Church, neighborhoods seeking common ground on amphitheater

Some area residents say volume of nearby worship services is too loud

By Kelli Weldon

LifeAustin Church’s amphitheater on Hwy. 71 has been the subject of much controversy throughout the years, in large part because of sound from worship services and its effect on neighborhoods in the rural residential area. In February the city of Austin Board of Adjustment, which handles zoning cases, is slated to postpone further discussion of the amphitheater until April 11, according to city staff.

The church in December reached out to some nearby residents representing the Hill Country Estates Homeowners Association and Covered Bridge Property Owners Association and has been meeting with them to try to determine next steps. For example, sound tests may be conducted in residents’ homes to determine just how loud music from the amphitheater is, Covered Bridge POA President Mike Kirk said.

“LifeAustin seems to be motivated to try to come up with a resolution,” Kirk said, adding: “We are all trying to be very amenable about this.”

The church does not want to shut down the amphitheater, which was approximately a $7 million investment and is helping the church accomplish its mission of transforming lives through faith, said Dennis Broughton, LifeAustin Church board member.

“We are hopeful that there can be some common ground,” he said. “There have been many [residents] who have taken the position that they want that thing bulldozed. ... We were given the right by the city to...
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FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Six years ago I accepted the Southwest Austin general manager position here at Community Impact Newspaper. This edition then was typically 32 pages, and it was distributed to nearly 76,000 households and businesses.

Thanks to your loyal readership, and numerous small businesses that have entrusted us with their advertising campaigns, we as a company have grown tremendously during our 10 years.

Specifically this edition now averages 48 pages per month, and our distribution is around 88,000 households and businesses. This success is not unique to our Southwest Austin paper; in fact, we will soon boast 22 papers throughout the state being distributed to more than 1.5 million Texas households and businesses.

That growth has opened the door to a new opportunity here for me, as I have become the publisher of our Austin metro region. Thank you, Southwest Austin, for putting up with my personal stories in these notes over the years. I still call Southwest Austin home, and I would not live anywhere else in this city.

Our January issue is a great issue for me to leave you with. It features two top stories we have been following for a long time, and we then look back at the year with updates on topics such as development, education and transportation. Enjoy this issue, and please introduce yourself to our new general manager next month!

Travis Baker
GENERAL MANAGER
tbaker@communityimpact.com

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COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

TAKE THE POLL
Would you vote to approve funds to construct a new Austin ISD high school in South Austin?

Take the poll at communityimpact.com.swt-poll.

LAST MONTH’S POLL RESULTS

Last month Community Impact Newspaper reported on CodeNEXT, the ongoing effort to rewrite the city of Austin’s existing land development code.

Do you want CodeNEXT to change your neighborhood?

44.44% Yes; I want the area to be more pedestrian-friendly.

22.22% No; I do not want my neighborhood to change as a result of CodeNEXT.

22.22% No; I do not think CodeNEXT will result in changes in my neighborhood.

11.11% Yes; I want to see different types of development.

0% Other

Results from an unscientific Web survey collected 12/16/15-1/22/16

READER COMMENTS

Capital Metro, transit advocates aim to gain momentum on rail planning (posted Dec. 9, 2015)

“Ignoring suburbs has long been a factor. ... Commuter trains can run along urban lines in the Austin core, and the ABIA parking areas could be expanded to take Bastrop-Smithville commuters into downtown on an airport line.”

– Randall Stephens

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Now Open

1. The Belterra Springs apartments opened for residency Dec. 3 at 271 Trinity Hill Drive. The 152-unit complex features one-, two- and three-bedroom units with amenities such as stainless steel appliances. 512-288-1700. www.belterrasprings.com

2. Orangetheory Fitness held a grand opening Jan. 7 at 9500 S. 1-35, Ste. L-800, and offers 60-minute group workouts. The center has a money-back guarantee for members who do not see results in 30 days, according to the company. 512-969-6626. www.orangetheoryfitness.com

3. Local business Pong Club opened in Oct. 22 in a shared space with SoccerZone South Austin at 9501 Manchaca Road. Owner/operator Roderick Medina said the table tennis space provides league play, coaching, and general play options for beginners and experienced players. 512-775-0497. www.pongclubatx.com

4. Primal Fusion Holistic Health and Performance opened Oct. 1 at 7225 W. Hwy. 71. Services offered include assessments, weight-loss programs, recovery and counseling. Owners Sara Eye and Aleks Rybchinskiy enhance the health, wellness, and spiritual well-being of each client by making holistic approaches to each client, according to the company. 512-468-1036. www.primalfusionhealth.com

5. Torchy’s Tacos opened at 1822 S. Congress Ave. on Jan. 19. The area taco chain’s new location features a dining room as well as outdoor seating and new signage, Marketing Director Brittany Platt said. 512-916-9025. www.torchystacos.com


Lawn care service “Leave it to Stever” Lawncare opened Jan. 1, serving Austin-area residents and businesses. Services include mowing, weed removal and leaf cleanup, owner Brian Stever said. 512-775-0932

Coming Soon

7. Cho Sushi will open its third Austin-area location in March or April at 10827 W. Hwy. 290. The sushi-fusion restaurant menu includes seafood, tempura, teriyaki, soups, salads, Kobe beef and Japanese ribeye steaks. The new location will retain the same menu used at its eateries in Lakeway and Steiner Ranch. www.chosushi.com

8. Family First Chiropractic will open a South Austin clinic Feb. 1 at 1221 W. Ben White Blvd., Ste. 111A, Dr. Jonathan Shultz said. Family First has been serving the Dripping Springs community for 10 years and focuses on pediatric development, adult health and family wellness by utilizing specific chiropractic adjustments. 737-222-6014. www.ffchiro.com

9. Sami’s Flower Shop & Event
Southwest Austin Edition • January 2016

Services LLC is opening at 8708 S. Congress Ave., Ste. 570, in February. Co-owner Nahl Nasreddine said the business offers floral arrangements, decorations and supplies for weddings and other events. 512-401-3921. www.samisflowershopandevevents.com

10 Coffee roaster and brewer *Summermoon Coffee Bar* is opening a new location at 11601 W. Hwy. 290 in the spring. Although construction is ongoing for the brick-and-mortar location, the shop opened a trailer in front of the site Jan. 18, serving the full drink menu. 512-804-1665. www.woodfiredcoffee.com

**Relocations**

11 Adventurers Academy of Lifelong Learning will move permanently to 1010 Meredith Drive on May 1. It has temporarily moved into the Manchaca Baptist Church, which is located at 1215 FM 1626. The local nonprofit organization aims to help people with special needs develop lifelong independence. 512-443-4514. www.austinadventurers.org

12 Austin Blue Sky Investments Inc. moved Dec. 4 to The Manchaca business park at 10421 Old Manchaca Road, Ste. 400, from its previous offices at 509 W. 18th St. The local business offers land development, construction management and consulting services for residential and small commercial clients. 512-327-8850

13 Mercedes Flowers is moving from 1902 S. First Street to 6705 W. Hwy. 290, in February. Although the shop opened a trailer in front of the site Jan. 18, serving the full drink menu. 512-804-1665. www.woodfiredcoffee.com

**Path Nutrition**, which provides dietitians and food coaches to help clients accomplish health goals, moved Jan. 10 from 2111 Dickson Drive, Ste. 22, to 1601 W. Sixth St. The location offers an in-house nutritional assessment and education center, including space for cooking tutorials. 512-710-7284. www.pathfood.com

15 A Signs Express location moved from 8400 Brodie Lane, Ste. 102, to 10421 Old Manchaca Road, Ste. 510, on Jan. 4. The business makes signs including vehicle wraps. 512-443-7446. www.signsexpresstexas.com

**School Notes**

17 The yearbook staff at *Bowie High School*, located at 4103 W. Slaughter Lane, received a national Premier Print Award from the Printing Industries of America for the second year in a row. The Austin ISD board of trustees recognized the “Bowie Lone Star” staff for its achievement during its Oct. 26 board meeting. 512-414-5247.

**Anniversaries**

18 Color At Dawn, a local hair salon, celebrated its 30-year anniversary at 5184 W. Hwy. 290, Ste. C, on Dec. 26, CEO Dawn Marie Hayes said. 512-892-3824. www.coloratdawn.com

**Expansions**

21 Anything Around the House LLC expanded its office space Dec. 1 by moving from Suite 200 into a new suite in The Manchaca business park, 10421 Old Manchaca Road, Ste. 420. The home repair and remodel business specializes in kitchen and bath remodels for residential and some commercial properties. 512-577-9228. www.anythingaroundthehouse.com

22 Local craft brewery *Jester King Brewery* purchased 58 acres of land surrounding its 13187 Fitzhugh Road operations Jan. 6. The brewery has short- and long-term plans for the land, including crop farming, winemaking, wedding and event space, and a restaurant. 512-537-5100. www.jesterkingbrewery.com

23 Outdoor bar, music venue and food truck park *The Rusty Mule* at 9201 W. Hwy. 290 added an indoor beer barn Jan. 22. The beer, wine and liquor bar has 16 beers on tap and serves breakfast tacos and coffee in the morning. 512-704-6416. www.rustymule.wix.com/the-rusty-mule

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Mayor: New fingerprinting ordinance for ride-hailing firms’ drivers is ‘incomplete’

**AUSTIN** Following backlash over City Council’s efforts to require drivers of ride-hailing companies to be fingerprinted as part of their background checks, Mayor Steve Adler said Jan. 19 he believes the requirement should be voluntary.

Council approved changes Dec. 18 to the city’s ordinance regulating transportation network companies, or TNCs, such as Uber and Lyft, that included fingerprint-based background checks. The approved ordinance aimed to create incentives and disincentives for drivers who are fingerprinted. Adler said incentives could include allowing fingerprinted drivers better access to passengers during major events.

The ordinance change set benchmarks for 99 percent of each company’s drivers to be fingerprinted by February 2017 but did not stipulate whether driver fingerprinting would be mandatory or optional.

“What we did in December was incomplete,” Adler said during a Jan. 19 news conference. “It had no enforcement mechanism.”

Adler said the city and private sector can come to an agreement. “I think it’s important we have ride-sharing companies operating at scale in this city. … At the same time there’s been a concern about safety, […] and I have never been comfortable with the prospect that we have to choose between those two competing goals,” Adler said.

The Austin Police Department received seven complaints of sexual assaults allegedly involving TNC drivers between April and August, Council Member Ann Kitchen said during a Dec. 17 news conference.

A coalition opposed to the ordinance change reported gathering nearly 65,000 signatures for a www.ridesharingworks.com petition that was submitted to city staff in January.

Data: residential recycling up 23 percent

**AUSTIN** City Council District 8, which includes much of Southwest Austin, is leading the pack as part of a citywide contest that will result in two districts receiving a beautification project for a library or public park.

Austin Resource Recovery launched the Austin Recycles Games, a competition among the 10 council districts to increase Austin’s recycling, on Nov. 30. In December, Austin residents recycled an average of 59 pounds in each blue recycling cart—a 23 percent increase for the month, ARR reported.

“Nine of the 10 council districts saw an increase, and four of the 10 are currently surpassing the goal of recycling a minimum of 60 pounds per household,” ARR Director Bob Gedert said in a news release.

District 8 residents recycled an average of 72.94 pounds per household in December. District 10 is second with 70.69 pounds per household, followed by District 4 with 63.32 pounds.

The two winning council districts in two categories—most overall recycling and most improved—will be announced at an Earth Day event April 23.

More information is available at www.austinrecycles.com.

County plans for transit challenges, court capacity, flooding and affordable housing

**TRAVIS COUNTY** Transportation, economic prosperity and providing civil and family courts services will remain among priorities for Travis County in 2016, Travis County Judge Sarah Eckhardt said Jan. 11.

The county must renew its focus on the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority to ensure greater access to mobility options besides cars, she said. MoPac and US 183 will be focus areas.

Another issue the court will discuss in 2016 is how to provide more capacity for courts. Voters in November rejected a $287.3 million bond proposal to build a civil and family courts complex in downtown Austin.

“We can’t give up on it,” she said. In Precinct 4, which includes parts of south and Southeast Austin, the county will look to invest in “transit-starved” and flood-prone areas, Eckhardt said.

The county will also look to establish an affordable housing partnership with county services on Airport Boulevard, a Public Information Office, and a regional study of groundwater capacity, Eckhardt said.
Ben Houston (left) and Jonas Dietsch play at the Circle C Metropolitan Park, one of several parks in Southwest Austin that could see changes to parks and recreation department funding as well as updates, such as new amenities, as reported in August.

Brothers Brandon and Zane Hunt opened a brick-and-mortar location of Via 313 Pizzeria on April 29 in Oak Hill. The menu includes Detroit-style deep-dish pizza.

George Cofer, executive director of Hill Country Conservancy, stands on the first completed part of the long-awaited Violet Crown Trail, which opened Aug. 14.

Five Star Emergency Room staffers Marysol Imler and Medical Director Ken Domucizcz examine plans for a new site.

Safety improvements are coming to Slaughter Lane and Manchaca Road after the city of Austin ranked it the sixth most-dangerous intersection in the city Sept. 2. City staff implemented temporary fixes at the intersection for the short term in October, according to the city.

The January Issue

A Year in Pictures

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Plans for Quarter Cent Fund will come back to Austin City Council

By Kelli Weldon

Austin City Council members were asked to submit a list of priority infrastructure projects for their districts to be considered for Quarter Cent Fund spending following a 9-2 council vote Dec. 17.

The fund’s creation stems from a light-rail proposition defeated in 2000. Capital Metro, Austin’s regional public transportation provider, agreed in 2001 to share 25 percent of its annual revenue—money previously allocated toward light rail—with the city to fund transportation projects.

Council passed a resolution in June to determine how to distribute the so-called Quarter Cent Fund among the council’s 10 geographic districts and citywide.

Council wants to use the money for low-cost projects to help with congestion and other issues.

Council Member Ann Kitchen, who helped to spearhead the initiative in her role with the Mobility Committee, said the Quarter Cent Fund gave council members the opportunity to work very closely with residents to understand the community’s priorities.

“There has been some concern that this is ward politics. I just don’t agree with that,” she said.

Mayor Steve Adler, who opposed the vote with Council Member Greg Casar, said dividing the money equally may be “politically expedient,” but it may create problems.

Kitchen clarified the initiative’s language does not state money should be split equally, but equitably, totaling “no more than $1.9 million” per district.

Before the final vote, council approved an amendment stating an updated recommended list of projects to be funded by the Quarter Cent Fund would come back to council Jan. 28 for consideration.

Eric Goff with AURA, formerly known as Austinites for Urban Rail Action, spoke Dec. 17 in favor of the mayor’s efforts to amend the resolution. He noted some residents do not work in the same district in which they live, and council could set a precedent by dividing the fund into $1.9 million pots.

Sunset Valley facilities may have financing options

Combination of funding sources on the table

By Joseph Basco

Sunset Valley City Council anticipates hearing back from a committee in February on how the city should fund the construction of proposed new police and public works facilities at City Hall that are estimated to cost $6.9 million.

Since November the city’s finance committee has been considering different funding options, City Administrator Clay Collins said. The committee plans to settle on a recommendation by the end of January to bring before the council in February, he said.

“The committee did recommend to the council that because they see several different options to finance the facility, they didn’t think it was a question of, ‘Could we do it?’ It was a matter of how we wanted to fine-tune the options to put a package together,” Collins said.

The committee is considering a mixture of sales tax revenue, bonds and reserve funds to finance the project, Collins said.

Meanwhile, the city is also negotiating with Wiginton Hooker Jeffry Architects to complete a design study for the project, Collins said. The architects were previously hired to form a feasibility study.

Sunset Valley is considering the construction of permanent buildings for its police and public works departments to replace the portable buildings currently in use. Additional parking is also part of the project.

After the council approves a financing plan, it may then vote to move forward with starting a design study, Collins said.
Development, additions continue in ‘SoChaca’ area

A few major projects along Manchaca Road wrap up; work stalled at some other sites

By Kelli Weldon

Growth in the South Manchaca Road area south of Slaughter Lane, deemed ‘SoChaca’ by local business owners, continued in 2015 with new businesses and developments being constructed along the Texas Department of Transportation road.

Work was completed in 2015 on two large projects in the area—Ravenscroft Retail and The Manchac. All that remains to be completed on the $6 million Ravenscroft Retail project is landscaping, which will likely happen in the spring, according to Sean Cummings Jr., owner and broker of Templar Development Inc., which is handling leasing for the property.

Now located in the development are pediatric dentist Tiny Texans Pediatric Dentistry, which began seeing patients in January. Also coming to the site is optometrist 512 Eye, which is targeting a February 2016 opening.

Three units are still available for lease, Cummings said. Additionally, an office building with 12,000 square feet of space was completed in 2015, and tenants will include an elder care specialist and insurance company. One section of the space was sold to a medical lab.

Work on local business park The Manchac began five years ago, Site Solutions Inc. president Susan Harris said. Construction on the final two buildings is complete, she said.

New tenants added in 2015 included Anything Around the House, Austin Blue Sky Investments, Uptown Valet, Signs Express, Site Solutions Inc. and Stitch Texas. There are three remaining vacancies in the center, Harris said.

Indian Roller, which celebrated its one-year anniversary in late October, is working to open a complex with a wine bar and outdoor stage, General Manager Rene Stokes said. The outdoor stage, named She Wolf, is still in development, Stokes said.

Plans for a few projects in the area have changed. Site work has stalled at the location of South Austin Beer Garden on Manchaca. The business is slated to consist of a covered pavilion, music stage and food trailers as well as a bar when it opens.

Moontower Saloon, which added new features in 2015 and had planned to build a 10,000-square-foot dance hall, shelved those plans and is preparing instead for a 6-acre industrial complex development, co-owner Josh Bumb said.

“The plans we are going to have drawn up also call for a brewery on our frontage road property next door,” Bumb said in an email, adding Moontower is also opening a new bar in Buda.

Area business It’s About Thyme on Manchaca plans to move in 2016 (See Page 15).

As for the road itself, TxDOT’s plans to expand a 1-mile stretch of Manchaca from Ravenscroft Drive to FM 1626 have remained halted because of a lack of funding.

TxDOT officials said in August that the new timeline will be to open up construction bids to contractors in 2021.
ANNUAL EVENTS CALENDAR

2016

JANUARY

Austin Gorilla Run
Jan. 30 • 7 a.m. (registration), 9 a.m. (race start) • $15-$40
Participants wear gorilla costumes in the sixth annual 5K. Runners may keep their suits after the race. Proceeds benefit the Ruth Keesling Wildlife Health and Research Center in Kampala, Uganda.
Camp Mabry, 2200 W. 35th St.
720-524-0272
www.austingorillarun.com

FEBRUARY

Austin Marathon and Half Marathon
Feb. 14 • 7 a.m.-2 p.m. • $15 (5K youth), $32 (5K adults), $130 (half-marathon), $150 (marathon)
Registration is open for the 25th anniversary race event. In addition to the marathon and half-marathon, which can draw a combined 17,000 participants, the ninth annual Paramount Break-A-Leg 5K is held to support the Paramount and Stateside theaters.
Expo and registration pickup at Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Road; race starting line at the intersection of Congress Ave. and 2nd Street
512-476-7223
www.youraustinmarathon.com

MARCH

It’s My Park Day
March 5 • 8 a.m.-4 p.m. • Free
Volunteers clean city parks in Austin as part of the annual citywide tradition. In 2015, about 3,000 volunteers helped complete nearly 100 citywide park projects. Residents can submit project ideas to the Austin Parks Foundation. In Southwest Austin, parks such as Dick Nichols District Park and Convict Hill Quarry Park have participated in the larger It’s My Park Day projects. Volunteer registration opens Feb. 9.
Locations vary • 512-477-1566 www.austinparks.org/impd

APRIL

Sunset Valley ArtFest
April 23 • 9 a.m.-4 p.m. • Free
The annual outdoor event is an all-day celebration of the arts in Sunset Valley featuring live music, food and activities for children. Artworks on display and for sale include original paintings, sculpture, woodworking pieces, photography, jewelry and fiber arts.
Toney Burger Center, 3200 Jones Road
512-892-1383 www.sunsetvalley.org/artfest

Art City Austin 2016
April 29-May 1 • Times, cost TBD
A new location—the same site as the former City Colosseum where the event launched in 1950 as Art Mart—helps mark the return of Austin’s original fine-arts festival. Art Alliance Austin anticipates room for more exhibits as well as more parking and indoor restrooms as part of the move.
Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Road • 512-609-8587 www.artallianceaustin.org/artcity

MAY

Spring Pecan Street Festival
May 7-8 • Times TBD • Free
The spring edition of this twice-per-year downtown arts and crafts fair includes face painting, concession stands, interactive workshops and live music. In addition to the art vendors and street performers, there is also a petting zoo and carnival rides for families. The fall festival takes place Sept. 24-25.
Historic Sixth Street between Brazos Street and I-35 • 512-485-3190 www.pecanstreetfestival.org

JUNE

Keep Austin Weird Fest & 5K
June 25 • 1:30-10 p.m. (festival), 6 p.m.
Wine is a focal point at the Dripping With Taste Wine & Food Festival. Courtesy Winifred Smith

Museum Day, a free community event Partnership has coordinated Austin Since 1998 the Austin Museum Sept. 18 • Times vary • Free www.austinmuseumday.org

Austin Symphony July 4th Concert and Fireworks July 4 • 4-10 p.m. • Free

Guests can partake in food, drinks, and arts and crafts vendors during this annual patriotic performance from Austin Symphony, which begins at 8:30 p.m., and fireworks occur at 9:30 p.m. Portions of Riverside Drive close beginning at 10 a.m., and most of Cesar Chavez Street closes beginning at 6 p.m. All streets reopen by midnight.

Vic Mathias Shores, 600 W. Riverside Drive • 512-476-6064 www.austinsymphony.org

Austin City Limits Music Festival Sept. 30-Oct. 2, Oct. 7-9 • 11 a.m. • $250 (three-day pass), $1,100 (three-day VIP), $3,600 (three-day platinum)

Early Bird tickets are already sold out for the 2016 show, which does not yet have a lineup announced. Three-day regular passes go on sale in the summer, and VIP and platinum passes are on sale now. Zilker Park, 2100 Barton Springs Road 888-512-7469 • www aclfestival.com

41st annual Charity Garage & Estate Sale Nov. 3-6 • Times, cost TBD

Last year’s event drew more than 25,000 shoppers to the annual fundraiser sale, which included more than 20 different departments. The Settlement Home for Children is accepting donations for the garage sale at 1600 Payton Gin Road from 9 a.m. to noon each Monday. Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Road • 512-448-5302 www.settlementhome.org

For more, visit communityimpact.com.
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Last year these businesses were coming soon, planning to move or closing. Here are updates on how they are doing now.

**St. Philip/Cane Rosso**

Dallas-based pizza restaurant Cane Rosso and local ice cream truck Cow Tipping Creamery will be taking over the former St. Philip space, located at 4715 S. Lamar Blvd. in Sunset Valley, Central Austin Management Group announced Jan. 6.

Cane Rosso serves wood-fired pizza. CTC makes soft-serve ice cream cones, stacker sundaes and shakes. CTC will continue to operate its food truck while using the Cane Rosso kitchen to experiment and create desserts, according to the company.

Both businesses plan to open sometime in 2016.

**It’s About Thyme**

Local garden center It’s About Thyme aims to move in May from 11726 Manchaca Road to a 6-acre site across the street from the Marbridge Foundation’s 2310 Bliss Spillar Road site.

The business, which opened in 1979 and is co-owned by Chris and Diane Winslow, filed in 2015 for its new site plan, including multiple greenhouses and outside growing areas, Chris said.

“It’s going to be all about the plants,” he said of the new space.

The current It’s About Thyme location at Manchaca Road and Frate Barker Road is being sold to a developer, he said.

**Kairos Academy of Austin**

A charter school to be located in Southwest Austin took several steps in 2015 toward opening.

Board Chairwoman Rachel Soto said Kairos Academy of Austin held outreach events and formed its founding board. On Nov. 2 the board submitted a charter application to the Texas Education Agency.

Kairos may receive final approval from the TEA by October, Soto said.

**Articulture Designs**

Articulture Designs opened its new location on Manchaca Road on Jan. 12.

Southwest Austin residents Monique Capaneli and Dante Dominick, who are married and co-own the business, offer a studio and gallery-boutique at the site.

“The location] is quadrupling the size of our studio, and we’ve never been open to the public before,” Dominick said.

The business offers “innovative art with plants as a medium,” Dominick said, explaining customers can view and purchase large-scale “living walls” that incorporate succulents and other plants as well as smaller items, such as terrariums, arrangements and miniature living walls.

The location was originally slated to open last fall but encountered a few delays with the city of Austin’s permitting process, Dominick said.

**Articulture Designs**

By Kelli Weldon

Articulture Designs offers art made with plants as well as home decor items.

A variety of seasonal flowers and plants are available for sale at It’s About Thyme.

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By Joseph Basco

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Moontowersaloons.com
These commercial, residential and nonprofit projects were announced or in progress last year. Here’s what is happening now.

1. **All Saints Presbyterian Church** is constructing its first church campus and plans to move into the new facility at 7816 Rialto Blvd. in May. The organization broke ground in January 2015. The campus will include a sanctuary, classrooms and church offices. 512-732-8383. www.allsaintsaustin.org

2. Work is about 80 percent complete on the first phase of **AMLI Covered Bridge** at 8715 W. Hwy. 71, and work on the second phase is underway. One-, two- and three-bedroom units are available for pre-lease, and about 10 percent of the units are already pre-leased. 512-490-3003. www.amli.com

3. Construction for coffee shop and eatery **Barley Bean** at the GreenView at Belterra Village at Hwy. 290 and Nutty Brown Road continue to line up tenants for the property, a mixture of shops, restaurants, residential and other uses. Construction is scheduled to start early this year, with a scheduled completion in 2018. www.endeavor-re.com

4. Developers of mixed-use project **Belterra Village** at Hwy. 290 and Nutty Brown Road continue to line up tenants for the property, a mixture of shops, restaurants, residential and other uses. Construction is scheduled to start early this year, with a scheduled completion in 2018. www.endeavor-re.com

5. **Crockett High School** at 5601 Manchaca Road held a ground breaking Oct. 13 for a new construction technology facility, which allows students to practice specialized construction tasks. Completion is expected to be complete in April, according to AISD. 512-414-2532. www.crockettshs.org

6. With 111 units, retirement community **Elan Southpark Meadows** at 9320 Alice Mae Lane is slated to open this fall. www.elansouthparkmeadows.com

7. **Construction of Foundation Communities’ Homestead Oaks**, at 3226 W. Slaughter Lane, was completed in January. The complex includes units for homeless families. www.found.com

8. Oden Hughes LLC opened apartment projects **Landmark Conservancy** at 9301 Old Bee Caves Road in early 2015 and **Landmark Southpark** at 715 W. Slaughter Lane in 2013, with final units slated to be complete by the first quarter of 2016. www.landmarkconservancy.com, www.landmarksp.com

9. **NoackLittle Architecture and Interiors** is slated to complete renovations on a 22,000-square-foot industrial warehouse at 220 Industrial Blvd. by the first quarter of 2016. The building will be the home of NLAI and other Creative Class companies once it opens. www.noacklittle.com

10. **The Range at Austin** is on track to open in late summer 2016 at 8503 S. I-35. The site will become a 52,000-square-foot shooting range. www.therangeaustin.com

11. Construction is on track to begin in mid-2016 at 113 Industrial Blvd. on **Saint Elmo**, a development with office, hotel, residential and entertainment space; a relocated Saxon Pub; and a public market. www.saintelmomarket.com

12. Construction of **Southwest Center** at 9521 W. Hwy. 290 ended in October. Restaurant Lox, Box and Barrel is slated to open in February, and craft beer store Hedgehog Bottle & Barrellhouse will open in the summer. www.loxandbarrel.com, www.hedgehogatx.com


14. The health science building at the **University of St. Augustine**, 5401 La Crosse Ave., was completed in September. USA’s new wellness center and multidisciplinary clinic is slated to open by early March. www.usa.edu

In 2016, Stratus Properties opened its Tecoma development’s first phase, The Santal.
Here is a recap of last year’s big news and a look at what is happening this year with area schools.

Board appoints new trustee for District 7

Yasmin Wagner takes oath before joining the Austin ISD board of trustees Oct. 12.

AUSTIN ISD The Austin ISD board of trustees appointed Yasmin Wagner as the new District 7 trustee Sept. 28 by a 7-0-1 vote after the death of former trustee Robert Schneider two months prior. Trustee Jayme Mathias abstained from voting.

Wagner, a corporate communications and marketing manager, was sworn in for a term until the winner of the November District 7 trustee election is sworn in.

Marketing plan aims to boost enrollment

AUSTIN ISD To address enrollment, Austin ISD plans to take a new approach to the way the district recruits and retains its students starting in 2016.

The Austin ISD board of trustees approved a $350,000 contract with a marketing consultant during its meeting Dec. 14 with a 7-0-2 vote. AISD hired Austin-based firm Sanders/Wingo Advertising Inc. to create a media plan that will retain and recruit students, change the perception of underperformance in East Austin schools, and communicate and engage with all ethnic audiences, according to the contract.

Reyne Telles, executive director of communication for AISD, said there will be marketing plans made for specific schools, such as targeted advertising on a music-streaming service or community newsletter.

Local leaders prioritize college enrollment

AUSTIN ISD A collaboration of area school districts and chambers of commerce formed a plan to increase the number of students who begin college immediately after high school. The plan, known as DTC70, was announced Aug. 27 by the group including the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce and Austin ISD.

The main objective of the plan is to increase the direct-to-college enrollment rate so that it reaches 70 percent for the area graduating class of 2016, or 9,100 students.

“It’s a big goal, but it’s a goal that we’ve created collaboratively with superintendents and business leaders all over Austin,” chamber Chairman Gene Austin said.
**TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT**

Meetings
The court meets Tuesdays at 9 a.m. at the Travis County Administrative Building, 700 Lavaca St., Austin. 512-854-9020 www.traviscountytx.gov

Terms and compensation
Court members serve four-year terms. The judge’s pay for fiscal year 2015-16 is $118,373, Davis and Gomez are paid $101,417, Shea is paid $98,463 and Daugherty is paid $93,000.

Video coverage
Meetings are televised live on Time Warner Cable Channel 17, Grande Communications Channel 17 and AT&T U-verse Channel 99. Meetings are also posted online.

Big decisions made in 2015
- **Budget decisions**
  The court voted to reinstate in-person visits and reasonably priced phone calls for county jail inmates and their families. The court also reduced property taxes for the average homeowner, including those older than 65 and disabled.
- **Parks and recreation**
  The county added more than 3,000 acres of park and conservation land in 2015 as well as 50 miles of bikeways and sidewalks.
- **Courthouse**
  On Aug. 18 the Travis County Commissioners Court called for an order to place a $287.3 million bond election on the Nov. 3 ballot. Voters rejected the bond, which would have spent funds on a new civil and family courts complex in downtown Austin.

Top issues for 2016
- **Transportation**
  The county plans to create better transportation connections for eastern Travis County, Judge Sarah Eckhardt said.
- **Flood response**
  One focus area is reclaiming flood-prone areas of southeastern Travis County to create flood-resilient communities with green spaces, creating safe and affordable housing, and establishing industries committed to employing the community.
- **Courts**
  The court plans to reimagine the way the county works to deliver civil and criminal justice, Eckhardt said.
- **County income**
  Trying to keep property taxes low by exploring other appropriate revenue sources to pay for needed infrastructure and services will be among the court’s goals in 2016.

**AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL**

The 2015-16 Austin City Council, from left: Gregorio Casar, District 4; Ellen Troxclair, District 8; Ora Houston, District 1; Sabino “Pio” Renteria, District 3; Don Zimmerman, District 6; Mayor Steve Adler; Sheri Gallo, District 10; Delia Garza, District 2; Leslie Pool, District 7; Ann Kitchen, District 5; and Mayor Pro Tem Kathie Tovo

Meetings
Council meets at 10 a.m. most Thursdays at Austin City Hall, 301 W. Second St. 512-974-2000, www.austintexas.gov/ department/city-council

Terms and compensation
The mayor, paid $110,796, serves four years. Council members, paid $97,137, serve two- or four-year terms.

Video coverage
Meetings are televised live on cable Channel 6 and streamed online at www.atxn.tv.

Big decisions made in 2015
- **Fingerprinting approved**
  New regulations passed Dec. 18 for ride-hailing companies require fingerprint background checks. City Council may decide penalties for noncompliance during its Jan. 28 meeting.
- **Restrictions lessened for accessory dwelling units**
  New regulations passed Nov. 19 make it easier to build accessory dwelling units, or ADUs. ADUs can now be located closer to the main home and on a smaller lot size than before. Additionally, ADU structures cannot be larger than 1,100 square feet and cannot be used as a short-term rental that is not owner-occupied.
- **Drainage fee changes approved**
  Drainage fees applied to customers’ water bills changed in June from a monthly flat rate of $9.80 to an amount determined by the percentage of impervious cover on a given property.

Top issues for 2016
- **Council annexed property at the end of Country White Lane.**
- **Council will continue to work on the long-range financial planning for the city, including how to best balance entitlements and conservation rebates.**
- **The city will aim to support retail and community activities in Sunset Valley, such as the farmers market, the Violet Crown Trail, The Brodie Homestead special events facility, and new retailers including Dallas’ Cane Rosso pizza and the first brick-and-mortar location of food truck Cow Tipping Creamery, opening this spring.**

**SUNSET VALLEY CITY COUNCIL**

The Sunset Valley City Council, from left: Council Member Marc Bruner, Council Member Walter Jenkins, Council Member Mickie Powers, Mayor Rose Cardona, City Manager Rudi Rosengarten and Mayor Pro Tem Jeff Burdett

Meetings and coverage
The council meets Tuesdays at 6 p.m. Sunset Valley City Hall, 3205 Jones Road. 512-892-1383 • www.sunsetvalley.org. Meetings are broadcast online.

Terms and compensation
Council members serve two-year terms. The mayor and all council members are unpaid.

Big decisions made in 2015
- **Short-term rental regulations**
  Laws regulating short-term rentals, or STRs, could change Jan. 28. Proposed new rules could include a new tiered permit fee structure. Council will also consider collecting hotel taxes from STR operators.
- **Funding for bicycle master plan**
  Advocacy group MobilityATX said Oct. 8 the majority of Austinites want the city to fully fund the $161 million 2014 Bicycle Master Plan. Mayor Steve Adler said a bond could be initiated to help pay for the comprehensive bicycle network.
- **Finalizing new sobriety center**
  Efforts to create an Austin/Travis County Sobriety Center advanced in October following a vote that allows city staff to negotiate a partnership with county officials to house the center at the existing Travis County Medical Examiner facility.

Top issues for 2016
- **Transportation**
  The council plans to create better transportation connections for eastern Travis County, Judge Sarah Eckhardt said.
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UPDATES

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HAYS COUNTY

TRAVIS COUNTY

Hwy. 290.

relief to the intersection of Hwy. 71 and

ongoing Oak Hill Parkway environmental

is refining two concepts as part of the

2016 regarding the project. A project team

Authority plan to hold a workshop in early

and the Central Texas Regional Mobility

The Texas Department of Transportation

Map not to scale

OAK HILL PARKWAY STUDY

The Texas Department of Transportation and the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority plan to hold a workshop in early 2016 regarding the project. A project team is refining two concepts as part of the ongoing Oak Hill Parkway environmental study on potential solutions to bring traffic relief to the intersection of Hwy. 71 and Hwy. 290.

TIMELINE: environmental study expected to be complete in 2017

FUNDING SOURCES: TBD

MANCHACA ROAD AND SLAUGHTER LANE UPDATES

At Slaughter Lane and Manchaca Road, the city of Austin Transportation Department will revise right-turn lanes, add raised medians on Manchaca north and south of the intersection, and add dual left-turn lanes in every direction. The department is designing the changes in conjunction with TxDOT.

TIMELINE: October 2015-spring/summer 2016 (design), TBD (construction)

COST: $1.5 million

FUNDING SOURCES: city of Austin

SLAUGHTER CREEK OVERPASS

Capital Excavation will replace the Slaughter Creek overpass, adding a southbound-to-northbound U-turn bridge and safety lighting in the area. The TxDOT bridge at I-35 will have three lanes, sidewalks and shoulders. Work includes widening the southbound frontage road to two lanes through the creek intersection.

TIMELINE: spring 2016-summer 2017

COST: $9.2 million

FUNDING SOURCES: state Proposition 1 funds

BEHIND SCHEDULE: FRATE BARKER ROAD WIDENING

The project will widen the road to a total of five lanes east of Hewitt Lane to Manchaca Road and a three-lane section from east of Brodie Lane to Hewitt. The entire project area will have bike lanes, sidewalks and a continuous center left-turn lane. An AT&T utility relocation has delayed the project.

TIMELINE: February 2014-summer 2017

COST: about $7 million for construction

FUNDING SOURCES: Travis County, Federal Highway Administration funds through TxDOT

HAZARD ELIMINATION PROJECT ON FITZHUGH ROAD

TxDOT plans to make safety improvements to Fitzhugh Road, including adding signage, delineation and guardrails along the roadway from Hwy. 290 to the Hays County line. The project is slated to go out for contractor bids in August 2017.

TIMELINE: August 2017-fall/winter 2017

COST: approximately $104,500

FUNDING SOURCES: TxDOT federal funds, Travis County

ON SCHEDULE: FM 1626 WIDENING AND IMPROVEMENTS

A public hearing took place Jan. 14 to gain public feedback on the design for the project, which will rebuild FM 1626 from Brodie Lane to Manchaca Road, widening it from a two-lane road to a four-lane highway with a continuous left-turn lane plus shoulders, curbs, gutters and sidewalks. The on-schedule project is in the design phase, which is about 80 percent complete. Once all public comments are received, the county can finish the design and start acquiring the right of way.

TIMELINE: August 2012-summer 2019

COST: $12 million

FUNDING SOURCES: design funded by Travis County, construction funded by TxDOT

SH 45 SW DESIGN PHASE

The Mobility Authority has identified opportunities to enhance the design cleared by TxDOT in 2015 for the limited-access, four-lane, 3.6-mile toll road connecting MoPac to FM 1626 in Hays County. Preliminary approval of funding was received at the December Texas Transportation Commission board meeting and final approval is pending. The Mobility Authority is finalizing its design and coordinating reviews with key stakeholders, and expects to request construction bids early this year.

TIMELINE: spring 2016-spring 2018

COST: $100 million (Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization estimate)

FUNDING SOURCES: Travis and Hays counties, Mobility Authority, TxDOT Toll Equity grant, TxDOT Toll Equity Loan

Compiled by Joseph Basco and Kelli Weldon
MoPac study gets approval, project heads to final design

TXDOT to build overpasses, add main lanes at Slaughter Lane, La Crosse Ave.

By Joseph Basco

After more than two years of research, the $45 million improvement project to alleviate traffic at the MoPac and Slaughter Lane and MoPac and La Crosse Avenue intersections is moving forward now that its environmental study has been completed.

The study began in May 2013. The Texas Department of Transportation issued a Finding of No Significant Impact regarding the MoPac Intersections Environmental Study on Dec. 22.

TXDOT is now working on the final design, which leads to construction in the spring, TXDOT spokesperson Kelli Reyna said. Construction is expected to take two or three years.

Revising the intersections

The project involves three components: the construction of four main MoPac lanes that pass under Slaughter and La Crosse, a traditional diamond intersection overpass at MoPac and La Crosse, and a new style of overpass at Slaughter and MoPac known as a diverging diamond interchange, or DDI.

Currently, the Slaughter and La Crosse intersections use traffic signals, causing MoPac drivers to stop at each crossing.

“[The traffic signals] are where a lot of the backup comes from, especially in this particular area because everyone is forced to go through that traffic signal,” Reyna said. “The difference with this improvement project is that the MoPac main lanes will go underneath these two new bridges.”

A new type of intersection

The DDI involves drivers wishing to make a left turn temporarily traveling on the left side of the road, which allows for through-traffic and left-turn drivers to proceed at the same time, Reyna said. The only time drivers will be on the left side of the road will be on the overpass section of the DDI, she added.

To navigate the new style of intersection, Reyna said drivers should follow all road signs and markings and follow the traffic flow to safely navigate.

“The DDI will be the first of its kind in Austin and the third in Texas,” Reyna said. The other two DDIs are located in Round Rock and El Paso.

“One of the reasons why we are going towards these types of innovative intersections [is] because we are able to do more with less,” Reyna said. “They are relatively low-cost improvements that have great traffic benefits. You are able to move a large amount of traffic through seemingly the same surface area as a traditional intersection.”

According to TXDOT, MoPac south of Cesar Chavez Street handles 130,000 vehicles per day. For Southwest Austin resident Ramon Noches, who has lived in the area for 27 years, the changes are welcome. Noches called for urgency in starting construction.

“Things really do improve with less,” Noches said.
Regional Transportation Updates

Compiled by Community Impact Newspaper Staff

This transportation page update includes projects that have regional significance or will provide mobility in the Austin metro area. This list is not comprehensive. For more transportation news visit www.communityimpact.com.

Map Key
- I-35 projects
- Proposed toll roads
- Toll projects under construction
- Existing roads

Roads

1. Loop 360
   - The Texas Department of Transportation is considering extending a mobility study of the roadway between MoPac in North Austin and Hwy. 290 in South Austin. In October, TxDOT closed a community survey that asked residents to rank the problems and proposed solutions to traffic congestion. Respondents identified decreased congestion and more reliable travel times as top priorities. TxDOT will release a draft report in the spring for additional public input.
   - Timeline: late 2014-mid-2016
   - Cost: $1.27 million

2. Oak Hill Parkway
   - TxDOT and the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority are conducting an environmental study on traffic solutions for the Hwy. 71 and Hwy. 290 intersection. The project team is refining two concepts and a no-build option and plans to hold a workshop in early 2016.
   - Timeline: 2012-2017
   - Cost: TBD
The following projects in TxDOT’s Mobility 35 program will be funded in fiscal years 2014-15 and 2015-16 through the state’s Proposition 1, which voters approved in November 2014.

1. **Hwy. 79 to SH 45N**
   - Braided ramps will eliminate weaving movements as vehicles attempt to merge on northbound I-35. The northbound and southbound frontage road intersections at I-35 and US 79 will be reconstructed, and a third left-turn lane from westbound Hwy. 79 to southbound I-35 will be added.
   - **TIMELINE:** spring 2016-spring 2018
   - **COST:** $28.1 million

2. **Stassney Lane to William Cannon Drive**
   - The bridges at Stassney and William Cannon and the frontage road bridge over Williamson Creek will be reconstructed. U-turns will also be added at Stassney and William Cannon, and the main I-35 lanes will be widened to incorporate shoulders and extended entrance and exit lanes.
   - **TIMELINE:** spring 2016-winter 2019-20
   - **COST:** $79 million

3. **Slaughter Creek overpass**
   - The existing Slaughter Creek overpass will be replaced with a new bridge, and a U-turn bridge will be added. The project will widen the southbound frontage road to two lanes near the overpass and install safety lighting from Slaughter Lane to Onion Creek Parkway.
   - **TIMELINE:** spring 2016-summer 2017
   - **COST:** $9.2 million

4. **RM 150 to Blanco River**
   - One new off ramp will be added, and five existing on and off ramps will be modified between RM 150 and the Blanco River to improve safety and access.
   - **TIMELINE:** will be sent for bidding in summer 2016
   - **COST:** estimated $20.6 million

5. **RM 1431 to FM 3406**
   - The project modifies two ramps on southbound I-35 and improves the southbound frontage road between RM 1431 and FM 3406.
   - **TIMELINE:** will be sent for bidding in summer 2016
   - **COST:** estimated $10.7 million

6. **51st Street intersection**
   - The project adds a collector-distributor road, or bypass lane, to allow southbound through-traffic to avoid the traffic signal at 51st street. A new roundabout will be added to the intersection with the southbound frontage road. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities will also be improved along the southbound frontage road.
   - **TIMELINE:** will be sent for bidding in summer 2016
   - **COST:** estimated $20.6 million

7. **Oltorf Street**
   - The Oltorf and I-35 interchange will be improved and reconstructed from south of Woodland Avenue to Woodward Street. Improvements will include the reconstruction of the Oltorf bridge, improved entrance and exit ramps and frontage roads, extended entrance and exit lanes for main lanes and ramps, and the addition of U-turns. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities will also be improved along both frontage roads.
   - **TIMELINE:** will be sent for bidding in summer 2016
   - **COST:** $54.5 million

8. **290 south to Hwy. 71**
   - This project will create two express lanes in each direction and an at-grade intersection at FM 1626, an overpass at Bliss Spiller Road, and a grade-separated interchange at Loop 1.
   - **TIMELINE:** tentative April 2016 letting
   - **COST:** $109 million

9. **SH 71**
   - The project is under construction and consists of the addition of one tolled lane in each direction and an at-grade transition at FM 973. The project extends about 4 miles from Presidential Boulevard to SH 130.
   - **TIMELINE:** early 2015-June 2016
   - **COST:** $140 million

10. **SH 45 SW**
    - This project will extend from Loop 1 to FM 1626, consists of four main lanes and includes an at-grade intersection at FM 1626, an overpass at Bliss Spiller Road, and a grade-separated interchange at Loop 1.
    - **TIMELINE:** tentative April 2016 letting
    - **COST:** $109 million

11. **183 North**
    - This project will include two express lanes in each direction and an additional general purpose lane from RM 620/SH 45 N to Loop 1. TxDOT is performing an environmental study for the project, and officials anticipate results in winter 2016.
    - **TIMELINE:** 2019 tentative letting date
    - **COST:** $650 million

12. **183 South**
    - This proposed project will improve the existing four-lane divided roadway with signalized intersections to a tolled six-lane controlled-access facility with grade separations and six-lane access roads. The project extends from Hwy. 290 south to Hwy. 71.
    - **TIMELINE:** construction expected to begin in spring 2016
    - **COST:** $743 million

**PROJECT CONNECT AND TRANSIT**

**PROJECT CONNECT**

Project Connect is a regional mass transit plan spearheaded by Capital Metro, the city of Austin and the Lone Star Rail District. It launched in 2013 with studies of two transportation corridors identified as top priorities.

**North Corridor**

Since the completion of the North Corridor Study in 2014, Capital Metro representatives have been meeting with stakeholders in the area—such as Pflugerville, Hutto, and Georgetown—and assisting with the development of local transit development plans. A Capital Metro representative said it is important for cities in the North Corridor to develop their own local plans before collaborating on the funding and implementation of Project Connect initiatives.

**TRANSIT**

**Capital Metro**

Capital Metro is continuing design work on several planned upgrades to its MetroRail commuter line. The transit agency received a $50 million grant from TxDOT and an $11.3 million federal grant to improve the line and boost frequency and ridership. Capital Metro will finish relocating tracks near Plaza Satillo in March and will begin construction in late 2016 on three sidings, or additional tracks, near rail stations to allow for more frequent service, said Todd Hemingston, vice president of strategic planning and development. The agency will finish final design and environmental clearance in 2016 on the new downtown station near the Austin Convention Center, and the station will open in early 2018.

**MetroRapid**

In June, Capital Metro launched its Frequent Service Network to provide more convenient service and better connectivity on five of its bus routes. Hemingston said three months later, about 20% of project ridership increases. Capital Metro will wait until its Connections 2025 service plan is completed in late 2016 before determining what other bus routes it could add to the FSN.
Creative Side Metalworks
Welding taught to both newbies and veterans

By Joseph Basco

Pieces of copper, steel and other metals come together with the use of heat to create works of art at Creative Side Metalworks, the complementary studio of Creative Side Jewelry Academy of Austin.

Courtney Gray, owner of both studios, said the metalwork studio, located in the Thornton Road Studios at 2311 Thornton Road, Ste. Q, opened in February, and the first classes began in the summer.

“There’s a creative magnet underneath Austin that makes people want to dive in and make things with their own hands,” Gray said.

Metalwork students can weld metal together to create yard art, wall art, candleholders, coat racks, trellises, small sculptures and other home decor, Gray said.

Instructors teach students how to properly hold an oxy-fuel torch along with other tools and techniques, Gray said.

“Absolute beginners are welcome to come in and try the courses,” Gray said. “Sometimes people fear learning new tools, especially a torch. But the hesitation dissolves the first day of class.”

Creative Side Metalworks also offers Young Metalsmiths jewelry fabrication classes for students ages 10-15, though the classes are held at Creative Side Jewelry Academy, located at 321 W. Ben White Blvd, Ste. 204.

Disc Nation
Austin disc golf business gets new owners

By Kelli Weldon

The new owners of Disc Nation on Slaughter Lane aim to expand the disc golf shop’s offerings and renovate its driving range in 2016.

Southwest Austinites Shannon and Sean Mullan took over ownership of the shop July 1.

The husband-and-wife team shopped at the business under its previous owner, and both are avid disc golf fans, Sean said.

The couple intends to make a few changes to the business, such as carrying more products—including as many as 20,000 discs on a daily basis—and welcoming members of the community to the shop on a regular basis for competitions and classes with expert advice.

“We have decided to start doing, at the very least, monthly events here,” Sean said.

Events will include disc clinics specifically for women, as well as clinics for children in the area, Shannon said.

New discs range in price from $7.99 to $18.99; the shop also sells used discs and collectibles.

The driving range, where visitors to the shop can test out discs before purchasing them, will feature new tee boxes, obstacles and targets when it is updated this spring, Shannon said.
Independence Fine Foods
Local restaurant to seek beer, wine license this year

By Kelli Weldon

In February, Independence Fine Foods aims to apply for a license to sell beer and wine, chef/proprietor Casey Livingston said.

Offerings will include bottled Texas craft beers and domestic beers, Livingston said. Wine will be sold by the bottle and glass, he said.

“We have a lot of guests that have requested it, and we’re looking to expand our dinner menu,” he said, explaining that in 2016 seven new items, including a few fine-dining entrees, will be added to the current lineup. Some new items are staff picks and requested dishes that will become permanent menu items.

The restaurant hopes to obtain the license by this summer, Livingston said.

Graceland Grocery
Store brings Stubb’s offerings to Southwest Austinites

By Joseph Basco

Graceland Grocery on Hwy. 290 officially opened Nov. 23 offering espresso drinks, pastries, Stubb’s breakfast tacos, groceries and bar service outdoors following the Sept. 15 soft launch of an outdoor Stubb’s Bar-B-Q outpost.

The hybrid convenience store, gas station, coffee shop, restaurant and bar is located at the former Señor Buddy’s site, which Nutty Brown Café owner Mike Farr and friends Matt Luckie and Jeff Waughtal leased July 1. Partner C.B. Demiralv said the espresso bar indoors serves local Cuvee Coffee.

Menu items include espresso, latte, macchiato, cinnamon rolls, oatmeal and chocolate croissants. Wi-Fi and seating is provided at the bar.

Pinhthouse Pizza
South Lamar location to ramp up brewing menu

By Kelli Weldon

The South Austin location of Pinthouse Pizza, which opened in October, is working to ramp up its production of housemade beers offered on tap.

There were nine beers on tap when the location opened, and there are about 20 now, owner Tyler Norwood said. In 2016 that will increase to 25, including some barrel-aged beers.

“We try to keep [the beer selection] unique so that ... our brewing team at each location has the chance to have their own creative voice,” Norwood said.

Michi Ramen
New ramen restaurant offers takeout, delivery

By Joseph Basco

Michi Ramen, which opened June 17 on South Lamar Boulevard, started food delivery July 3 and expanded the delivery zone July 26. The delivery area is bordered by 15th Street, Parker Lane and I-35, William Cannon Drive, and MoPac and Walsh Tarlton Lane, General Manager Jesse Harder said.

Services such as Bitesquad and Amazon Prime Now may be used by diners outside the zone, he said.

The restaurant also expanded hours to be open seven days a week from 11 a.m. to midnight.
Go Red For Women® Summit

February 26, 2016
9:00 am - 1:00 pm
JW Marriott Austin

Featuring Keynote Speaker
Former First Lady, Laura Bush

For more information or to register please call 512.338.3487 or visit AustinGoRed.heart.org

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Pedernales Electric Cooperative pec.coop/smarthub

Because of the sudden cardiac deaths of her father and a young cousin within months, Stacy decided to get a heart checkup for peace of mind. In October of 2010, she saw a cardiologist at St. David’s HealthCare who took her family history seriously and ordered an echo and stress test, despite having no symptoms and being in good health. During the echo, the doctor found a large tumor on her tricuspid valve. Stacy underwent open heart surgery 3 months later, and even though the tumor was benign, the surgeon told Stacy that it was so large, it would have killed her instantly if it had become dislodged. The discovery of the tumor, surgery and recovery were terrifying for Stacy, but she feels very fortunate to be alive. Because of her surgery, Stacy was diagnosed with pericarditis, a form of heart disease, which prevents her from running, biking, or other strenuous activities. She does her best to remain healthy and keep her stress levels in check.

Go Red For Women® Summit
February 26, 2016
9:00 am - 1:00 pm
JW Marriott Austin

Featuring Keynote Speaker
Former First Lady, Laura Bush

For more information or to register please call 512.338.3487 or visit AustinGoRed.heart.org

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Overlook Estates
10509 Superview Dr
4 BD 5 BA +/-3,280 SQ FT
Listed by Michelle Kopp
512.657.3305

Polo Club
251 Colonial Affair
4 BD 3.5 BA +/-3,602 SQ FT
Listed by The Clausen Group
512.853.0846

Belterra
414 Naples Ln
4 BD 3.5 BA +/-3,983 SQ FT
Listed by Burt Dement
512.689.7352

Oak at Twin Creeks
10200 English Oak Dr
5 BD 3.5 BA +/-5,357 SQ FT
Listed by Cristina Valdes
512.789.0309

Belterra
146 Catalina Ln
4 BD 3.5 BA +/-2,829 SQ FT
Listed by Victoria Wilson
512.748.7514

Southland Oaks
2610 Dupree Cir
4 BD 2.5 BA +/-2,999 SQ FT
Listed by Sonny & Erin Bara
512.779.7009

Shiloh
8416 Seminary Ridge Dr
3 BD 2 BA +/-1,975 SQ FT
Listed by Kim Wilkin
512.632.3992

Westcreek
4620 William Cannon Dr #57
2 BD 2.5 BA +/-1,304 SQ FT
Listed by Dani Steece
512.785.0698

Open House Citywide Open House: Sunday, February 7th, 2016

realtyaustin.com  •  512.241.1300 •  fb.com/realtyaustin
Children's book fair
In what is to be an annual event, attendees can meet children's book authors and participate in children's activities. Authors scheduled to appear include Dianna Hutts Aston and Keith Graves. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (Sat.), noon-5 p.m. (Sun.). Free (members; University of Texas faculty, staff and students; age 4 and younger), $4 (ages 5-17), $8 (age 65 and older, college students with ID), $10 (general). Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave. 512-232-0100. www.wildflower.org

Beer 101: The Pursuit of Hoppiness class
An introductory beer course in Sunset Valley explains the history of beer and examines various beer styles. The class is taught by a beer expert. Online reservation of one of the 36 seats available is recommended. 6:30-8:30 p.m. $10. Total Wine & More, 5601 Brodie Lane, Ste. 800. 512-892-8763. www.totalwine.com

Carnaval Brasileiro
The annual event in Austin, now in its 39th year, celebrates the nationwide Carnaval festival that takes place in Brazil. The indoor Brazilian-style Mardi Gras party includes dancing, samba music and costumes. 8 p.m. (doors open), 9 p.m. (music begins), $38 (in advance), $45 (at the door). Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Road. www.sambaparty.com

CASAblanca Gala
Participants at the annual black-tie event can partake in casino games, food and auctions to raise funds for local nonprofit CASA, or Court Appointed Special Advocates, of Travis County, which aims to help children in the community who have experienced abuse or neglect. 5:30 p.m. (Powerful Voice Society Reception), 6:15 p.m.-midnight (gala), $200. JW Marriott Austin, 110 E. Second St. 512-459-2272. www.casatravis.org/events/casablanca

Super Bowl viewing party
The football game is shown on a large screen projector and two TVs at the Satellite Bistro and Bar. Attendees can eat from a buffet and drink happy hour specials. 5-10 p.m. $20 (in advance), $30 (at the door). Satellite Bistro and Bar, 5900 Slaughter Lane, Ste. 400. 512-288-9994. www.satellitebistro.com

Vitera’s Valentines: A night of duets with Haydn Vitera and special guests
Local venue Strange Brew Lounge Side hosts a night of duets featuring Haydn Vitera, who fuses old-school American rock with Latin grooves and pop rock lyrics in Spanish and English. Formerly a member of Grammy-winning group Asleep at the Wheel, Vitera plays the guitar, keyboard and electric violin. 9 p.m. $10 (in advance), $15 (at the door). Strange Brew Lounge Side, 5326 Manchaca Road. 512-828-7636. www.strangebrewloungeside.com

African-American Traditions in Gardening class
Justin Duncan, sustainable agriculture specialist with the National Center for Appropriate Technology, teaches historical aspects of gardening in the African-American community. 10 a.m. Free. The Natural Gardener, 8648 Old Bee Caves Road. 512-288-6113. www.naturalgardeneraustin.com

Oak Hill Business and Professional Association luncheon
The local group for entrepreneurs and area professionals hosts its monthly membership luncheon. Speaker Ira Siegel, a certified public accountant with Carpenter & Langston, speaks on tax law changes that will affect 2015 income tax returns. 11:30 a.m. $20. Mandola’s Italian Market, 4301 W. William Cannon Drive. www.ohbpa.org

‘Dancing With the Stars: LIVE!’ performance
Professional dancers from the ABC entertainment show perform on stage for a 90-minute show with both original choreography and numbers from the TV show. Dancers scheduled to appear include Lindsay Arnold and Jenna Johnson. 8 p.m. $49.75-$69.75. Bass Concert Hall, 2300 Robert Dedman Drive. 512-477-6060. www.austintix.com

February

Online Calendar
Find more or submit Southwest Austin events at communityimpact.com/swa.

To have Southwest Austin events considered for the print edition, they must be submitted online by the second Friday of the month.

Volunteer
AUSTIN PARKS FOUNDATION
LEND A HAND

SATURDAY, MARCH 5TH
AUSTINPARKS.ORG/IMPD

IT’S MY PARK DAY
Amphitheater
Continued from I 1

develop this. This has always been part of our vision.”

Kirk said the residents he represents are not opposed to religion, but many are opposed to the amplified sound from the site during worship events.

“We don’t think [the amphitheater] was properly approved,” he said.

History
LifeAustin Church, originally named PromiseLand West Bible Church, started in 2005 with about 80 members, Broughton said. Now about 2,000 people worship at the church on Sundays.

The church was completed in October 2012. Broughton said LifeAustin wanted to build the amphitheater on its 53-acre private property for people who might be reluctant to enter a traditional church but would be willing to come to an outdoor worship center.

The property is zoned for residential use, and one of the allowed uses is religious assembly. The city conducted sound testing at the property and instructed LifeAustin to operate under religious assembly use determination, Guernsey said. Some residents disputed that decision, saying the amphitheater—including hosting Christian bands before large crowds—should not be considered religious assembly use.

Local neighborhood groups, including the Hill Country Estates HOA and the Covered Bridge POA, have fought the amphitheater’s construction for years. Those two associations sued both the city and Guernsey.

The amphitheater was completed in June 2015, Broughton said. The facility has a capacity of about 1,580, he said.

At a Dec. 9 public hearing, the BOA heard from residents who think the amphitheater should be allowed to continue to operate as well as those who think the noise is a nuisance.

The board, which has the authority to hear an appeal over a use determination, voted unanimously to postpone action on the case to Feb. 8. The board’s task is not to make a ruling regarding amplified sound but to examine the codes in place at the time the site plan was approved and determine how Guernsey decided to approve construction. Board member Michael Von Ohlen urged residents and church representatives to come up with a compromise.

Some residents want the board to reverse the land-use determination that outdoor religious assembly is a principal use under religious assembly in the area’s zoning district, said Robert Klee- man, an attorney with Sneed, Vine & Perry P.C., representing Hill Country Estates, Covered Bridge POA and residents at the hearing.

The group also wants the board to reverse the site plan as it pertains to the amphitheater only, Kleeman said.

If the church and its neighbors reach an agreement, the appeal could be withdrawn, Guernsey said. If the board reverses the determinations, LifeAustin could appeal, he said.

Board member Melissa Neslund said during the hearing that based on the facts of the case, she would have a hard time overturning it.

LifeAustin purchased state-of-the-art sound systems and monitoring

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The amphitheater opened in summer 2015. Church member Allen Harrison said the amphitheater is an expression of what members have been called to be. “I realize that it can seem a little bit unconventional to have an amphitheater as part of a church worship service... but it really shouldn’t,” he said. “Jesus did some of his best work outside.”

He said LifeAustin wants to come to an agreement with residents and have that agreement approved by the city. Cox said the bottom line for her and many other residents is that they do not want to hear the music in their homes. “I am much more optimistic now than I have been for the last seven years,” she said. “I sense in [LifeAustin] a definite desire to make things right.”
District considers Southwest, Southeast Austin for school land

AISD staff to show recommended sites to board in ‘next few months’

By Joseph Basco

Austin ISD’s solution to the years-long student capacity problems in Southwest Austin high schools reached a turning point in December as its board of trustees instructed staff to evaluate land to purchase in both Southwest and Southeast Austin for the purpose of one or two high school developments.

Staff is working with a real estate consultant to bring to the board recommendations for the purchase of land “within the next few months,” trustee Gina Hinojosa said during a board meeting Dec. 14.

“The purchase of this land is an investment in the future of our school district and city and is based upon projections of growth and future land availability,” Hinojosa said.

Hinojosa added that AISD has bond money only for the purchase of land, and a separate bond election would have to be held to fund the construction of a new campus.

Years of talking

Plans for a new high school for Southwest Austin date back to 2008, when voters passed a bond for land purchase money. However, land is still not acquired, and a new high school still does not exist.

Discussions about the school site’s location, cost and potential academic programming have continued throughout the years. Some residents have vouched for a new high school in Southwest Austin, and others rallied for new Southeast Austin school.

The board indicated March 9 it would make a decision by December on whether to purchase south high school land and has discussed potential next steps related to the land purchase since then.

On June 1 consulting firm Southwest Strategies Group recommended that land be purchased now instead of in the future, when the price of land may increase and the availability of land may decrease. Consultant Daniel Roth said there may be more land available in Southeast Austin in contrast to Southwest Austin.

The July 28 death of former District 7 trustee Robert Schneider halted board discussions about Southwest Austin issues such as a new high school until a new trustee was appointed. The board appointed Yasmin Wagner to the vacant District 7 seat Sept. 28 to represent parts of Southwest Austin.

Since then, the board met in closed session Dec. 7 to receive a briefing and discuss the value, suitability and negotiation issues for multiple school sites in South Austin, Hinojosa said Dec. 14.

Wagner said to Community Impact Newspaper that the time it will take for staff to negotiate buying land in both Southwest and Southeast Austin will be hard to predict.

Theresa Bastian, president of the Bowie High School Parent Teacher Student Association board, said the new high school process is “slow going.”

“It is good to see that the board made a decision [to negotiate for land],” Bastian said. “However, I feel like they’ve made a decision that ensures no one is going to complain right now.”

One or two, now or later

For the time being, AISD is only considering the land purchase, Wagner said.
As we took a hard look at the needs across Southwest and Southeast Austin, there really was a need in both places for the long term,” Wagner said.

After land is purchased, the board will then discuss how immediate the need is for a new high school on one or both of the sites, Wagner said. If the need is immediate, then the board will set a timeline and move forward with a bond proposal for the design and construction of a school or schools, she said.

“We need to be very careful about the timing of those schools so that we don’t inadvertently build the school before the need is there,” Wagner said. “Eventually we will have a need in both of those areas, but when that need actually comes online still remains to be seen.”

AISD released its annual demographic study Jan. 11, revealing that student populations are expected to decline annually during the next 10 years, eventually decreasing to 77,628 students in the 2025-26 school year. The greatest declines will be in the elementary and middle school levels, though high school enrollment will remain stable, according to the study.

The study also found that Bowie attendance may go from 114 percent capacity in the current school year to 115 percent in the 2025-26 school year.

“At some point an argument could be made that relief is needed at Bowie,” said trustee Jayme Mathias, who represents parts of far South and Southeast Austin.

Mathias pointed out that the study also projected Akins High School’s attendance dropping from 141 percent to 125 percent capacity in the same time frame.

“So it seems that Akins will be at a greater percent capacity than Bowie 10 years out,” Mathias said.

Melissa Lamm, a parent of three AISD students who live in the Bowie attendance zone, agreed that Bowie and Akins are overcrowded. Having moved to Southwest Austin in 2007, Lamm’s family witnessed the bond election for high school land in 2008 and thought construction of a new high school would have been completed in 2015.

“Let’s not delay with coming up with a solution any longer because the students are being impacted by the overcrowded conditions of the school,” Lamm said.

**Alternate ways to address capacity**

In the meantime the board is addressing overcrowding with districtwide changes in student transfer policy and advanced academic programming in Southwest Austin, Wagner said. In the 2017-18 school year, all priority transfers will be denied for schools at or above capacity, according to AISD.

The board also continues to talk about how it can bring programming to South Austin akin to the Liberal Arts and Science Academy.

Take the poll online at communityimpact.com/swa-poll.

Would you vote to approve funds to construct a new Austin ISD high school in South Austin?

Source: Austin ISD/Community Impact Newspaper

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**THE NEW TRANSFER POLICY**

The Austin ISD board of trustees has made several revisions to the district’s transfer policy in an effort to curb overcrowding at schools. Starting with the 2016-17 school year, majority-to-minority student transfers will only be approved for schools that have space, meaning schools not frozen to transfers.

In the 2017-18 school year, all priority transfers will be approved only for schools that have space.

On Dec. 14, Superintendent Paul Cruz announced 23 schools that will be frozen to transfers for the 2016-17 school year because the schools have enrollments exceeding or nearly reaching capacities. Bowie and Akins were two of the three high schools in AISD frozen to transfers. The three types of priority transfers are:

- **Majority-to-minority:** A transfer in which a student whose ethnicity makes up the majority of students at his or her current school requests transfer to a new school where his or her ethnicity is a minority.
- **Sibling:** A transfer that allows a student to attend the same school that a sibling attends.
- **Tracking:** A transfer for a student who has already transferred to a school and had at least two unbroken years of attendance in the two highest grades at the school. If the criteria is met, the student may request to transfer to the next school level, such as from elementary to middle school, to remain with his or her peers.
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Austintexas.gov/WastewaterAveraging
REAL ESTATE

Village at Western Oaks is located near major employers as well as entertainment, dining and shopping options.

The neighborhood’s local amenities include the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Dick Nichols Park, an 18-acre karst preserve, Grey Rock Golf Club and the Latta Branch Greenbelt.

FEATURED NEIGHBORHOOD

Village at Western Oaks

Build-out year: 2005
Builders include: Buffington Homes, Centex, Scharfe
Square footage: 1,435-3,088
Home values: $269,900-$475,000
HOA dues (estimated): $185 annually
Schools: Patton and Mills elementary schools, Clint Small and Gorzycki middle schools, Austin and Bowie high schools

Property taxes (in dollars):
Austin ISD: 1.2020
City of Austin: 0.4589
Travis County: 0.4169
Central Health: 0.1178
Austin Community College: 0.1005
Total (per $100 value): 2.2961

Median home value: $360,000
Median price per square foot: $158.78
Median annual property taxes: $7,462
Homes on the market*: 17
Homes under contract*: 12
Average days on the market*: 36

*As of 1/18/16

Recent listings

8004 Cutler Ridge Place
5 Bedroom / 2.5 Bath
Agent: Eddie Carpenter
Century 21 Randall Morris
512-773-8649

5 Bedroom / 2.5 Bath
Agent: Wendy Chen
Total Realty Austin
512-655-9538

8904 La Siesta Court
4 Bedroom / 2.5 Bath
Agent: John Hernandez
John Hernandez Real Estate
512-789-4800

5 Bedroom / 2.5 Bath
Agent: Tracey Guttes
Horizon Realty
512-417-4596

6066 Abilene Trail
4 Bedroom / 3.5 Bath
Agent: Tracey Guttes
Horizon Realty
512-417-4596

6066 Abilene Trail
4 Bedroom / 3.5 Bath
Agent: Tracey Guttes
Horizon Realty
512-417-4596

*As of 1/18/16
Recent Property Listings

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<td>Barton Creek</td>
<td>8212 Barton Club Drive, Unit 364</td>
<td>3br/4ba</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>Thomas Perrin</td>
<td>Engel &amp; Volkers</td>
<td>512-567-2784</td>
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<td>2br/3ba</td>
<td>$695,000</td>
<td>2,584</td>
<td>Dylan Everett</td>
<td>JB Goodwin, Realtors</td>
<td>512-660-7523</td>
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<td>Trailwood Village</td>
<td>5101 Split Cedar Cove</td>
<td>3br/2ba</td>
<td>$490,000</td>
<td>1,712</td>
<td>Lindsey Fenton</td>
<td>Keller Williams</td>
<td>512-839-5137</td>
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<td>Vista Hills</td>
<td>7701 Rialto Blvd., Unit 1221</td>
<td>2br/2ba</td>
<td>$259,900</td>
<td>1,456</td>
<td>Mike Hammonds</td>
<td>Moreland Properties</td>
<td>512-983-6603</td>
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<td>2br/2ba</td>
<td>$229,000</td>
<td>1,359</td>
<td>Alan Adams</td>
<td>Realty Austin</td>
<td>512-466-8044</td>
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<td>Windmill Run</td>
<td>8513 Red Willow Drive</td>
<td>3br/3ba</td>
<td>$310,000</td>
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<td>Gregg Klar</td>
<td>Keller Williams</td>
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<td>Belterra</td>
<td>111 Abwater Cove</td>
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<td>$520,000</td>
<td>3,829</td>
<td>Chadwin Barley</td>
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<td>512-589-3251</td>
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<td>301 Mauves Way</td>
<td>4br/3ba</td>
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<td>Big Country</td>
<td>13104 Wells Fargo St.</td>
<td>3br/2ba</td>
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<td>Highpointe</td>
<td>126 Briarpatch Court</td>
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<td>78737</td>
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<td>7807 Crazy Horse Drive</td>
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<td>Buckingham Estates</td>
<td>7311 Cooper Lane</td>
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<td>8806 Pepper Grass Cove</td>
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<td>4618 Richmond Ave.</td>
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<td>Patton &amp; Associates</td>
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<td>McKinney Park</td>
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<td>Cherokee</td>
<td>3316 Silks Oak Drive</td>
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<td>Oak at Twin Creeks</td>
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<td>11236 Lost Maples Trail, Unit 11236</td>
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<td>Southland Oaks</td>
<td>2610 Dupree Circle</td>
<td>4br/3ba</td>
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<td>4620 W. William Cannon Drive, Unit 57</td>
<td>2br/3ba</td>
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<td>David Stieve</td>
<td>Realty Austin</td>
<td>512-785-0698</td>
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exp. 3.31.16

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Pain relief is at hand.
Use your HSA/FSA for chiropractic care.

$19 INITIAL VISIT
Includes consultation, exam & adjustment.

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Abbey Ben White • 600 E. Ben White • Austin • 512-326-3500

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Buy any regular & get the second regular half off

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$7.99 Meal Deal
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Buy any regular sub, chip & a 22oz fountain drink

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Hurry! Offer expires 2/29/16. One coupon per person per visit per day. Not to be combined with other offers. No cash value. Redeemable in person only. 22oz
MARDI GRAS!
The best Mardi Gras party in town! Tuesday, Feb. 9th

- Live Cajun Music with Jean-Pierre and the Zydeco Angels 6:30-close
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Having a Mardi Gras party? Pick up a Mardi Gras platter from us!
Gumbo - Jambalaya - Crawfish Etouffee
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Gambino’s King Cakes!
Order your Cream Cheese-filled or Classic Cinnamon King Cake today while supplies last. Walk in and pick up your King Cake today or call to reserve for pick up later.

Laissez les bon temps rouler!
Bring this ad in and receive 10% off your check!
Not valid with any other offers or on February 9, 2016. Offer expires February 23, 2016.

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Affordable and Dependable House Cleaning Services
Start The Year Off With A Clean Slate And Get Your House Cleaned Today!
weekly • bi-monthly • monthly • move in/move out
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1,500-2,500 sq. ft.
For 1st time cleaning, Expires 2/29/16.
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