

NW Commander's Forum

At this month's Commander's Forum the guest speaker was Lt Littrell of the Austin Fire Department, which is an appropriate subject as our NW Commander was not present at this meeting. The Commander's house burned to the ground last month due to an electrical fire in the laundry room. Our thoughts are with him and his family and glad that everyone got out all right due to fire alarms. Lt. Littrell is with the Fire Arson department and he had very interesting stories of arsonist and non-arsonists fires in Austin in the past 5 years. Of course, he had the usual advice for everyone to please check the batteries in the fire alarms at often as remembered. The statistics last year here in the Austin area for the top five reasons for residential fires, as follows:

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Gardening Tips for January

1. Plant bare root nursery stock, especially roses, pecans, and small fruit trees.
2. Continue to select and plant ornamental trees and shrubs to fill landscape needs. Always plan ahead before planting.

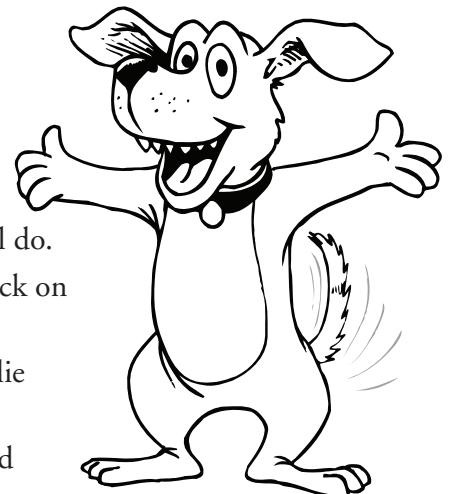
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MPNA Crime Stats

At the last Commander's Forum, comments were made that there have been a big escalation of drive-bys that shoot out the windows of a SUVs in the Balcones Woods neighborhood. Here in Mesa Park, there has been one reported. The frustration is high on both sides, neighbor and police department. They have increased patrol, but no arrests have occurred. The police department requested neighborhood participation to help them, and would like any witness to call them with information. Should you observe anything that causes you suspicion, please note the day and time of the event, color of the car, approximate age/type of car, any detail of driver (male/female), number of people in the car. Even if you do not have a license plate your information could help.

If a dog was the teacher you would learn stuff like:

- 🐾 When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.
- 🐾 Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joyride.
- 🐾 Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy.
- 🐾 When it's in your best interest, practice obedience.
- 🐾 Let others know when they've invaded your territory.
- 🐾 Take naps.
- 🐾 Stretch before rising.
- 🐾 Run, romp, and play daily.
- 🐾 Thrive on attention and let people touch you.
- 🐾 Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.
- 🐾 On warm days, stop to lie on your back on the grass.
- 🐾 On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.
- 🐾 When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body.



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NW Commander's Forum *continued from page 1*

5. Mechanical Malfunction: the only example I could find on the web was of a humidifier that had been recalled as it proved to be a fire hazard.
4. Kids playing with fire: Lt Littrell showed pictures of a fatal fire in a house in South Austin. Very tragic as it happened by setting the Christmas tree on fire.
3. Candles: easiest thing in world to forget to douse prior to either leaving the house or going to bed at night.
2. Smoking materials: if you do smoke, please ensure that your "smoking" area is all non-flammable materials.

And the number 1 reason for residential fires last year...

1. Electrical malfunctions: Electrical malfunctions include many reasons, and all are explained in detail and there is even a checklist to use in going through your house at the following website:
<http://www.firesafety.gov/directory/public/electrical.shtm>

But this topic also segues into a past topic regarding Mesa Park neighborhood homes reaching the age of 25 years. If your house was built prior to 1974 the chances that you have aluminum wiring are very good. Since our newsletter article months ago regarding "Fixing the Wiring" by Caroline Meyer, there were 3 people who contacted us for information. Researching reveals that it not the aluminum wiring itself that is a problem, but where it connects to connection box for wall outlets, ceiling lights and ceiling fans. Where the aluminum wire meets the copper wire at the "connection" is where the failure occurs after certain years of expanding and contracting. Further research indicates that fixing this problem can range from hiring a service company (i.e. Fox Services) to use a patented connection technology on every electrical connection in your house (around \$4,000.00), to identifying the problem connections in your house and hiring an electrician to fix that one outlet (around \$75.00), to doing it yourself. In talking with a certified electrician, he indicated that the problem between the aluminum wire and copper connection point can be eliminated by installing a building grade connection and checking on a regular basis. If more neighbors are interested in organizing to help find the best fix for this problem, please contact us.

Gardening Tips *continued from page 1*

3. Seeds of most all spring annual flowers and vegetables can be sown indoors during January for later transplanting.
4. Be prepared to protect tender plants against a sudden cold snap. Water plants if a hard freeze is predicted.
5. Keep the lawn free of fallen leaves to prevent smothering the grass.
6. All dormant season pruning can be done now through late February. Use proper tools, make cuts close and clean. Wait on pruning gardenias, climbing roses, azaleas, camellias, and other spring flowering shrubs until after they bloom.
7. Apply dormant oil spray to control scale, and other hard-to-manage insect pests.
8. Prepare soil and beds for planting spring and summer annuals and perennials. Add organic materials, as needed.
9. This is the best month to prune oak trees to reduce possible spread of oak wilt fungus.
10. Apply light application of fertilizer to established beds of winter flowering annuals (pansy, calendula, snapdragon, etc.) Use one pound of 15-10-5 per 100 square feet of bed area.
11. Select and order gladiolus corms for February and March planting.
12. Check evergreen trees and shrubs to be sure they are not suffering from lack of moisture.

Information provided by Travis County Extension Service – 512-854-9600

Dog *continued from page 1*

- 🐾 No matter how often you're scolded, don't buy into the guilt thing and pout...run right back and make friends.
- 🐾 Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.
- 🐾 Eat with gusto and enthusiasm. Stop when you have had enough.
- 🐾 Be loyal. Never pretend to be something you're not.
- 🐾 If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.
- 🐾 When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle them gently.

Become a BEST FRIEND adopt a rescue dog!

Poinsettia *continued from page 4*

- Keeping the poinsettia in a cool room (55-60 degrees) at night will prolong blooming time.
- Water when soil is dry to the touch and avoid over watering. Always remove plant from any decorator container before watering. Water only when soil is dry and allow to drain completely.
- Don't fertilize when plant is in bloom.

Community Educator: Youth Partnership for Change YouthLaunch

YouthLaunch, a nonprofit organization that provides empowering service opportunities to young people, is seeking a dynamic individuals to serve as a Community Educators with the Youth Partnership for Change program (YPC).

YPC is an alcohol prevention education program that empowers young people to raise awareness in Austin area community about the number one drug of choice for young people in Texas—alcohol. Young people will serve as community educators, sharing their knowledge through exciting community presentations and outreach activities to help peers, parents, and community members understand the real dangers and consequences of underage alcohol use.

We are currently looking for young people to serve as Community Educators.

Who We're Looking For

You might make a great YPC

Community Educator if you are...

- 16 – 21 years of age
- Concerned about underage drinking and want to take action
- Interested in making a difference in Travis county, by sharing why you are concerned about underage alcohol use
- A U.S. citizen or possess a social security card
- Have transportation or have access to transportation
- Model appropriate behavior in regards to alcohol use
- Can commit team meetings for a few hours a couple times a month

What You Get

As a Community Educator you will ...

- Feel good about enhancing your community by sharing your story with others
- Earn a stipend *in exchange for your service*
- Gain professional skills
- Receive training in underage alcohol issues, public speaking, job skills, and team building
- Enjoy the support of a close-knit

group of young people making a difference in the Austin community

- Participate in service that will strengthen your resume

If You're Interested

Contact: Myra Constable,

YPC Program Coordinator

Email: mconstable@youthlaunch.org

Phone: 512-342-0424

Smart Kids

A first grade teacher had 25 students in her class and she presented each child the first half of a well known proverb and asked them to come up with the remainder of the proverb. It's hard to believe these were actually done by first graders. Their insight may surprise you. While reading, keep in mind that these are 6-year-olds, because the last one is classic!

1. Don't change horsesuntil they stop running.
2. Strike while thebug is close.
3. It's always darkest beforeDaylight Saving Time
4. Never underestimate the power oftermites.
5. You can lead a horse to water but.....how?
6. Don't bite the hand thatlooks dirty.
7. No news isimpossible.
8. A miss is as good as aMr.
9. You can't teach an old dog new.....math.
10. If you lie down with dogs, you'llstink in the morning.
11. Love all, trust.....me.
12. The pen is mightier than thepigs.
13. An idle mind is.....the best way to relax.
14. Where there's smoke there's.....pollution.
15. Happy the bride whogets all the presents.
16. A penny saved is.....not much.
17. Two's company, three'sthe Musketeers.
18. Don't put off till tomorrow whatyou put on to go to bed.
19. Laugh and the whole world laughs with you, cry andyou have to blow your nose.
20. There are none so blind as.....Stevie Wonder.
21. Children should be seen and not.....spanked or grounded.
22. If at first you don't succeed.....get new batteries.
23. You get out of something only what you see in the picture on the box.
24. When the blind lead the blind.....get out of the way.
25. Better late than.....pregnant.

Mark Your Calendars

Neighborhood Meeting

Tuesday, January 29, 2008

7:00 pm

Please make plans to attend Mesa Park Neighborhood Association meeting at the Milwood Library, 7pm, the 29th of January.

Police Appreciation Meeting

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

7:00 pm

Covenant Methodist Church

4410 Duval Rd

This is a cherished Mesa Park Tradition and the NW Police appreciate it greatly. Lets keep it going. Please make plans to attend. If you would like to donate baked goods or other gifts (memo pads, etc) to be included in the appreciation baskets, please contact Jesse Grissom (345-4882). If you have not participated in the past, please do so. It's a great way to say *Thank You* and to meet your neighbors and service men and women.

Holiday Decorating Contest

Make sure you have your house ready for the Holidays! The MPNA will be judging houses on **December 16, starting at 6 pm**. We will be driving around the neighborhood and take pictures of the best decorated homes in Mesa Park. Have your lights on by 6pm.

All winners will receive a gift card from Home Depot in the following increments:

1st place: \$50.00

2nd place: \$35.00

3rd place: \$20.00

Honorable mentions: (3 spots) \$10 each.

Poinsettia Pointers

Buying Tips:

- Avoid plants with drying lower leaves or other signs of wilt. Look for dense, green foliage to the soil line
- The "blooms" of a poinsettia are actually colored leaves called bracts. The true flowers are the button-like parts at the base of the bracts. Look for green or red-tipped flowers; yellow pollens a sign of age.
- Protect from temperatures below 50 degrees when transporting.

Home Care:

- Remove paper or plastic sleeves around pots or plants to let the poinsettias breathe.
- Place plant in indirect sunlight. No part of the plant should touch cold window panes.
- Keep poinsettias away from warm or cold drafts, radiators or open windows. Ideal temperature is 60-70 degrees.

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Neighborhood contacts:

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

Emergency: 911

Police Non-Emergency: 311

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

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