



Neighborhood News

News and information for the residents of Wells Branch.
Vol. 26, Issue 1, Jan./Feb. 2018



Wells Branch Votes!

Early Voting February 20 - March 2
Election Day Voting March 6

In both Travis and Williamson Counties, you may vote at any location displaying the **VOTE HERE** sign. March 6, we'll

have three Travis County polling locations in Wells Branch: Northwest Elementary at 14014 Thermal Drive, Wells Branch Rec. Center at 3000 Shoreline Drive, and the Wells Branch Community Center at 2106 Klattenhoff Drive. All locations will be open 7am-7pm.

If you choose to vote early, February 20 - March 2, the closest location to Wells Branch is the Travis County Tax Office in Pflugerville at 15822 Foothill Farms Loop, open Monday-Saturday from 7am-7pm and Sundays from Noon-6pm. You may check online at traviscountyclerk.org for other voting locations.

Williamson County residents, please visit wilco.org for early voting information and polling locations. There are numerous locations that are an equal distance from Wells Branch; preference is determined by which direction is most convenient for you personally.

Coyote Safety Reminder

It's breeding season again for our resident coyotes. That, on top of all the current construction surrounding Wells Branch, increases their activity and the likelihood that you may encounter one on your walks, or even in your yard. Please visit the sites listed below and make sure you're following all their suggestions. Most of all, keep your pets inside from just before dusk until after dawn and keep them leashed when on the trails. **Be safe, not sorry!**

Follow these links to an educational video presentation on coyotes from Austin Animal Protection Officer Adrienne Clark, the City of Austin webpage on coyotes, and the Humane Society page. All cover tips on deterring coyotes and discuss how to best protect your fur babies.

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/WBNA.WellsBranchNeighborhoodAssociation/videos/1714745575225575/)

[WBNA.WellsBranchNeighborhoodAssociation/
videos/1714745575225575/](https://www.facebook.com/WBNA.WellsBranchNeighborhoodAssociation/videos/1714745575225575/)

[http://www.austintexas.gov/departments/coyotes-
central-texas](http://www.austintexas.gov/departments/coyotes-central-texas)

[http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/coyotes/tips/
coyotes_pets.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/coyotes/tips/coyotes_pets.html)

Help Shape YOUR Community!

Get Involved! by Debby Thompson, WBNA President

2017 saw another year of continued growth in Wells Branch. Our community needs your participation and involvement. WBNA is quite literally a labor of love. It was created by and is run by VOLUNTEERS. **We need your membership, but more than that, we need you!** Please consider joining the WBNA and volunteering your time and talents.

Our annual meeting and officer election is March 1, 2018 at 7pm in the Community Center. We hope to see you there! Visit WBNA.us for details.

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**Membership Form on Back Page -
Return Envelope in Center Section.
Thank you for your support!**

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3rd Annual WB Kite Festival

Sunday, March 11 • 10am-5pm

Retention Pond/Dog Park northeast of the
WB MUD Annex • 14611 Wells Port Drive

Come early and stay late! Join us for a kite flying, picnicking, community led event. Absolutely FAMILY FRIENDLY! Bring your blankets and lawn chairs. Pack your own goodies and please bring a trash bag as we're required to pack our rubbish out.

As the weather is somewhat unpredictable in March, our rain date is March 18. For questions, or to help with the planning, please contact Mark Johnson at jonnojohnson@gmail.com. Look for our event on Facebook and share with your friends and neighbors.
<https://www.facebook.com/events/150071709035841/>

2018 Community Garden Plot Rentals

Annual garden plot rentals began February 1. 10' x 20' plots are available for individuals with a desire to garden in the WB MUD all organic Community Garden. Water, mulch and wheelbarrows are provided for use by gardeners. For more information visit: wellsbranchmud.com/gardens



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Goodbye from Bribery Bakery -

After a lot of thought and soul searching, I've made the difficult decision to close and sell Bribery Bakery. It's been an unforgettable and invaluable life experience that I will always cherish. Opening my own little bakery was a dream come true and sharing my baked goods with Austin has been my absolute pleasure. I'm beyond grateful for everyone's support over the years and thank you for letting me share in your celebrations.

I've decided to sell at a bargain price, so the hunt is on for the perfect buyer to make their dream a reality! It would be a fabulous opportunity for any aspiring restaurateur. If you're interested, feel free to reach out to briberysale@gmail.com for more info.

I'm moving on to do more pastry consulting and looking forward to new and always sweet adventures!

As a parting gift, I'm posting our famous carrot cake recipe that was featured in Food & Wine back in 2009 - Enjoy!!!

Happy Baking—Jodi

Best time to buy or sell?

According to ABOR-MLS* statistics, on average, first quarter home prices are the lowest AND second quarter home prices run the highest

This means that typically, now through March is a good time to buy and March through June is a good time to sell!

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As part of my commitment to our community, a donation will be made to the WBCL or WB 501(c)(3) group of your choice upon closing.

Bribery Bakery Carrot Cake

from the Kitchen of Jodi Elliot

Total Prep Time: 3hrs 30 mins

Serves: 8 to 10

Ingredients

Cake

- 1 cup pecans (4 ounces)
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1 1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 4 large eggs
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 pound carrots, peeled and coarsely shredded

Frosting

- 2 sticks unsalted butter, softened
- Two 8-ounce packages cream cheese, softened
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
- 2 cups confectioner's sugar

How to Make It

Step 1

Preheat the oven to 325°. Butter two 9-inch cake pans; line the bottoms with parchment. Butter the paper and flour the pans.

Step 2

Spread the pecans on a baking sheet and toast for 8 minutes, until fragrant. Cool and finely chop the pecans.

Step 3

In a bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. In a small bowl, whisk the oil, butter-milk and vanilla. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat the eggs and sugar at high speed until pale, 5 minutes. Beat in the liquid ingredients. Beat in the dry ingredients just until moistened. Stir in the carrots and pecans. Divide the batter between the pans and bake the cakes for 55 minutes to 1 hour, until springy and golden. Let the cakes cool on a rack for 30 minutes, then unmold the cakes and let cool completely.

Step 4

In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat the butter and cream cheese at high speed until light, about 5 minutes. Beat in the vanilla, then the confectioners' sugar; beat at low speed until incorporated. Increase the speed to high and beat until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes.

Step 5

Peel off the parchment paper and invert one cake layer onto a plate. Spread with a slightly rounded cup of the frosting. Top with the second cake layer, right side up. Spread the top and sides with the remaining frosting and refrigerate the cake until chilled, about 1 hour. Slice and serve.



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Edward Jones

MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING Member SIPC

Art Camp Spring Break:

Clay, clay and more clay! by Dianne Koehler

March 13, 14, 15 | 12:30-4:00pm | WB Rec. Center

Let your child spend part of spring break creating masterpieces from clay. They will learn about types of clay and work with several kinds to create a number of projects. This is one of the most fun camps we do—messy though. Students should bring a snack and drinks.

\$45 (all supplies included). Age 7-12 (must be at least in Grade 1). Only 18 students may register.

Register in person at the WB MUD Rec. Center, 3000 Shoreline Drive, by phone at 512-251-9814 or online at <http://wellsbranchmud.com/parks-a-recreation/youth-programs>

Spring Break Sports Camps

Looking for activities for your child(ren) to attend during spring break? The WB MUD Recreation Center offers camps and sports clinics throughout the week to help occupy their time.

More information and registration info may be found online: www.wellsbranchmud.com/springbreak.

Basketball Camp

3/12, 3/14, 3/16 | 1:00-4:00pm | Ages 7-17 | Fee: \$100

Beginner & Intermediate Volleyball

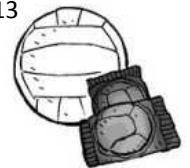
3/13, 3/15 | 10:00am-12:00pm | Ages 8-13

Fee: \$85

Advanced Volleyball

3/13, 3/15 | 12:00-2:00pm | Ages 14-18

Fee: \$85



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Our Family Has Been Caring For Your Family Since 1989.

Silver Branchers

by Darlene Bauhs and Glen Garey

The Silver Branchers began in 1988 as a group of seniors interested in meeting for fun and fellowship. The current group has continued this tradition and would like to extend an invitation to any and everyone who might be interested in making new friends. Meetings are held Thursdays of each month from 1-3pm at the Wells Branch Rec. Center, 3000 Shoreline Drive to visit and play games. We also have socials and take day trips to local places of interest from time-to-time. Membership is free. There are no age requirements; everyone is welcome. Both individuals & couples are invited. For more information, call 512-461-1665 or just stop by.

March 24, we'll travel to Salado for lunch at the Stagecoach Inn <https://www.stagecoachsalado.com/> and shopping <http://www.salado.com/>. We'll depart the Rec. Center at 10:00am and return by 4:00pm.

For a complete list of upcoming day trips, please visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/silverbranchers/. You may sign up for day trips by registering with Wells Branch MUD customer service at 512-251-9814 or at the customer service desk at the Wells Branch Recreation Center. This will enable us to arrange for transportation. For more information call Glen at 512-461-1665 or visit our page on the WBNA website at: <http://wbna.us/community/silver-branchers/>

PROPERTY TAXES 101

Sunday, March 18 • 4pm

Wells Branch Community Center • 2106 Klattenhoff

Join Bruce Elfant, Travis County Tax Assessor-Collector and Chief Appraiser, Marya Crigler, for an informative session all about property taxes. Austin home values continue to increase resulting in higher property tax bills. A clear understanding of how your home's value is appraised and how you can protest that appraised value is invaluable information. Our guest speakers will cover important topics such as how to effectively protest your property taxes, exemptions, important deadlines and what to do if you can't afford to pay your taxes on time. Due to a change in the Texas legislature, the deadline to file property tax protest forms has moved up to May 15. This FREE community event has been arranged by local Realtor, Tammy DeWitt Le. There is limited space at the Wells Branch Community Center, so please register to attend at the "Wells Branch Real Estate" Facebook page.

Wells Branch Garden Guild by Dianne Koehler

February 17 we'll meet to discuss soil-testing, fertilizing, and more. Our March 17 meeting will cover seed starting for transplanting. Both meetings will be at the WB MUD Rec. Center, 3000 Shoreline Drive. Come early at 10:30am to chat and exchange garden items. All are welcome!

Watch for updates on our Facebook page: **Wells Branch Garden Guild.**

On the Trails by Shelley Palmer

As in many other communities, Wells Branch is now actively managing our public green spaces with the goal of increased canopy, greater bio diversity, and improved riparian zones. To ensure that future generations get the benefits of a truly healthy and vibrant green belt, we need to make the tough decisions and practice maintenance follow-thru now and into the future so that progress continues.

Urban forests provide many ecological services and benefits for local residents. Healthy forest ecosystems can cool peak summer temperatures, absorb and filter storm water, absorb air pollution, release oxygen, store carbon in vegetation and soils, and support biodiversity, as well as allow for that human connection to nature, noise abatement, and increased property values. These benefits can't be realized unless urban forests are managed and supported. Many cities have published formal Urban forest plans like this City of Austin version: https://issuu.com/austinurbanforestry/docs/aufp_final_03-05-14

The Wells Branch MUD's efforts to improve and grow our Urban Forest include:

- **Survey of existing trees** to understand the number of species and distribution and use of the data to plan for future plantings. Residents can now look up the tree species based on the tag number at <http://wellsbranchmud.com/tree-species-lookup>
- The MUD **established grow zones** along the Wells Branch creek which includes no mow zones in some places and low mow zones in KF park. Grow zones are allowing the native species that naturally lived here to come back along the creek sides. Rough leaf dogwood

and pecan trees have begun popping up on the east side trail between Wells Port and Wells Branch Parkway, sycamore and cottonwood are more common in KF Park, and Mills Pond has an Arizona ash thicket. Read about Austin grow zones at <http://www.austintexas.gov/blog/grow-zones>.

- Over the last four years the MUD has **removed invasive plants and replaced them with Texas natives**. This winter saw the removal of the last large invasive trees along the creek. It's not uncommon to find a little oak tree struggling under a ligustrum; how quickly those saplings grow once the invasive is removed. Moving forward, the effort will be to remove the invasives as they pop up. Learn more about invasive species at TexasInvasives.org.

The MUD has done yearly tree plantings for the last six years. At this point, hundreds of trees have been planted: upper, mid and under story trees along with smaller woody plants in some areas. All are native plants that are known to grow well locally.

It is exciting to see the changes our "green" practices are creating. I'm taking pictures now as I think the creek sides will look quite different in five years. As it is, the pond area is much healthier than it was four years ago and the Eastside Trail wanders along a lovely, bio-diverse green belt that was scarred and sad looking just a few years ago.



Wells Branch Eco Fair 2018

Saturday, April 28 • 2-5pm

WB Rec. Center • 3000 Shoreline Drive

SAVE the DATE! It's never too early to think about spring, Earth Day, the environment, or the 2018 WB Eco Fair. Over the last few years, the Wells Branch MUD along with other WB community groups have partnered with local vendors to host environmentally focused fairs.

On April 28, WB MUD Parks & Rec. Dept. will be hosting an Eco Fair. We've already started to line up local experts, volunteers, and vendors. If you'd like to share your knowledge, or want to learn more about a specific topic, such as solar power, composting, water conservation, regional gardening, or the 3Rs, etc., we welcome you to join us!

We're looking for volunteers and area businesses to discuss ways to adapt our homes to be more environmentally friendly, while helping to save money, improve the value of your home, and quality of life. There will also be fun learning activities for the kids, door prizes, and giveaways.

If you'd like to volunteer, have a business or know of a business or service you would like to see showcased, please contact one of the Team Leads:

Healthy Food and Home:

Vicky Linsalata, vickylin@austin.rr.com

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle:

Debby Thompson, deborah_thompson@earthlink.net

The Great Outdoors:

Shelley Palmer, spifala@gmail.com

Alternative Power/Fuel:

Stephen Hochstetler, srh2pjh@gmail.com

Water Conservation/Waste Water/Storm Water:

WB MUD, Christine Taylor, ctaylor@wellsbranchmud.com

Get involved, make plans to attend, and stay tuned for updates!



McNeil High School PTSA would LOVE your support!



If you need Mav Gear, we've got you covered! From bags to Ts to lanyards to jackets, we've got the gear you need to show your Mighty Maverick Pride. Visit our website: <http://mcneilptsa.my-pta.org/> for our amazing selection of Spirit Wear. Just click on the Store tab.

Looking for a place to show off that gear? Join your fellow Mavericks at a:

basketball game: <http://mcneilmaverickhoops.com/> for boys, or girls: <http://www.hometeamsonline.com/teams/?u=MCNEILWOMENSBASKETBA&s=basketball;>

baseball game: <http://www.mcneilbaseball.com/> or **softball game:** <https://sites.google.com/roundrockisd.org/mcneilsoftball;>

track meet: <http://www.mcneiltrackxc.com/schedule.html> or **tennis match:** <http://mcneil-tennis.com/>

Catch up on ALL things McNeil on the school's web-site: <https://mcneil.roundrockisd.org/>

LET'S GO MAVS!!!

4TH ANNUAL MCNEIL HIGH SCHOOL MATTRESS FUNDRAISER

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McNeil High School
5720 McNeil Drive

Sunday, February 25
10am-5pm

McNeil High School Band Boosters are hosting their 4th Annual Mattress Fundraiser! If you have been dreaming of a new mattress - You don't want to miss this event! Sunday, February 25 from 10am-5pm, the MHS Band Hall will be turned into a mattress showroom with over 25 different styles for you to try! Savings of up to 50% off retail will be passed on to our community!

Sleep better. Save money.
Support the McNeil High School Band!

Email smanda69@yahoo.com for an additional \$50 OFF Coupon. More info at <http://bit.ly/Beds4McNeil4>.

MHS Band 8th Annual Pancake Breakfast
Saturday, March 3 | 7-11am
St. Philip's UMC | 16321 Great Oaks Dr. in Round Rock
(Near Cedar Valley Middle School)

The McNeil Band Boosters invite you to attend our 8th Annual Pancake Breakfast, Silent Auction, and Bake Sale. Ticket cost is \$6 per person, available from any McNeil Band student or Guard member. Tickets will also be sold at the door. Enjoy All-You-Can-Eat Pancakes, Sausage, Coffee/ Milk/OJ and performances by student groups!

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Clip -n- Save Pool Hours

Katherine Fleischer Pool
September 5, 2017 - March 31, 2018

Pool Closed - Swim Team Use Only

Willow Bend Pool
512-310-1833

October 29, 2017 - March 31, 2018

Open/Lap	M-F	4-8pm
	S-S	1-6pm
Lap Swim	MWF	12-2pm

Please note: These are general guidelines. Hours are subject to change. Visit: wellsbranchmud.com/pools for current information and specific exceptions. Pools will be closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Pools may be closed due to inclement weather. During heavy storms or below freezing temperatures, check the website or call the pools to confirm if they are open. If you have any questions about pool operation, please feel free to contact the Aquatics Supervisor Katie Hutcheson (khutcheson@wellsbranchmud.com or 512-251-9814 x111).

WB Walking Club by Katie Hutcheson

It's never too late to start walking! Get a jump start on spring! Temps are crisp in the morning and the trails are beautiful. WB Walking Club meets in front of KF Pool at 7:30am **AND** 8:30am on Tuesdays & Thursdays and utilizes the Wells Branch MUD trails. The 7:30am group walks at a faster pace and for longer distances while the 8:30am group is best for beginners or those who'd like to take it a little more slowly and enjoy the scenery.

For more info, contact Katie Hutcheson at khutcheson@wellsbranchmud.com.

WB Running Club by Kara Myers

The Wells Branch Running Club is a completely free and fun group of community members who meet every Tuesday and Thursday at 5:45am at the Gazebo in KF Park. Work-outs are tailored to meet the needs of every individual with members running at all different paces. We also do week-end runs, usually on Saturday mornings. If you have a particular event that you're training for, let us know and we can be sure to help you meet your goals. We have a group that just ran the 3M Half and some of us are targeting the Cap 10K next. Come join the fun!

We are now on Twitter @wellsbranch_run and Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/wellsbranchrunclub/>.

Call, Text, or E-mail :

karamyers@austin.rr.com | (512) 470-9782

Pioneer Pals

by Gwendolyn Johnson, WB Homestead Curator

Calling all preschoolers and their caregivers! Join Ms. Gwendolyn on the Homestead lawn each Wednesday at 9:30am for this fun, weekly story-time program. We read stories, sing songs, make crafts, and play. It's free to attend and no registration is required. Join the fun and make some new friends while you're at it!

For more information, contact Gwendolyn Johnson at gjohnson@wellsbranchmud.com.

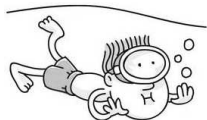
Juniors Disc Golf Tournament at WB

by Brian Litke, Wells Branch Disc Golf Club

SAVE THE DATE! Our first youth disc golf tournament in Wells Branch will take place **Sunday, April 15, 2018 at 2pm.**

This event is for youth ages 1 to 18. Participants will get a custom-stamped event disc, and there will be trophies for age division winners. It will likely cost \$10 to enter the event. Official registration information will be provided as the event nears. Individuals or businesses that are interested in sponsoring prizes for the event, please contact wellsbranchdiscgolfclub@yahoo.com.

If you are on Facebook and want to add this event to your calendar, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/1469428689840353/>



Swim Across Texas Update

by Katie Hutcheson,
 WB MUD Aquatics Supervisor

The Swim Across Texas Program has created a fun and healthy competition at the pool! The leading spots change weekly and we are looking forward to seeing who comes out on top. The three swimmers to log the most miles receive a free recreation tag for the next year so think about joining this fall. The program runs from November to the end of February each year, just let us know you are interested and then we will start calculating your laps at Willow Bend Pool. Questions? Contact Katie at khutcheson@wellsbranchmud.com.



Aquafit Classes

by Katie Hutcheson, WB MUD Aquatics Supervisor

WB MUD offers Aqua-fit classes year-round each Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1-2pm at Willow Bend Pool. This class requires the MUD Multi-class card; for more information visit wellsbranchmud.com.

Please wear swim attire, bring a water bottle and towel. If it is raining or below 55° we will not meet. Otherwise, we are there year round. See you at the pool! For more information, contact Katie Hutcheson at 512-516-2621 or khutcheson@wellsbranchmud.com.



Top 20 Tips for Preventing House Fires

by Allison Strupeck, PIO/Community Outreach Coordinator, Pflugerville Fire Dept./Travis County ESD No. 2

There are a few common causes of fires that you can focus on to help keep your family and pets safe! Most home fires are caused by cooking, candles, smoking materials, and electrical / lighting issues. Here are our top 20 tips to help prevent fires in your house or apartment:

COOKING FIRES

- Considering how busy and rushed our lives have become, it's easy to forget we have the stove or oven on! Set a timer to remind you to turn them off. In addition to a watch or traditional timer, most tablets and smart phones have built-in timers you can use. Remember to always "Stay With the Stove" whenever you are using it and never leave the house with the oven on.
- Even when the stove is off—but especially when it's on—keep the area around your stove clear of flammable items such as hot pads, paper towels, cookbooks, decorations, and notes.
- If a grease fire starts in your kitchen, just remember, "Cover To Smother!" NEVER use water to try to put out a grease fire.

SMOKING-RELATED FIRES

- NEVER smoke in bed! And if you're feeling sleepy or intoxicated, don't risk lying down while smoking.
- Before you throw out butts and ashes, make sure they are out. Dousing in water or sand is the best way! Never throw them in mulch or landscaping.
- Never toss lit cigarettes or matches out a car window.
- Use deep, wide ashtrays on a sturdy table.
- Teach children to never touch matches and lighters. Tell them that they're "tools, NOT toys!" and if they ever find some, to go tell a grown-up right away.

CANDLE FIRES

- Use candle holders that are sturdy and won't tip over easily.
- Always blow out all candles when headed to sleep or leaving home.
- Keep candles at least a foot from anything that can burn – such as decorations, towels, and curtains.
- Better yet, use flameless, battery operated candles!

ELECTRICAL / LIGHTING FIRES

- Do not charge your cell phones and laptops overnight – especially not if placed on your bed or couch where they're more likely to overheat!
- Charge cell phones and laptops on a flat, open surface while you're awake and attentive.
- Cords need to breathe! Give cords plenty of space around furniture and each other.
- Never run extension cords under anything such as doors, rugs, or furniture.
- Only use extension cords with portable appliances – never with major appliances.
- Only use one heat-producing appliance (EX: toaster, coffee maker) at a time in an outlet. Unplug them when not in use.
- Only use extension cords with portable appliances – never with major appliances.
- Don't overload an outlet with too many items plugged in.

Fire & Fall Prevention Class for Older Adults

Tuesday, February 27 • 10:30am

WB Rec. Center • 3000 Shoreline Drive

Calling all seniors in Wells Branch! Travis CO. ESD 2 will be presenting a program called "Remembering When: Fire & Fall Prevention for Older Adults" at the WB Rec. Center on February 27. A quarterly program, running from 30 minutes to an hour, this month's program will feature a Home Safety Checklist! Do you know how to put out a fire on your stove top? Do you wear shoes that could make you slip or trip? Are you using extension cords safely in your home? Do you know what kind of rugs can help prevent falls? Do you have a home escape plan in case of a fire? If you answered no to any of these questions, please make plans to join the Fire Department at 10:30am, Feb. 27!



Winter Wastewater Averaging

is in effect through the March 12, 2018 meter reading. Conserve water now and save money ALL YEAR long!

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Statistical Analysis of TCSO Wells Branch Initiative

Provided by Kristen Dark, Sr. Public Information Officer, Travis County Sheriff's Office

Throughout October and November of 2017, TCSO conducted an initiative focused on reducing crime in the Wells Branch community. The six-week initiative which took place from October 8 – November 15, 2017 consisted of both undercover and overt operations. On November 28, 2017, TCSO hosted a Town Hall meeting to share details of the completed operation with residents. At that meeting TCSO Captain Craig Smith promised attendees and media representatives that our agency would release statistical analysis of crime in the area once December data had been collected and analyzed, to present a picture of where things stood the month after the initiative ended.

JULY 15 – AUGUST 15, 2017 (Pre-initiative Reports)

Violent Crimes

Robbery: 4
Assault: 6
Aggravated Assault: 2
Narcotics: 24

Property Crimes

Burglary of Residence: 8
Auto Theft: 11
Burglary of Vehicle: 27
Theft: 21

Traffic Offenses

DWI: 8
Collisions: 27

NOVEMBER 15 – DECEMBER 15, 2017 (Post-initiative Reports)

Violent Crimes

Robbery: 1 **75% Decrease**
Assault: 4 **33% Decrease**
Aggravated Assault: 1 **50% Decrease**
Narcotics: 17 **29% Decrease**

Property Crimes

Burglary of Residence: 4 **50% Decrease**
Auto Theft: 5 **55% Decrease**
Burglary of Vehicle: 11 **59% Decrease**
Theft: 11 **48% Decrease**

Traffic Offenses

DWI: 3 **63% Decrease**
Collisions: 25 **7% Decrease**

It's important to note that this initiative is not an indication that Wells Branch is an unsafe neighborhood. It's a densely populated area where crime rates had begun to show an increase. The goal was to reduce crime through a concentrated effort. These results were accomplished through community engagement, education and collaboration. During this initiative TCSO worked closely with the Austin Police Department, Pflugerville Police Department and the Texas Department of Public Safety. We will continue to engage the community and work together to keep crime rates low.

TCSO started these initiatives in 2017. The first concentrated on the Del Valle area. These operations will be an ongoing practice in the months and years to come and will target areas where statistical analysis shows an uptick in criminal activity.

Phone and Online Scams -

DON'T BECOME A VICTIM!

Please refer to the quick reference guide below put together by the Travis County Sheriff's Office regarding potential fraud/scams.

For additional precautions, visit: https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cpd/frauds-and-scams_

IF YOU RECEIVE A PHONE CALL AND THE CALLER TELLS YOU:

- he is with law enforcement and you have a warrant for your arrest
- you won a prize, a grant, a too good to be true work from home opportunity
- he is with the IRS and you owe the IRS money
- your computer has a virus and you need tech support/remote computer access
- your family member is in jail, involved in an accident or needs money
- you must purchase a gift card or money card to pay over the phone
- to wire money to pay a debt

DO THIS:

- ask the caller for his name, title, phone number, office location
- tell the caller you will not purchase a gift card or money card to pay him
- tell the caller you will not stay on the line and drive to a location
- tell the caller you will hang up and confirm who he is
- hang up and call your loved one to confirm he/she is not hurt or in jail
- hang up and call 974-0845, press 3, OR 911 to report your suspicions

DO NOT EVER:

- confirm or provide the caller with any personal identifying information (date of birth, social security number, etc.)
- purchase a gift card or money card and read the number to someone over the phone
- wire money to anyone, WHO YOU HAVE NOT MET IN PERSON
- drive to a location with the caller on the phone giving directions
- provide the caller with remote access to your computer
- return a suspicious phone call by calling the number provided

FINANCIAL FOCUS

What Should You Do With Your Tax Refund?

by Nicole Viator, Financial Advisor, EdwardJones

You may not get much of a thrill from filing your taxes, but the process becomes much more enjoyable if you're expecting a refund. So, if one is headed your way, what should you do with the money?

The answer depends somewhat on the size of the refund. For the 2017 tax year, the average refund was about \$2,760 – not a fortune, but big enough to make an impact in your life. Suppose, for example, that you invested this amount in a tax-deferred vehicle, such as a traditional IRA, and then did not add another penny to it for 30 years. At the end of that time, assuming a hypothetical 7 percent annual rate of return, you'd have slightly more than \$21,000 – not enough, by itself, to allow you to move to a Caribbean island, but still a nice addition to your retirement income. (You will need to pay taxes on your withdrawals eventually, unless the money was invested in a Roth IRA, in which case withdrawals are tax-free, provided you meet certain conditions.)

Of course, you don't have to wait 30 years before you see any benefits from your tax refund. If you did decide to put a \$2,760 tax refund toward your IRA for 2018, you'd already have reached just over half the allowable contribution limit of \$5,500. (If you're 50 or older, the limit is \$6,500.) By getting such a strong head start on funding your IRA for the year, you'll give your money more time to grow. Also, if you're going to "max out" on your IRA, your large initial payment will enable you to put in smaller monthly amounts than you might need to contribute otherwise.

While using your refund to help fund your IRA is a good move, it's not the only one you can make. Here are a few other possibilities:

- **Pay down some debt.** At some time or another, most of us probably feel we're carrying too much debt. If you can use your tax refund to help reduce your monthly debt payments, you'll improve your cash flow and possibly have more money available to invest for the future.

- **Build an emergency fund.** If you needed a new furnace or major car repair, or faced any other large, unexpected expense, how would you pay for it? If you did not have the cash readily available, you might be forced to dip into your long-term investments. To help avoid this problem, you could create an emergency fund containing three to six months' worth of living expenses, with the money kept in a liquid, low-risk account. Your tax refund could help build your emergency fund.

- **Look for other investment opportunities.** If you have some gaps in your portfolio, or some opportunities to improve your overall diversification, you might want to use your tax refund to add some new investments. The more diversified your portfolio, the stronger your defense against market volatility that might primarily affect one particular asset class. (However, diversification, by itself, can't protect against all losses or guarantee profits.)

Clearly, a tax refund gives you a chance to improve your overall financial picture. So take your time, evaluate your options and use the money wisely.

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Wells Branch Spring Soccer Kicks Off Soon!

by Leisha Richardson, Secretary, WBSA

Spring will be here soon and that means it's the perfect time to get ready for soccer! The WB Soccer Association (WBSA) Spring 2018 season officially begins mid-February with the first games taking place the weekend of February 24. We are looking forward to welcoming back 375 plus WBSA players this season!

Visit www.wellsbranchsoccer.com to register and see our Facebook page to learn about upcoming events. We look forward to seeing you all out on the fields in a few weeks!



WBSA UNITED girls bring home CAYSA and GLASA tourney titles

Keep Wells Branch Beautiful on It's My Park Day, March 3

by Katie Hutcheson, KWBB Coordinator
and Brian Litke, Wells Branch Disc Golf Club

Saturday, March 3 • 9am - Noon

Wells Branch MUD Disc Golf Course on Owen Tech

Join Wells Branch for "It's My Park Day," an Austin Parks Foundation (APF) annual event to get the public involved in sprucing up their local parks. Instead of the regular KWBB meeting that takes place the first Sunday of each month, volunteers will be spreading mulch, planting trees, and doing general cleanup in the greenbelt at the WB MUD Disc Golf Course on Saturday, March 3, from 9am-12pm.

Please wear long-sleeve shirts and closed-toe shoes. All *registered** volunteers will receive a free "It's My Park Day" t-shirt; snacks and equipment will be provided. It's our opportunity to make Wells Branch the cleanest, most beautiful community in Texas, so we hope to see you there!

Registration is open on Austin Parks Foundation website at <https://austinparks.givepulse.com/event/67913-Wells-Branch-Disc-Golf-Course-Tree-Mulching-Planting-and-Litter-Pickup>.

**Only those who are registered on the APF site will get a free IMPD t-shirt.*



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BSA Cub Scout Pack 140 by Tonya Riley

In December, Pack 140 participated in Wreaths Across America and placed wreaths on the graves of veterans at Texas State Cemetery. In January we held our Pinewood Derby. The Scouts made cars from a wooden block and raced them. Christopher Riley was our 1st place winner. There will be a district-wide Pinewood Derby on March 3. Anyone interested in racing can make (or borrow) a car and participate. In February we will hold our Blue and Gold Banquet to celebrate Scouting's birthday and to recognize the achievements of our Scouts. For more information on Cub Scouts and Pack 140 or participating in the district Pinewood Derby, please contact Pack 140 at info@pack140.org or 512-627-9741.



BSA Cub Scout Pack 728 by Shannon Best

Pack 728's Scouts had a very busy holiday season. A few of our Webelos Scouts volunteered with Brown Santa helping wrap presents for families in need. The Pack also had a Thanksgiving potluck dinner and a cookie exchange. Our Scouts had a spectacular Pinewood Derby and participated in Report to State. We look forward to Scout Sunday, It's My Park Day (at Wells Branch Disc Golf Course), Spring Campout and our Advancement Ceremony. We have three Webelos crossing over to Boy Scouts in February! Come see what we're all about. Contact us at wbpack728@gmail.com.

BSA Venture Crew 1409 by Jill Douglass, Advisor

The Crew had its first ever family camp out at McKinney Falls State Park in November. This trip featured an 8am outdoor yoga class followed by a swim in the creek and finished with a cooking contest. In February we headed to Hill Country State Natural Area for backpacking. This trip required the Crew to think and plan very carefully with regards to water. The park provides NO potable water. The Crew has also been active helping with the brush arbor project in KF Park and face painting and making balloon animals at Snow Day. In March we have a big trip to New Mexico for Winter Camp at Philmont Scout Ranch! We are busy investigating balaclavas and insulated winter boots! And finally, a big thank you to Kevin Ward who drove the truck and trailer for the Crew as they collected items for Extreme Clean.

Venturing is a youth development program of the Boy Scouts of America for young men and women who are 14 – 20 years of age. Contact Jill Douglass (512-293-9022 / jdouglass@crew1409.com) for questions about the Crew. Visit <http://www.crew1409.com/> to learn more!



BSA Troop 1409 by Daniel White, Committee Chair

Troop 1409 held their annual Webelos Invitational at Russell Park on Lake Georgetown in January. Cub Scout Packs from Packs 140 & 728 who are moving up to Boy Scouts camped with the Troop.

In February, our Scouts joined Scouts from all over the state as they marched in the Report to State parade from the Congress Avenue bridge to the State Capitol. Later in the month, Scouts will attend a gaming camp out. The Troop will have Scouts on hand at the Webelos Crossover for Packs 140 & 728 on February 23.

If your 11-18 year old boy is interested in joining the Troop, contact Daniel White, 512-413-0097.

Eagle Scout Project Benefits Wells Branch

by Grant Dzurenko

Hi, my name is Grant Dzurenko, and I am replacing the brush arbor in Katherine Fleischer Park for my Eagle Project. I chose the brush arbor because I want to see my community prosper. The old brush arbor was in danger of falling down, and I wanted to build a new one for the neighborhood. I've lived in Wells Branch my whole life and have seen the arbor every day. I've seen bands play there during our festivals and families take pictures there almost every weekend. I'd like to thank Lowe's for supplying all the hardware at a discount, Papa Johns for discounted pizza for volunteers, and Starbucks for providing coffee for volunteers. Troop and Crew 1409 and Troop 157 all provided scouts to help with labor.



**GIRL SCOUT COOKIES
ARE HERE!** 

2018 Girl Scout Cookie Sale!!! by Emily Berver

Neighborhood Girl Scouts will be selling cookies through February 25. Stock up on your favorites such as Thin Mints, Caramel Delites, Peanutbutter Patties and Lemonades. The S'more cookie and gluten-free, chocolate chip Trios cookies are both back this year. Many of the popular cookie flavors are also vegan. If you are unable to enjoy cookies, please consider donating cookies to military families (most GS troops participate in this program, called "Troop to Troop").

Cookies are still \$4 per box except for the Trios, which are \$5 per box. Proceeds from the sales go towards both the individual Troops and Central Texas Girls Scouts and make up a significant portion of program funding. The cookie sale also helps the individual Girl Scouts learn about goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills and business ethics. This site has links to nutritional info for all the GS cookies (<https://www.abcbakers.com/abc-bakers/abc-bakers-choice-cookies/>)

Thank you for supporting Scouting!

Northwest Elementary



A note from the School Nurse:

The FLU is spreading fast here in the area. Please keep your child home if they have the following symptoms: fever of 100.0 or greater, body aches, chills, tiredness, cough. Stay home until symptoms have ceased for 24 hours without the help of medication. This helps in decreasing the spread of illnesses to others.

Library News

Our Spring Book Fair is just around the corner! Preview is Friday, February 23. Students, parents, teachers & staff may purchase items Monday, February 26 through noon on Friday, March 2.



Spring Break March 12-16!

Westview Middle School



Ways to Stay Informed

Westview MS Website: <http://www.pfisd.net/wms>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WestviewMsWildcats/>

CHS Project Grad Fundraising Dinner

Sunday, February 18, 2017 • 6:00pm

Lion's Club • 500 N Railroad Ave, Pflugerville, TX 78660

Support Connally High School Project Graduation and enjoy a fun-filled Mardi Gras themed evening that includes:

- Delicious food featuring a Cajun-style menu and drinks (wine/beer)
- Reverse Raffle game with chance to win \$1000!
- Silent auction with bargains galore
- Fun and laughter with wonderful people – old friends and new
- The opportunity to help keep CHS grads safe on graduation night and to provide them a final send-off memory



Get a group together and make it an exciting evening for all!

Tickets: \$40 each or \$75 for two. Contact Cindy Padavick at padavick1994@sbcglobal.net or (512) 909-9785 for tickets or more information.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/323102624853474?ti=ia>

STEAM Festival at Harmony

Science Academy Pflugerville!

Science - Technology - Engineering - Art - Mathematics

Saturday, March 24, 2018 • 9am-1pm

1421 Wells Branch Pkwy Suite 200, Pflugerville, TX 78660

Save-the-date! Come for a day of entertainment, art and science fun! Free and open to the community!



Connally High School



There is a lot of exciting news from John B. Connally High School!

Boys and Girls Basketball qualify for State Playoffs! Way to GO COUGARS! Follow @JBConnallyHS on Twitter to get the latest information on game times and locations.

8th Grade Invasion—Over 260 CHS student volunteers helped make this day go off without a hitch! There were more than 520 8th Graders visiting CHS from Westview and Dessau Middle Schools to see, first hand, our best-in-the-area Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, as well as other elective options at CHS that they are all excited to participate in next year... **WELCOME Cougar Class of 2022!!**

Speaking of Connally's best-in-the-area CTE programs - **IBM Teams up with CHS Senior Heather Brown...** <https://developer.ibm.com/stories/imacoder-heather/>

The Big Event, 2018—527 Cougar students will be going into the community on March 2, 2018 to perform community service projects around the city as a way to say "thank you" to the community for support of Connally students and our Cougar Community. Students and staff volunteers will be going to various locations: Lake Pflugerville, parks and trails, neighborhood community centers, and performing community service: picking up trash, cleaning benches and play-scapes, sweeping, shoveling, spreading mulch, etc. For more information about the BIG EVENT visit: <http://www.pfisd.net/Domain/1455>

Stay informed about Connally:

Join the CHS Campus Academic Advisory Council

Download the Connally App: <https://goo.gl/RWz5Qg>

Become a PTA member: www.chspta.org; connallyhspta@gmail.com

Connally Website: www.pfisd.net/Page/450

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Connally-High-School-1458721827756675/

Twitter: @JBConnallyHS

Chaparral Star Academy



The Shark Service Club spent their MLK Day of Service creating a project for our school! Students Hamzah Ahmed, Josh Hinojosa, Laura Huneycutt, Isaac Kleiwer, and Sam Nelson teamed up with Dr. Mates and Mr. Nelson to build the Shark Book Exchange! Together they repurposed a fridge, built shelves, painted it, and filled it with donated books. The Shark Book Exchange is a "take a book, leave a book" concept where students can choose a book and then return it when they are finished reading it, or keep it and leave a different book in its place for another student to read. The Sharks Service Club is helping to provide CSA students access to books and hoping to promote literacy among our students and in our community. The free rotating book exchange is set up in the hallway across from the teachers' lounge and ready for students to use. Stop by to check out a book and grab a free bookmark!



WBE Arts Integration Academy

by Laura Gomez-Horton, WBE PTA, Secretary

WBE AIA PTA is ready for 2018! We hope that you will join us for one of our biggest events and fundraiser of the year **SPRINGFEST!!!!**

This has become a neighborhood tradition over the years and has always received rave reviews. This year we will continue the tradition and hope to involve more of the community! Join us for fun, food, performances, and an amazing Silent Auction!

If you would like to volunteer or help in any capacity please contact us at springfest@wellsbranchpta.org.

YEARBOOKS ARE ON SALE NOW!!!! If you are interested in ordering a WBE yearbook, please contact the PTA president, Blythe Gander at president@wellsbranchpta.org.

It's never too late to become a member of your WBE PTA, a volunteer membership program that works collaboratively with the school and the WB community to bring amazing programs, field trips, and materials that supplement learning. If you want to get involved, become a member, donate some time, and/or show off your talents, please visit our website at <http://wellsbranchpta.org/> or facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/wellsbranchpta/>.



ROUND ROCK
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Spring Break March 12-16

WBE AIA Farmer's Market

by Dianne Koehler, Garden Curriculum Coordinator

WBE AIA gardens survived the freeze! Kids wrapped the plants well and used the hoop covers. The only plants to take a big hit were our beautiful Meyer lemon trees. We have not had public Farmer's Markets on Fridays yet as the teachers have been buying everything we produce. We do expect to begin having surplus soon to share and will post info to both the Google Group and WB Facebook pages.



Deerpark MS PTA

Hogwarts Readathon

March 2 • Immediately after school to 10pm

Readathon brings students together over a common love for books and the desire to share that love of literacy with others. Students obtain pledges for four hours of reading at Readathon. Pledge money raised will be used to buy books for the DMS Library and for DMS classroom libraries. Thank you for supporting literacy and Deerpark Middle School! McNeil High School NHS members will be House Prefects for the event and staff members will be on hand as well, but we need your help! Sign up online to donate items or help decorate and set-up. See *Items Needed List* at <http://deerpark.my-pta.org/>. This is the list that brings all the magic together and enables all pledge money to go straight to buy books. **THANK YOU!!**

LIKE us on Facebook at **DeerparkMSPTA**

FOLLOW us on Instagram at **DeerparkMS_PTA**

JLJ STEAM Academy PTA

by Stephanie Hilchey, Secretary, JLJ STEAM PTA



Trailblazers, we have enjoyed some wonderful grade level community events this school year. Thank you for making this possible! Please continue to get involved at Joe Lee Johnson Elementary STEAM Academy by joining the JLJ PTA at www.jljpta.org.

Sign up for our monthly email newsletter. We will be posting frequent announcements and updates on our FB page. Follow us! (<https://www.facebook.com/jljpta/>).

Upcoming Events at JLJ!

March 7 | 9am-2pm | Kinder Round Up

March 12-16 | No School | Spring Break

We want you as part of our Trailblazer Community as we strive to Walk Arm-in-Arm with our Children! Driving the Dream!

Oh What A Night!!!! Thank you to all of our families who were able to join the Bike Rodeo event. There was a FANTASTIC turnout and our hope is that your children walked away with safety informed smiles!

I also would like to extend a HUGE thank you to our 4th Grade students and teachers. The Bike Rodeo exemplifies our STEAM Instructional Vision. As our students studied safety equipment they made the decision to hold a safety related event and planned the bike rodeo. Through this process, students studied principles of safety, equipment, financial literacy and budgeting, planning, collaborating with business partners, communicating their plans and of course, executing. Our teachers facilitated experiences for them and served as their cheerleaders along the way. Thank you again for supporting our Trailblazing students, you are appreciated!!!

JLJ Steam Academy Garden News

by Heather Johnson, Garden Curriculum Coordinator

The Joe Lee Johnson Garden is having a busy spring! Kindergarteners and family volunteers participated in the first ever JLJ Dirt Day! The Kindergarteners were faced with the challenge to create a growing garden and after learning about basic plant needs, they decided the garden soil did not have enough nutrients. So they helped replace the soil with nutrient rich compost.

The JLJ Farmer's Market is working hard raising winter crops to sell this spring. Keep an eye open for details of a kickoff party and school garden tour, Thursday, March 22.

Babysitting Training Course

March 15 • 1-5pm • WB Rec. Center • 3000 Shoreline Drive

ARC Babysitting Training Course provides youth, ages 11-15 years, the knowledge and confidence to care for infants and school-age children. Cost is \$40 per participant. Questions? Contact Katie at khutcheson@wellsbranchmud.com or 512-251-9814, ext. 111. Offered by WB MUD Parks & Rec. Dept.

WELLS BRANCH COMMUNITY LIBRARY

15001 Wells Port Drive | www.wblibrary.org | 512-989-3188

All programs are free and open to the public.

Programs with ** require advance registration at wblibrary.eventbrite.com

February is Love Your Library Month!

Throughout the month, go on a blind date with a book: take home a wrapped book, read it, then let us know what you think!



EVENTS FOR THE FAMILY

Planetarium Shows**

Friday, February 9 beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Learn about the night sky in an interactive show.

Chinese New Year Dance Performance

Saturday, February 17 at 10 a.m.

See Texas Dragon/Lion Dance perform at the library!

Tales of Texas Flowers**

Saturday, March 3 at 10 a.m.

Learn legends behind Texas' wildflowers from storyteller Bernadette Nason.

LEGO Fun Day (Ages 4+)**

Sunday, March 11 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Register at learningfun101.com under "Free Fun Events."

Hungrytown Folk Duo Concert

Saturday, February 17 at 6 p.m.

After ten years of international touring, three album releases, and appearances on *The Daily Show* and *Portlandia*, you can see folk duo Hungrytown for free at the library! Visit hungrytown.net for information and music samples.

Have you been to the LAB?

The Wells Branch Learn And Build (LAB) is an adult crafting space. Bring supplies and use library tools to complete special projects and practice your skills. Visit wblibrary.org/lab for a list of open crafting hours, or attend one of the events below!

DIY Wednesday: programs begin at 6 p.m.**

Cardmaking: February 14; Glass Etching: March 14

Makerspace Equipment Training

February 28 & March 28 at 6 p.m.

KIDS & TEENS

LEGO Lab (Ages 5+)

Mondays from 4 to 5 p.m.

Robotics and free build. Robotics registration at 3:30.

Spanish Circle Time/Rueda de Amigos (Ages 0-3)

Tuesdays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Learn vocabulary and early concepts in this Spanish-language circle time!

Circle Time (Ages 0-3)

Wednesdays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Learn through song and play in a first classroom experience!

Arts and Crafts (Ages 5+)

Wednesdays at 6 p.m. (Tickets available at 5:30 p.m.)

Make a new craft each week!

Sign Language Storytimes (All Ages)

Thursdays at 11 a.m.

Enjoy stories and songs in sign language!

Storytime & Craft (All Ages)

Saturdays at 11 a.m. | Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.

Hear stories and make a simple craft!

Family Yoga (All Ages)**

Second Saturday of each month at 10 a.m.

Free, for all ages.

ADULTS

Spanish Conversation Hour

First and third Mondays of each month at 6:30 p.m.

Practice your speaking and listening skills with others!

Wells Branch Writers' Guild

First Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

Connect with the Guild on Meetup:

meetup.com/Wells-Branch-Fiction-Writers-Guild

Morning Yoga

First and third Thursdays of each month at 10:30 a.m.

Please bring your own yoga mat.

Knit & Crochet for a Cause

Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

Knit and crochet items benefitting the Austin Scarf Project.

English Conversation Group

First and third Saturdays of each month at 10:30 a.m.

All skill levels are welcome.

Computer and Career Workshops**

Explore topics like Microsoft Word and Excel, résumé help, and more! See all class offerings on our calendar.

To see everything happening at the Library this season, check out our event calendar at

WWW.WBLIBRARY.ORG

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- 2 Let's add home technology to dramatically cut your gas and electric bills.
- 3 Let's spend some time together so I can teach you how everything works!

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FOL News

by Tracy Simon, President, FOL

Hurricane Harvey devastated the Port Arthur Library; they lost their entire collection. The rebuilding process has been slow as people are working on their homes as well. The Friends of the Library (FOL) and Wells Branch Community Library are lending a hand. Look for notification of our upcoming book drive to benefit the Port Arthur Library. We will have announcements on our website wbfriends.org, all the community Google groups and the library's weekly Monday eblast.

2018 Calendar Close Out

We only have a few calendars left! Since we have elected to discontinue producing the calendars they are now a collectors item! Price is reduced to \$7.00 from \$15.00. To order, access our above mentioned website.



FOL Community Garage Sale

As spring is a much more successful time of year for garage sales, we've planned our next FOL Community Garage Sale for Spring 2019. Watch for updates as they become available.

WB Photo Club by Margaret McGhee-Sufke

Welcome to 2018 and the Wells Branch Photo Club. We've kicked off this year with some new topics and interactive presentations. We're also going to try to start up a photo essay format to allow members to get creative with their pictures and then share their essays with the group.

The upcoming meetings will include hands-on practice exercises and interactive critique sessions. As the weather gets nicer we'll work to organize a few meet-up sessions. Members will continue to take our photographic skills into the community to help capture all the great local events.

March 13, our topic will be *Working with Light*, a hands-on meeting. April 10, we'll hold a photo essay critique session. As a reminder, our group has a standing monthly meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, from 6:30-8:30pm at the Rec. Center on Shoreline. WB Photo Club includes some part-time professionals, keen amateurs, general hobbyists and several beginners. Everyone is welcome. Please feel free to reach out to Margaret Sufke, mmsufke@gmail.com or 512-341-0428 for updates.

New Crafting Space at the Library

by Jeremy Selvidge, Outreach and Technology Librarian

The Wells Branch Community Library invites you to try out the Learn And Build (LAB), a new community crafting space! Opened in December, the LAB is a space for adults to use library-supplied tools to practice skills learned in our DIY Wednesday programs and complete personal projects. Tools and equipment are available to any adult patron with a library account in good standing and include:

- Sewing machines
- Dremel tools
- Engravers
- Sizzix machine for paper cutting and embossing
- Leatherworking tools
- Glass etching supplies
- and more!

Visit wblibrary.eventbrite.com to view upcoming DIY classes, and check out wblibrary.org/LAB for complete information about LAB policies and open LAB hours. Happy crafting!

Free Concert at the Library February 17

by Jeremy Selvidge, Outreach and Technology Librarian

Make plans to hear folk duo Hungrytown in concert at the Wells Branch Community Library! Since 2003, Rebecca Hall and Ken Anderson (better known as Hungrytown) have toured North America, Europe, and New Zealand, sharing their original folk music with audiences around the world. Their songs have been featured on several television shows, including Portlandia, and have received extensive radio play worldwide.

As part of their current international tour, Hungrytown will perform a free concert at the Wells Branch Community Library (15001 Wells Port Drive) on Saturday, February 17, at 6 p.m. Come hear music from their albums Hungrytown, Any Forgotten Thing, and Further West! No registration is required. You won't want to miss this great musical act! For more information and to hear music samples, visit hungrytown.net.



New Business Spotlight WB

by Gus Kohn

In support of our Wells Branch business community, we like to share updates and changes to area establishments. Sales tax paid within Wells Branch from your purchases benefits both the Library and the Fire Department (ESD#2). The continuing success of the businesses in the district directly influences our property values. When we "Shop WB" we all benefit.

Elevated Fitness, formerly Fit For Life Solutions, Miguel Lopez (owner) has re-branded his studio to offer a more personalized, less corporate structure for our neighbors. Elevated Fitness offers instructor led training in a non-intimidating environment so you can burn a lot of calories in a small space. They do the thinking for you making it easy to increase your fitness level. Taking an holistic approach to fitness they teach a sustainable lifestyle – no roller coasters here; guiding proper nutrition and promoting individual fitness success. They have morning and evening classes Monday-Thursday.

Find them at 2013 Wells Branch Pkwy Suite 202, 512-489-3026 and elevatedfitnessatx.com. They are hosting a Grand Re-Opening event on February 19th, stop by and see what they have to offer. Please see their ad page 2.

iMassage Austin opened in January in Bratton Square where Massage+Yoga was previously located. Specializing in Foot Massage and Full Body Massage, they have branched out from their other location in Cedar Park and are offering Wells Branch neighbors Deep Tissue Massage as well as Acupressure. Visit them now for their Grand Opening pricing special. Open 7 days a week from 10am to 10pm, call them at 512-293-4368 or visit at 14735 Bratton Ln., Suite 207.

El Huarache Restaurant opened January 8 where Portobello had been in the Wells Branch Plaza center. Co-owner Carlos Santizo explains they are offering a culture in authentic interior Mexican dining cooked from the heart. They slow cook everything from scratch and treat customers like family. They have three different salsas; mild, medium and spicy. Their signature specialty entree is the Huarache with your choice of chicken, beef, carnitas or al Pastor. They serve breakfast all day!

Visit them at 2113 Wells Branch Pkwy #1000, or www.elhuarache.live. They are open 7-9 weekdays, 10am-9pm Saturday and 10am-3pm Sunday, and Carlos says they are here to stay!

Wells Branch Little Free Libraries

Springtime is almost here and many of our LFLs have been restocked! Did you know there are currently 14 Little Free Libraries throughout Wells Branch? LFLs are free book exchanges where anyone can "take a book, return a book". Learn more about the WB LFLs (including locations) at <http://www.wellsbranchreads.com/>



St. Andrew's Record Breaking Food Pantry

by Tina Tarbox, Record Keeper

The St. Andrew's Food Pantry, open the second and fourth Saturdays January through October, and the second Saturdays of November and December, has some interesting numbers for the year. (I like numbers. My hair has square roots.)

The Pantry averaged 87 people on site for 2017. In the prior 5 years, our highest on site average was 60 people. We sent home food to feed an average of 221 people each pantry. For the prior 5 years, the highest number was 180 people in 2014.

The Pantry served an average of 57 households, had an average of 4 people take showers, and received on average 8 new households. Since it takes about 2 hours for all the households to choose the items they want "grocery-store style", the Pantry serves a meal of individually packaged bel-vita bars, nutra-grain bars, sun-chips, cheezits, fruit, yogurt, coffee, and orange juice.

The St. Andrew's Garden, which is planned, planted, weeded, watered, and harvested almost entirely by two dedicated gardeners, averaged 14 pounds of organic produce for each pantry. The produce consisted of 40 different fruits and vegetables from basil to zucchini with the most prolific items being lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, and Swiss chard.

But by far the most interesting number came about because of our new partnership with Austin Diaper Bank. From August to December of 2017, St. Andrew's Pantry gave out 5,000 diapers for both children and adults!

We welcome volunteers. Please call the church (512-251-0698) if you are interested in this ministry.

KUDOS!

Thanks to all of you who delivered our Holiday Newsletter, sent in articles, and donated bags. You're AWESOME!

June Apprill · Bob & Darlene Bauhs · Bradley, Winston, Brady & Colton Bennett · Emily Berver · Karen Buerkle · Jim & Creola Burns · Phil & Dana Carter · Kim Clark · Madison Colón* · Chris & Alex Connell · Theresa, Raja, Ryan & Alex Faris · Dan Ernst · Delian Filip · Audrey Foushee · Miriam, Melissa, & Briana Garate · Dave Gezana · Carla & Alexander Gordon · Chris & Millie Harper · Jack & Mary Hendren · Travers Hough · Cindy Howell · Bruce Jones · Jennifer Jones · Gus Kohn* · Kim Langridge · Kim Lanicek · Rachel & Brian LeBansky · Sherry Lindig · Brian Litke · Angel Lugo · Siv Manda · D'Arlyn Marks · Michelle, Cody, Conner, Lucas & Evan McGuire · Joan & Dave Mead · Jeaneane & Finn McNulty · Haylee & Ethan Nguyen* · Arlie Pfeifer · Jeremy, Chevonne, Mina & Marleigh Read · Jennifer & Audrey Ricci · Mischa, Tasha, Magic Nat & Marisa Sawatphadungkij* · Mark Schneider · Julie & Doug Schwartz · Alice Sears · Ethan Shaffer · Yvette Shelton* · DeLane Spriggs · Sharon Sproat · Jeff & Jeannette Stevens · Mark & Margaret Sufke · Debby Thompson* · Jill & J.R. Traffanstedt · Carl Unruh
**Delivered more than one section*



Neighborhood Icons Move North

by Joe Wieck

I wanted to share some bitter sweet news concerning two legends of Wells Branch. George and Wanda Holcombe have moved up to Georgetown to be closer to their daughter. Anyone involved in the Wells Branch community for any amount of time has more than likely been on the receiving end of a warm smile or handshake from George or Wanda. If you don't know them personally, I would wager that you have enjoyed some amenity in Wells Branch that they had a significant part in either creating or protecting. No question, they are true legends of Wells Branch and will be sorely missed.

George started the Google Group almost 8 years ago to provide the community a forum to communicate. I have seen his involvement and influence in almost every significant neighborhood discussion since I moved here. I've sat behind him at MUD board meetings where he asked difficult questions and provided answers instead of just pointing out problems. His actions and attitudes have taught me and my three boys what it means to really get involved in your community and be a good citizen.

You might recognize Wanda's name from all the bird watching activities that she has been a part of here in Wells Branch. She has taken time out of her schedule to share her love for birds with countless neighbors. I'm sure that she had her hands in many other activities in the neighborhood and she always did it with a smile.

Best Wishes Holcombe Family!

From George & Wanda—

It's hard to say goodbye Wells Branch, we've enjoyed being your neighbor so much. Age and frailty beckoned us to live closer to our daughter while still able to move. As most of you know, Wells Branch is the most diverse community in Travis County and as such you are a community of the future, and you demonstrate compassion. WB children get to be raised in the way the world is becoming. WB MUD Board, WBNA, Library, Elementary schools, Garden Guild, Bird Watchers, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and the list goes on forever are examples of how special this place is. Your struggles and accomplishments do more to shape the future than you may know. We miss you and will be cheering from the stands.



HomeCare of Wells Branch

**Do you have an aging
loved one who could use a
little help?**

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(Help Getting Around)
- Looking Out for Safety

Companionship

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- Medication Reminders
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For excellent care for your elderly family member, please contact your Wells Branch neighbor:

Rudolf Valenti

rudolfjvalenti@yahoo.com
(512) 330-4343

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Austin, TX 78728

BRANCH BAR-B-Q & CATERING

Chris' Weekly Specials

Thursday

Homemade Meatloaf

Friday

Chicken –n– Dumplings

Collard Greens

Candied Yams

1779 Wells Branch Pkwy., Austin, TX 78728
(512) 990-5282 • branchbbq.com

Birding in Wells Branch

Wells Branch Hosted Bird Walks are held the 2nd Monday and 3rd Saturday of each month. Meet at 8:00am at the Mills Pond Gazebo, weather permitting. Check WBNA.us for any calendar or location changes. Mondays are hosted by Sharon Richardson and Saturday Bird Walks are hosted by Heather Johnson and/or Paul Wadehra.

If you would like to be a part of the Wells Branch Birding Group email (whether you've been on it before or not), please contact Sharon Richardson at sharonrichardson@gmail.com as the previous one has been closed out.

Karen & Howard Hagemann manage care teams for the Purple Martin bird houses in the north meadow. If you are interested in being part of one of these Care Teams, email Karen at: khallhagemann@hotmail.com.

Happy Birding!

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- ◆ Homes sold FASTER: 9 days on market average for Tammy's homes sold* vs. 21 day average for Wells Branch homes sold
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St. Andrews Presbyterian Church
14311 Wells Port Drive

Open Ears Concerts, hosted by St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, is a monthly non-profit concert series that explores the intersection of Art, Spirituality, and Activism by presenting diverse genres and styles of music in an alcohol free, family friendly, listening room environment.

*While there is a suggested donation of \$15, no one will be turned away. Visit staopen.org for more info.

Sunday, March 11: Carrie Elkin and Danny Schmidt

Potluck lunch immediately following service. Show starts at 12:30pm.

**Keep up with Wells Branch events
at WBNA.us and Facebook!**

OFFICE USE ONLY

Support your Neighborhood Association

Date: _____ by joining the WBNA and continue to make Wells Branch great!

Check: _____ Here is my check (made out to WBNA) for \$20 annual dues for 2018

I am: _____ renewing my membership _____ a new member

Name(s) _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

I/we want to help with: _____ Newsletter Delivery _____ Crime Watch _____ July 4th

_____ Easter Egg Hunt _____ Nat'l Night Out _____ Luminary Fest

MAIL TO: WBNA Membership, 2104 Klattenhoff, Austin, TX. 78728

