corner:** New goals include bringing park to reality

By Kevin Wier, NSCNA president

Dear North Shoal Creek neighbors,

I always enjoy spring as an opportunity for fresh new beginnings and for making exciting plans for the coming months. In our North Shoal Creek neighborhood, we have a lot to look forward to.

We are beginning our efforts to bring to reality the neighborhood park outlined in our new NSC neighborhood plan. This is the plan that we finalized with city staff last year and that Austin City Council voted to approve.

The proposed new park and hike/bike trail would be along the floodplain of Shoal Creek on privately owned land. We will have to form a mutually beneficial public-private partnership to make the park and trail a reality. We see many benefits for all stakeholders in this proposed park and are eager to tell this story.

The months ahead will also bring several annual neighborhood-wide events. In April, we will have our annual North Shoal Creek garage sale, in which everyone in the neighborhood is invited to participate. In July, we'll celebrate the Fourth with our traditional parade and gathering. As the holidays approach in December, we'll take time to reflect on the beauty of the season with our Luminaria Walk.

Throughout the year, we will have opportunities to support Pillow Elementary School as a group and as individual volunteers. Please email media@nscna.org to learn more.

We need you and your positive energy to help build an even better and safer neighborhood. Please come to our next neighborhood association meeting from 6:30 to 8 p.m. March 5 at the Pillow Library and make some new friends. The more people we have, the easier the work is for everyone.

I see neighborhoods as foundational building blocks of our democratic society. Being involved feels good and provides a sense of connection, empowerment and well-being. Whether you rent or own in North Shoal Creek, we invite you to join us in the good work and good times ahead.

#### **JOIN NSCNA**

Dues are only \$15 per household per calendar year. Renters and property owners residing in North Shoal Creek are eligible to join. Just fill out the membership form on page 12, then mail it and your \$15 check to NSCNA Membership / P.O. Box 66443 / Austin, TX 78766-0443. Join online via PayPal at <a href="https://www.nscna.org/join">www.nscna.org/join</a>. Or come to our next membership meeting — 6:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 5, 2019, in the Pillow Elementary School library — and join there via cash or check.

# North Shoal Creek should expect ripples from Apple's planned North Austin campus

By Amy Culbertson, contributor

The announcement of Apple's plans to build a \$1 billion new North Austin campus, with the initial promise of 5,000 jobs and the eventual potential of 15,000, was big news in Texas and beyond. For the North Shoal Creek neighborhood, some seven miles south of Apple's new site just over the Williamson County line off Parmer Lane, that means changes are coming.

Colin Pope, who keeps a close eye on area development as editor of the *Austin Business Journal*, told us he expects some of those changes—such as higher home prices—to be seen immediately. Others, he said —including commercial development, residential upscaling and increased auto traffic—will take longer to unfold.

"There's not going to be any niche of the city that will

go untouched in coming years" by the Apple decision, he said.

For North Shoal Creek, he expects one effect is "already kicking in," even though the first of the planned 12 Apple office buildings is not expected to open until 2021, with construction to proceed in phases. "As soon as news like the Apple campus hits, that's enough to increase property values."

And, as tech employers like Apple, Facebook, Indeed.com and HomeAway—either already based near the Domain or building new offices there—bring in new hires, North Shoal Creek is "a cakewalk of a commute," he said.

"You have to be mindful of the types of people who'll
(Continued on page 4)

# THANK YOU.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO NORTH SHOAL CREEK RESIDENTS
FOR HELPING MAKE OUR KIDS CLOTHING DRIVE FOR
PILLOW ELEMENTARY A SUCCESS.

JOIN US IN FELLOWSHIP AS WE SEEK TO BE A BLESSING TO ONE ANOTHER AND OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH GOD'S GRACE.

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10AM SUNDAYS | PILLOW ELEMENTARY

(Continued from page 3)

be coming in," Pope said. "Those people tend to bring some pretty big money to the table, and we know what that can do to housing prices." So "it's just a matter of time before teardowns start happening, in five to 10 years or more." Unfortunately, that also means residents on fixed incomes "could be forced out due to rising property taxes."

For the big picture, he said, "A lot of people are calling the Domain the next downtown." The 126.7-acre Apple campus, just north of McNeil Drive up Parmer Lane from the tech giant's current Austin offices, is only part of the picture. Pope pointed to several other projects in the works: the IBM Broadmoor campus, with offices, hotels, condos and residential units planned on 66 acres at 11051 N. Burnet Road; North Gateway Plaza, a high-rise office and apartment tower near the planned Major League Soccer stadium at McKalla Place; and an expansion of the Domain involving two new towers.

Looking at "developed Austin," Pope said, the area around North Shoal Creek is "smack-dab in the middle, geographically speaking." He suggested we will see the kind of changes on upper Burnet over the next 10 to 15 years that we've seen over the last few years on lower Burnet, with commercial development likely happening before further residential development. Eventually, "as South Lamar is to downtown Austin, upper Burnet will be to the Domain."

Pope worries that, as prices rise, "mom-and-pop stores find it harder to survive," so, though we may have a greater number of retail, dining and service options in the area, "we might see more chain restaurants and more upscale spots as opposed to Dairy Oueens."

Obviously, all this means more traffic, though Pope thinks non-vehicular options will be expanding. Capital Metro's commuter rail line skirts the western side of Robinson Ranch, from which Apple carved out its new purchase, but the new Apple site is on the eastern side, and Cap Metro has said it has no plans for now to add a station for Apple commuters. It is, however, considering expanding bus service on Parmer, perhaps with dedicated bus lanes. Projects vying for a new MetroRail station include the soccer stadium,

(Continued on page 5)





(Continued from page 4)

whose team franchise has promised to chip in on the cost of transit facilities, and the IBM Broadmoor on Burnet, where plans are proceeding to move the current Kramer station.

Pope sees a bit of a silver lining for drivers, though: "Not everybody will be driving to the same place at the same time. The more jobs we see added north of us, he said, the more people will be driving north to work instead of south, resulting in a "reverse commute" for some and easing the rush-hour pressure between North Shoal Creek and downtown.

As far as major development, Pope doesn't see anything happening soon south of U.S. 183, where zoning is not as friendly to big projects. "Developers would not see that area as low-hanging fruit," he said, so "the big picture is no major, major changes for several years."

Pope supplied an even bigger-picture context by noting that all this is just Austin being Austin. "This is nothing new," he said. "Over the last 100 years, Austin has doubled its population roughly every 20 years."





## From the Social Committee

# Neighborhood sale will be held April 27; sign up by April 17

The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Association will host the annual North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Garage Sale **Saturday**, **April 27**.

If you want to participate by having a garage or yard sale on that date, please sign up with NSCNA so your address will appear on a master sale map, copies of which will be distributed to each sale site.

To register your sale, send an email to garagesale@nscna.org. Please provide:

- Name
- Address
- Contact email or phone number

NOTE: All that will appear on the map is the address of your sale.

This sale will be advertised in the Austin American-Statesman, Craigslist, Facebook, garagesalefinder.com and others. Signs will be placed around the neighborhood before the sale.

**DEADLINE TO SIGN UP for your address to be on the map: Wednesday, April 17.** 

Please add these dates to your calendar. If you're planning to host a sale, email your sale information to garagesale@nscna.org by April 17 so shoppers will know how to find your sale.

And if you aren't holding a sale, be sure to browse the sales and buy, buy, buy!



# Pillow's Page: Students are getting their hands dirty in gardening classes

# By Darlene Watson, master gardener and community garden volunteer

Pillow Elementary School is getting into gardening.

Neighborhood volunteers Brian Cobb and Steve and Darlene Watson have begun working with Pillow staff Anyone interested in becoming involved with these and students to teach garden classes.

Lessons on composting in Ms. Frenzel's and Ms. Pearlman's second-grade classes began the garden classes. The children were excited to learn about composting and eager to get their hands into the soil and to plant vegetables. The teaching volunteers, Mr. Cobb and Ms. Watson, seemed to be having as much fun as the children.

Future class subjects include worms, pollinators, water conservation and planting and caring for a garden.

We are hurrying to plant a spring garden in the three beds set aside for Pillow in the North Shoal Creek Community Garden at the corner of the school grounds. There are also six neglected older beds just behind the school building, and we are working to recondition those for future use.

gardening projects should e-mail Darlene Watson at darlene0615@gmail.com. You need not know anything about gardening to volunteer.

Plans are also in the works for general gardening classes for the neighborhood at the community garden

## Volunteer opportunities at Pillow:

50th-Anniversary Committee: Planning for the celebration of Pillow's 50th anniversary for the 2019-2020 school vear

-Box Tops for Education Coordinator: Collecting. counting and mailing in box tops as they are donated at school.

To volunteer, e-mail PTA President Jessica Levesque at pillowpresident@gmail.com.



# North Shoal Creek Community Garden will be adding accessible raised beds

# By Sarah Brandon and Dick Dunbar

Raised planters and wheelchair-friendly pathways to make the North Shoal Creek Community Garden more accessible and inclusive are in the works.

Last year, the City of Austin's Equity Office announced a mini-grant opportunity for community-based projects aimed at eliminating barriers and improving the quality of life for the city's most vulnerable populations. Out of more than 125 applications, North Shoal Creek's proposal was one of just a handful the office accepted.

The proposal aims to make our community garden more equitable, accessible and inclusive by constructing several new beds raised high enough to be gardened from a wheel-chair or from a standing position, instead of squatting or bending down, as well as improving the pathways to meet Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.

The \$745 city grant will be used for materials. The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Association Community Garden Committee is still in the early stages of planning how to build the new beds, which must meet ADA standards, and how to incorporate them into existing garden space. If you have suggestions for how North Shoal Creek can implement a more accessible design, or if you want to volun-

teer with the garden, please email gardenchair@nscna.org

The goal is to have three new accessible beds ready for planting in late March. Anyone who finds the new beds easier to use than the lower plots may apply for the use of one by e-mailing <a href="mailto:gardenchair@nscna.org">gardenchair@nscna.org</a>. Prospective gardeners should also e-mail this address to be added to the waiting list for the existing ground-level beds. All these were committed in 2018, and the garden committee is in the process of renewing plot assignments for 2019. If any become available, they will be offered to new gardeners on the waiting list. The annual plot fee is \$25.

The North Shoal Creek Community Garden is sponsored by the Sustainable Food Center of Austin and supported by a grant from the Austin Parks Foundation. The Equity Office seeks to improve the quality of life for all Austinites and to build and sustain a culture of equity across the city. More information about the Equity Office and its programs is available at <a href="http://austintexas.gov/department/equity-office">http://austintexas.gov/department/equity-office</a>.

Dick Dunbar is 2019 chair of the North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Association Garden Committee; Sarah Brandon is the outgoing 2018 chair.





# From the Safety Committee

# Some tips for avoiding vehicle break-ins and what you should do if one happens

Car break-ins—known in law enforcement as "burglary of a vehicle"—are relatively common occurrences. Police, who consider them "crimes of opportunity," have this advice to minimize the chance of becoming a victim:

Remember "LOCK, TAKE and HIDE. Always lock the vehicle doors, take your keys with you and leave no belongings visible inside your car. If you have a garage, always park your vehicle in it and close the doors. When no garage is available, strive to park in well-lit and well-traveled areas.

In spite of your efforts, of course, some morning you might find yourself staring at a burglarized vehicle. If that happens, here's what you need to do:

- 1. Take pictures of the damage.
- 2. Make a list of stolen items.
- 3. File a police report, even if nothing was stolen.

You can report the break-in by phone at 311, online at <a href="http://www.austintexas.gov/department/ireport-austin-online-incident-reporting-system">http://www.austintexas.gov/department/ireport-austin-online-incident-reporting-system</a> or in person by visiting your nearest police station. Whichever you choose, **report it one time only.** Filing a report both by phone and online or in person will only cause confusion. If you're more comfortable reporting in Spanish, you can call 512-974-8521 ("Tu Voz" or "Your Voice," an information and referral hotline for the Hispanic community).

Have these items in hand when you file the police report: your driver's license, vehicle registration and auto insurance ID card, plus any photos of the damage along with your inventory of stolen items.

4. If anything was taken bearing information that could be used to steal your identity—name, birth date, or Social Security number—contact one of the big three credit bureaus—Equifax, Experian or TransUnion—and have a fraud alert placed on your

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ing in our neighborhood.

account. If credit cards were taken, contact the credit card company.

5. If damage done to your vehicle exceeds your deductible, file a claim with your insurance company. Keep in mind that stolen items may be covered by homeowners' or renters' insurance, while the damage to the vehicle will be covered by your auto insurance.

- 6. Get your vehicle repaired as soon as possible; in the meantime, do what you can to protect your car's interior (get creative with duct tape and plastic).
- 7. Let your neighbors know what happened by posting online on Nextdoor. Doing so may help neighbors be more aware and take extra precautions to protect their property. Don't include your address, just the name of the street or a nearby intersection. Also email <a href="mailto:safe-ty@nscna.org">safe-ty@nscna.org</a>. Safety Committee members may be able to help; also, they need to know what safety issues are happen-

According to Neighborhoodscout.com, your odds of being the victim of a violent crime in Austin are only 1 in 234, while the odds of being a victim of a property crime here are 1 in 30. We hope these tips will help you lower those odds, or at least help you lower the stress of a car break-in if you know what to do when one happens.





The Beautification Committee began gathering ideas for the mosaic in 2018. Based on that input, Mr. Wier created two designs for the mosaic series (see photos on page 1). Each design is comprised of five vertical panels, 41 inches tall, that will be spaced out along the length of the railing, mounted on the railing's concrete support posts. The outer two panels of each design are 17 inches wide and the inner three, with the words "North Shoal Creek," 11 inches wide.

Supervised by mosaic instructor Dianne Sonnenberg, artistic director of the Austin School of Mosaic Design, a group of volunteers organized by neighbors Mary Jane Wier and Amelia Cobb, is working on the mosaics. Heather Kruger, owner of the Austin School of Mosaic Art at 1810 W. Anderson Lane, has been instrumental in the project, providing training in mosaic work by Ms. Sonnenberg for the volunteers.

The Beautification Committee extends thanks to the volunteers, who have been meeting twice a month to work on the mosaics, and special thanks to neighbors Patti and David Garing, who have generously allowed the group to work at their home. The committee also extends thanks to City of Austin Neighborhood Partnering Program staff members Tracy Ho and Marcus Primm for their help, and to the City's Public Works Department, whose staff recently repainted not only the metal railing of the Steck Avenue bridge but also the railings on other neighborhood bridges as well.

Plans call for the mosaics to be completed this spring and mounted on the bridge in May.

If you are interested in participating in this project, please email beautification@nscna.org.

Each of the vertical mosaic panels will be mounted on one of the railings' concrete stanchions. Photo was taken prior to repainting the railings.



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Red oak foliage in North Shoal Creek, Fall 2018. Photo by Dan Barrera.

# Short takes on neighborhood news

## By Sharon Justice, newsletter editor

- •The pedestrian hybrid beacon originally installed at the Burnet/Ashdale intersection last July was turned on January 21. Be sure to use it if you're crossing Burnet as a pedestrian near Ashdale. If you're driving on Burnet, be aware that it is now working.
- •The Austin Transportation Department is revamping its Local Area Traffic Management Program. The new program is to be presented to the City Council in the first quarter of 2019. Unfortunately for North Shoal Creek, this means the requested roundabout at the Rockwood/Stillwood intersection and the speed cushions on Primrose are unlikely to be funded under the new program. And that means concerned neighbors will once again need to advocate for effective speed control for Primrose and Rockwood.
- •A new restaurant, District North, will open this spring in the space previously occupied by Suzi's China Grill at 7858 Shoal Creek Boulevard. Like its South Austin sibling District Kitchen in Circle C it will serve contemporary American food.
- •The 183/MoPac Shared Use Path is scheduled to be completed in spring 2019. Once it's open, walkers and cyclists will have access from Shoal Creek Boulevard to Neils Thompson Drive and areas north of 183. More information: <a href="http://www.mopacexpress.com/enhancements/bike-pedestrian.php">http://www.mopacexpress.com/enhancements/bike-pedestrian.php</a>.
- •NSCNA Safety Chair Roger Wines reports that Austin's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) train-

The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Association (NSCNA) holds five membership meetings a year, on the first Tuesday of these months: January, March, May, September and November. Meetings are held from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the Pillow Elementary School library, 3025 Crosscreek. All meetings are open to the public.

North Shoal Creek Neighborhood News ad prices: Business-card size, 3.5" wide by 2" high, \$30. Quarter-page, 3.5" wide by 4" high, \$60. Halfpage: 7.5" wide by 5" high, \$115. 10% discount when three or more ads are purchased at the same time. To advertise, email <a href="mailto:newsletter@nscna.org">newsletter@nscna.org</a>.

ing is being revamped. This free training educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster-response skills. The revised training, which is expected to focus on training in neighborhoods, should be available soon. If you are interested in signing up for it, please email Roger at <a href="mailto:safetychair@nscna.org">safetychair@nscna.org</a>. You must be at least 18 to qualify. Also, if you don't want to wait for Austin's revised program, other Central Texas locations offer CERT training. Contact Roger if you need help locating a class outside Austin. More information: <a href="https://www.austintexas.gov/AustinCERT">https://www.austintexas.gov/AustinCERT</a>.

•Roger also asks that his committee be informed when a crime occurs in the neighborhood. He requests that anyone who is a victim of a crime or knows of one please e-mail him at <a href="mailto:safetychair@nscna.org">safetychair@nscna.org</a>. He may be able to help by following up with police, and he needs to keep the Safety Committee apprised of what crimes are committed and what safety issues exist in our neighborhood. Also, the Safety Committee needs more members. Please email <a href="mailto:safetychair@nscna.org">safetychair@nscna.org</a> to join.

There's a lot happening in North Shoal Creek — from working toward a new park along Shoal Creek to adding mosaics to our bridges to expanding our community garden. Join us and help make our neighborhood even better!



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