

*A Publication of the Northfield Neighborhood Association
 Delivered to 1600 homes and businesses 3 times per year
 www.northfieldna.org*

Another Great National Night Out in Northfield

National Night Out was held on October 6th, and Northfield was very proud to host visitors from Austin's emergency services and the Austin City Council. Neighbors enjoyed great conversation and excellent food provided by a new restaurant in the neighborhood on Airport Boulevard, House Pizzeria. Many thanks to all who showed up to once again make National Night Out a huge success.



Photos by Brenda Benner

Neighborhood Holiday Potluck:
Monday, Dec 7th 6:00 ~ 8:00
 (Please note the earlier time)
 Dayspring Chapel, Ave. G & 55th

Neighbors are invited to bring a side dish or dessert and encouraged to bring a small donation to Dayspring Chapel's Holiday Fund

~ WANTED ~
NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Currently there is no official editor for this newsletter. A volunteer is needed to ensure continued publication of this newsletter which currently comes out three times per year. Please contact Sebastian Wren at 459-4144 or swren@balancedreading.com

City of Austin Noise Ordinance: A Friendly Reminder

The Northfield Neighborhood Association would like to remind neighbors of the Austin City Code ordinance related to noise and amplified sound. We respect each resident's right to play music or make any sounds they choose in their own homes. However, we also respect our neighbors' rights to NOT hear those sounds, at any time of day. Please be aware of these ordinances as you are planning parties and gatherings, practicing performances, or working with tools.

Chapter 9-2 of the Austin City Code states that a person may not:

- (1) Make noise or use sound equipment in public between 10:30 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- (2) Use or permit the use of sound equipment at a business in excess of the decibel limits prescribed by this chapter
- (3) Make noise or play a musical instrument audible to an adjacent business or residence between 10:30 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

Further, in residential districts, a person may not:

- (A) Use sound equipment that produces sound audible beyond the property line of a residence in a residential area between 10:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m.
- (B) Use sound equipment audible beyond the property line of a residence in a residential area that produces sound in excess of 75 decibels.



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The Little Blue Caravan

by Louis & Pam

Great progress is being made in our Northfield Neighborhood dining options! Already we can choose between pizzerias and coffeehouses, traditional Mediterranean at Pharaoh's and soon, fine dining at Foreign & Domestic. Now there's one more. It's a unique alternative to conventional restaurants; a vegan sandwich shop called Counter Culture whose fare can be good for your weight and your well-being.

Vegetarian and vegan restaurants are growing in popularity as more and more folks become careful about what they eat and where it comes from. For instance the vegan diet, a subset of vegetarianism, typically consists of raw and unprocessed foods. You may have tried, at some time, to cut back on fattening foods and animal products. You may have tried a vegetarian or vegan regimen. And, you may have decided that how food tastes is more important than sticking to politically correct and dietetically balanced meals. Many of us, having tried truly healthy meals, were left with the impression that they were too bland.

There may not be a lot of vegans or even vegetarians in the neighborhood. Vegans not only don't eat meat but they try to avoid all animal products including cheese, eggs and honey. It's a strict dietary regimen and it can feel like work to stick to it. Now, however, it's a new day for vegans and all of us who want an unassailably healthy meal every once in a while. The salads and sandwiches at the blue Counter Culture caravan are so well prepared and seasoned that they compare favorably to many so-called convenience foods.

That's the signature of Sue Davis' Counter Culture cuisine. A chef and vegan for many years, Sue has

broken through the it-doesn't-taste-good barrier. The creations from her little blue caravan at 102 E. North Loop are a revelation. She has invented recipes for vegan meals, in easy to carry out sandwiches, which are more satisfying than any you may have tried before.

Sue is not new to Austin. For a while she was a food prep person in Los Angeles but returned to live and will ultimately open a sit-down restaurant in the North Loop area. Her emphasis is on unprocessed, organic ingredients from sustainable and preferably local sources. She has a repertoire of vegan and raw comfort foods that will please carnivores as well as vegetarians. Customers can order her meat-free versions of favorite dishes or try some of her seasonal specials.

Sue's non-dairy uncooked deserts are surprisingly delicious. Another surprise is her 'tuna' salad sandwich. There's no tuna in it, of course, but the pureed garbanzo beans with herbs and celery are such a close match that you may become a convert. (Bonus - there's no mercury in a Counter Culture 'tuna' sandwich.)

It's wonderful to live in a town with so many food choices. It's even better when some of these options are in our own neighborhood. Indeed, walking to dine beats driving every time. And for that special occasion when you'd like your meal to be fat-free and guilt-free, we've got our own vegan eatery now.

Counter Culture is usually open from noon to seven, Thursday thru Sunday. Check the web site CounterCultureAustin.com for details. There are weekly specials and as the weather gets cooler some soups and stews will appear on the menu. Ultimately Sue hopes to use her picnic tables for music and art shows with wine and cheeze tastings.

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How I Came to Steward the Only Urban High-Density Mixed-Fruit Orchard in Central Texas: A Cautionary Tale

by Patrick Goetz

People who have known me for a while know that I own a vacant lot on Nelray near Guadalupe that I had upzoned single-family to multi-family use. My intention was to build a high-quality, multi-family structure. However, my plans are changing.

Recently, after watching the film "The future of Food," I started to develop a great deal of interest in sustainable urban agriculture. A recent bicycle trip along the Danube River through Austria and Germany also focused my attention on fruit trees and urban orchards. Fruit trees are beautiful, and in Austria, there are so many apple and pear trees along the bicycle path that any time one feels like eating an apple, all one has to do is reach up and grab one. Why don't we have more fruit trees in Austin, I wondered?

An interest in local agriculture, an obsession with planting trees: the die was cast. Despite knowing nothing whatsoever about growing fruit trees, I decided to abandon my plan to build high density housing on my vacant lot and plant an orchard instead.

After a great deal of research, I found that Texas is divided into 7 horticultural regions, with Austin in Zone 4, a tiny east-west sliver barely wider than the city itself. This explains why there are no commercial fruit growers in these parts. Most fruit trees have very specific climate requirements. For example, most varieties of apples require a certain number of chilling hours (temperatures below 45 F). The trees will grow, but if there are not enough chilling hours, the tree will not bear fruit. There are similar rules for grapefruit, loquat and peach trees in terms of temperature and rainfall. Some years will be highly productive, fruit-abundant years, other years, not so much. It would be difficult to make a living as an apple-baron in Austin, but I'm just an amateur grower. No problem for me.

I used guidelines from the Texas A&M website to select a wide variety of trees using the high density urban orchard ideas popularized by the Dave Wilson Nursery (http://www.davewilson.com/homegrown/BOC_explained.html). I searched far and wide for trees that were born and raised in Texas, as those are much

(Continued on Page 5)



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Contact Sebastian Wren at
swren@BalancedReading.com

Urban Orchard

(Continued from Page 4)

more likely to survive than plants imported from, say, California. Unfortunately all of our nearby nurseries seem to mostly sell imported plants. I was very fortunate to find the fine folks at Bob Wells Nursery (www.bobwellsnursery.com/) in Lindale, about halfway between Dallas and Shreveport on IH-20. Wells is a family-owned business started by Bobby's grandfather 70 years ago. The Wells supply fruit trees to retail nurseries all over the country -- very helpful, wonderful people who had every tree I was looking for, plus we saved about \$300 by driving up and getting the trees ourselves.



A tiny fruit tree bears fat fruit less than 1 year after being planted in an urban orchard on Nelray.

I bought 36 of a wide variety of fruit and nut trees (limes, lemons, plums, pecans pears, apricots, loquats, apples, pomegranates, and olives). Planting them was challenging -- 36 trees means 36 fairly large holes -- but it was very well worth the effort. With a little care over the summer, all 36 trees we planted survived the worst drought in 50 years, and all of them are thriving as we head into winter. Very unexpectedly, some of these young trees even produced fruit! For a while, every visitor to our house was sent home

with a pomegranate... whether they wanted one or not.

You might think you don't have room in your yard for fruit trees, but I'd bet you do. Fruit trees, pruned back every year, don't require a lot of space to thrive. I have dozens of trees, and I still have room for more. I'm hoping to order more trees from Bob Wells Nursery soon and have them delivered here to Austin. If anybody in the neighborhood would like to add to this order and get a few fruit trees of your own, please let me know.

(Editor's note: This article is excerpted from a longer article that describes in greater detail lessons learned about planting fruit trees in a central-Austin neighborhood. Go to <http://spaklandgnome.info/orchard> to read the full article.)



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Casa Brasil: International Trade Right Here in Northfield

Joel Shuler

When I approached a realtor about finding a space for a Brazilian Cultural Center in 2004, she said that she had the perfect place: a house off the beaten path in an up-and-coming neighborhood. And thus began Casa Brasil. We opened our doors on Evans Avenue in 2005 as a Brazilian Cultural Center with three objectives: Help Brazilians living in Central Texas, promote Brazilian Culture, and provide a place to touch Brazil. The center had a small market and eventually the market morphed into a small café. Through the café my passion for Brazilian coffee developed and in 2007 we closed our retail store to focus solely on sourcing the best coffee in Brazil and importing it directly to Austin.

It took several years to put everything together, but this year we imported our first container of gourmet Brazilian coffees. Our system is quite unique in that we put together micro-lots of coffee, vacuum seal the green coffee at source, import ourselves, and roast in small batches here in Northfield. Once a coffee cherry is picked,

the quality can only deteriorate. By following the entire process, we are able to maintain the integrity of the bean (and also of the proud farmer who produced it). Fortunately this quality has been noticed, and Whole Foods recently accepted our coffees into the entire Southwest Region.

Our direct trade model also goes the other way, allowing us to directly impact the lives of those that produce these great coffees. One such way is a scholarship program that addresses the social inequities that coffee producers face by providing their children a scholarship to a private school; putting them on better footing to open up their potential and allow them to follow their bliss, whatever that may be.

You can learn more about us on our site, www.casabrazilcoffees.com, and please feel free to call or email if you would like to come by and taste some great coffees.

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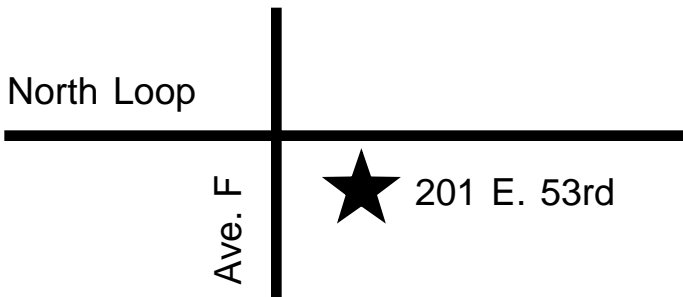
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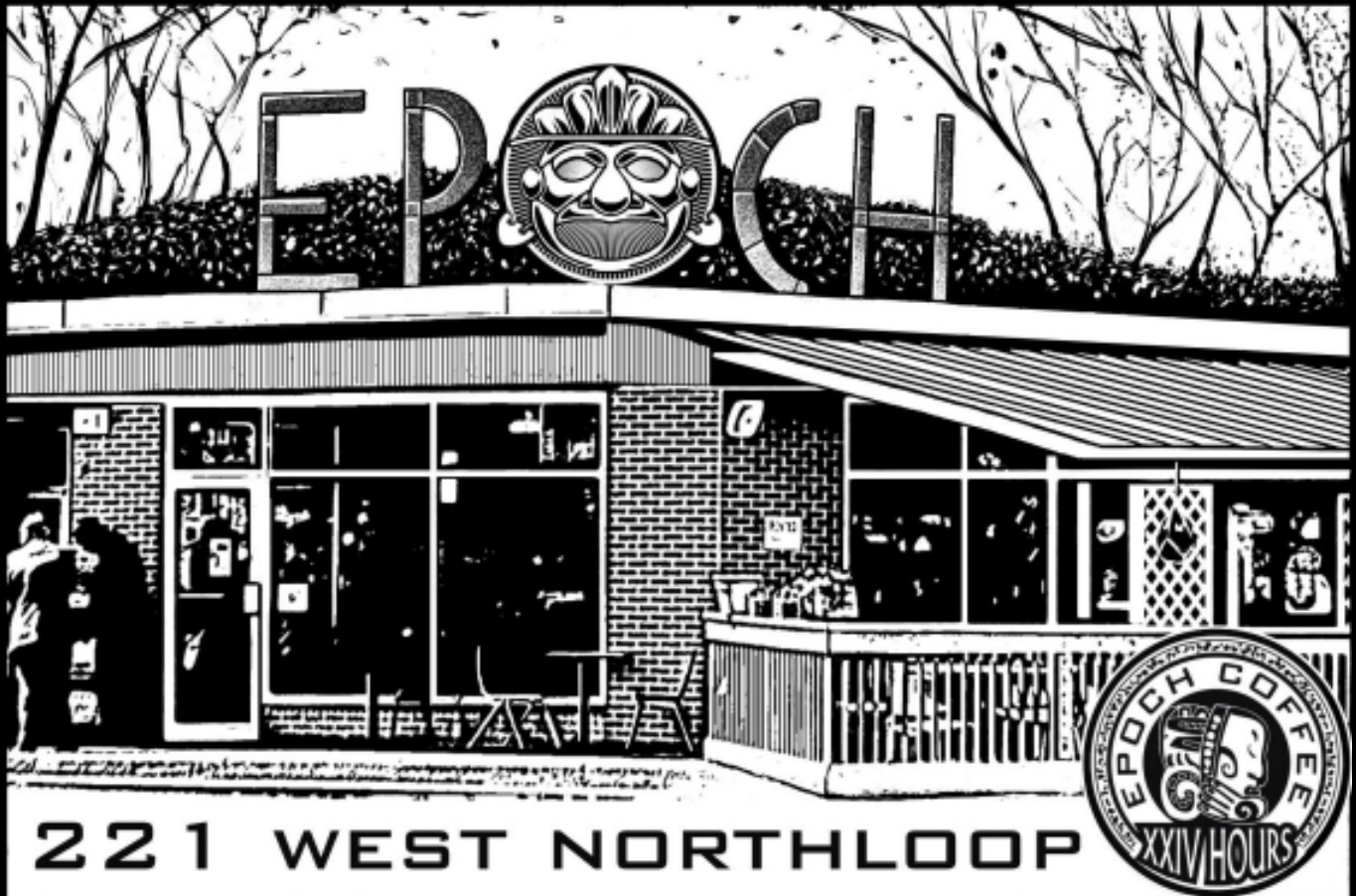
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Changes Along North Loop

by Cindy Black, Keeper of the Green

Northfielders may have noticed some changes overhead while driving along North Loop Boulevard lately -- thirty large Ligustrum trees have been removed to make way for the planting of 32 new native Texan trees.

The project to remove the Ligustrums has been a long time coming. For many years, Northfield residents have been aware that Ligustrums are considered an invasive species, and this particular stretch of the trees had become problematic. The base of each tree was composed of as many as 20 thick trunks, crowding out the walkway for pedestrians. A long-desired sidewalk would have been impossible to construct.

Luckily the Urban Forestry Program recognizes this problem, and awarded Northfield a grant of \$6,315 in October 2009. Just two weeks later, the process to remove the trees began. But two unexpected issues quickly arose.

First, Project Leader Cindy Black applied for a right-of-way permit so that the Environmental Corp of American Youthworks could block off the street as the larger trees were felled. Unfortunately, this request was denied altogether because it was 'impossible' to close any part of that section of North Loop. Second, some of the Ligustrums were touching the live overhead wires, which would pose a risk of shock to anyone cutting the trees.

The solution: City of Austin to the rescue. Austin Energy first came out on Oct. 15th and performed a 'make safe,' cutting the trees below the wires. Then on Friday, Oct 16th, PARD came out and topped off the trees - all the way to the ground!

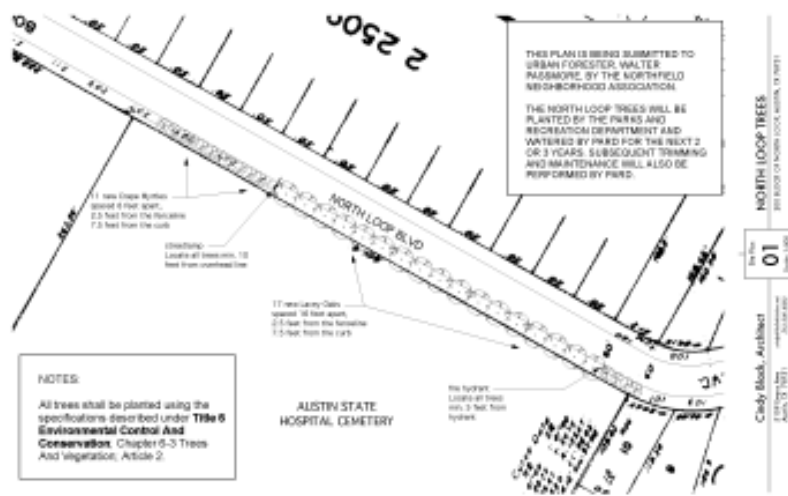
Apparently they have an easier time getting access to the right-of-way.

Finally Environmental Corp was able to start work, and on Tuesday morning, Oct. 20th they started applying the herbicide which will prevent any future ligustrum growth (part of the issue with these trees is that if they are pruned or if berries fall to the ground, new growth starts right away and the invasion begins again.)

On November 4th, the Environmental Corp returned to grind out the

stumps so that the ground will be prepared for the new trees. Cindy then met with Urban Forester Walter Passmore to walk the site and review the tree plan. Under the wire, PARD will plant 11 Crape Myrtles, then following that, 17 Lacey Oaks, and then 4 more Crape Myrtles near the east end by the Safe & Lock store. The plan is to plant the trees this season, between December and March 2010.

Northfield residents have shown enthusiasm for this change to the street canopy, and have hopes that the improvement will influence some positive changes to the Austin State Hospital Cemetery grounds.



Plans for new trees describe where and how many of each species will be planted along North Loop Blvd.

NORTHFIELD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

MEETING DATES

The NNA meets on the First Monday of each month (except holidays) at 7:00 p.m. at the the Dayspring Chapel, Corner of Ave. G & 55th

Holiday Potluck - Monday December 7 (6:00 - 8:00)

Monday January 4

Monday February 1

Monday March 1

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