



Neighborhood News

News and information for the residents of Wells Branch
Vol. 32, Issue 1, Jan/Feb 2024

WBNA Annual General Meeting & Election

Thursday, February 29 | 6:30-7:00pm

WB MUD Community Center | 2106 Klattenhoff

For more information, see page 2.

Neighborhood Watch Training Program

Deputy Alexis White,

TCSO Community Outreach Program

Thursday, February 29 | 7:00-8:00pm

WB Community Center | 2106 Klattenhoff Drive

(immediately following the WBNA general meeting)

Last November the WBNA hosted the Travis County Sheriff's Office community forum for public safety. Prior to that session, the WBNA conducted a short neighborhood safety survey. One of the biggest takeaways was that folks wanted to re-establish an active, hands-on Neighborhood Watch group. 76% of the survey respondents indicated there was not an ACTIVE neighborhood watch group either on their street or within their immediate subdivision. Getting new block captains educated and re-assigning streets or manageable areas is the first step.

Deputy Alexis White will return to Wells Branch to lead a face-to-face Neighborhood Watch Block Training Class. It is important that those interested in becoming block captains attend this class in person. Personal connections and getting to know your neighbors are the fundamental cornerstones to this program. The best way to defeat local "crimes of convenience" is to be active in your area and get to know your neighbors.

The class is free and should last about an hour. After the class each block captain should plan on 1-2 hours a month following up with their neighbors, keeping in touch and sharing safety tips.

The WBNA is proud to host TCSO Deputy White. Both the WBNA and the WB MUD want to encourage safety and fellowship within the entire Wells Branch community. The WBNA team will work with the individual block captains to make sure they have the tools and knowledge required to help support their neighbors. As a friendly reminder, the WBNA is serving as the host for this class and has no direct authority for WB covenants or law enforcement.



Upcoming TCSO

Citizens Academy

TCSO Community Outreach Unit is excited to host the 37th Citizens Academy this Spring. The academy provides citizens valuable insights on the criminal

justice process and the how's and why's of TCSO operations and services. We believe the education and dialogue the academy offers will further our efforts in improving community relations and the quality of life for Travis County residents.

The Citizens Academy is a 13-week program from March 21 - June 13, 2024. Citizens will meet every Thursday from 7:00 - 9:00 pm at the TCSO Central Command located at 5555 Airport Blvd., Austin, TX 78751.

Citizens receive classroom instruction by corrections officers, law enforcement deputies, civilians, and supervisors who work in each division within the department. The weekly sessions are not intended to train participants to be officers, but to help develop a citizenry with TCSO. For more information on the course and how to enroll, please visit: <https://www.tcsheriff.org/about/community/citizens-academy>

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Please JOIN or RENEW YOUR WBNA Membership TODAY!
Membership Form on Page 16 or join online at wbna.us/membership/



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2024 WBNA Annual Board Update & Elections

Thursday, February 29, 2024 | 6:30pm

WB Community Center | 2106 Klattenhoff Drive

The WBNA Board has seven members, each serving a two year term with assigned place numbers. Even numbered places are elected during even years; odd numbered places in odd years. This year places 2, 4, and 6 are up for re-election. As governed by the WBNA Bylaws, roles vacated prior to the election are filled by appointees.

Transition defined 2023 for the WBNA board. Three board members, Darci Marter, Mikella Maughan, and Terra Moses chose to step down mid-term. Each member was reluctant to leave, citing family related reasons, either moving out of area or additional family commitments. In the interim, we were so glad to welcome back Donna Lyons and Lara Bennett as appointees.

In early 2024, Heather Briggs and Donna Lyons stepped back due to family and time commitments. We are currently seeking two new board members and any resident of Wells Branch may join the board. Currently Places 1 and 6 are open and appointees will be ratified during the general meeting.

All Wells Branch residents (both in-district and out-of-district) are invited and encouraged to attend the 2024 general meeting. Your WBNA membership must be current in order to vote in the election or run for office. The membership form is available on **page 12** or you may join online at: <http://wbna.us/membership/>. It's quick and easy! Please be sure and enter a valid email address.

2023 saw increased attendance at every WBNA event! The entire team excelled this year, working through the a traditional Easter Egg Hunt, a fantastic 4th Fest auction, National Night Out, the annual Pumpkin Patch event and active participation in the WB MUD Cultural Diversity Fair, Trunk or Treat and two Extreme Clean events, and of course newsletter distribution. Everyone worked very hard to give back to the neighborhood, while serving to build a true sense of community.

If you are interested in serving as a board member, please contact Margaret Sufke at mmsufke@gmail.com or 208-869-5224 (text). We are always seeking talented people ready to help build the community spirit that makes Wells Branch so very special.

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Wells Branch by the Numbers...

Market activity as of 2/7/24 (1/1/24 - 2/7/24) in Wells Branch
According to the Austin Board of REALTORS®' Unlock MLS

1-Story Homes:

2	Active Homes for Sale
4	Homes Under Contract
7	Homes Sold
\$243	Median PPS**
73	Avg DOM**
1	# exp/withdrawn/on Hold

2-Story Homes:

5
2
3
\$267
46
4

*www.abor.com - E-mail Pam for Full Stat Sheet **price per Sq Ft/Days on Mkt

Our Real Estate market appears to be settling back into it's "normal" cycles. While activity seems to be picking up, interest rates continue to be a cause for concern. If you are wanting to sell, but haven't wanted to give up your low rate - I might have a solution for you with a new program just introduced. Whether you are a buyer, a seller or both - let's have a conversation so that you can make a confident decision about your next move!

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WBNA 2024 Community Calendar Sales – Thank you for your support

The WBNA 2024 "Window into Wells Branch" Community Calendar has had a very successful run! At the time of this writing, there are only a handful of calendars left. You may still purchase online, but the pop-up sales sites have shut down. Thank you to the volunteers who worked the sales locations.

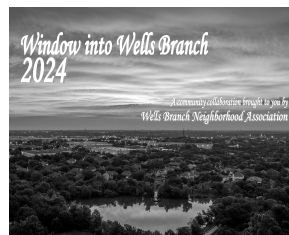
Order online: <https://tinyurl.com/WB2024Calendar>

If you have not already done so, please renew your membership and you may still pick up a free calendar (while supplies last). Please reach out to Margaret Sufke via mmsufke@gmail.com and we can make arrangements for a handoff of your calendar.

Renew your membership online at: <https://wbna-inc.square.site>

Thanks to Lifetime Quality Roofing for a very generous sponsorship! The calendars sold for \$10 this year—this was a fantastic bargain! The additional funding also allowed us to offer 1 free calendar for every paid membership in 2024. We are making plans for a similar sponsorship for next year.

Plan to get yours early! Please remember that the calendar is produced as a limited edition and when they are gone, they are GONE!



It's time once again! WBNA 2024 Membership Dues are DUE.

As 2024 kicks off, please take a minute and renew your commitment to the WBNA. Your membership is an investment in our wonderful neighborhood. All funds collected are returned directly into the community through our traditional events, educational and civic programs.

As a reminder, the WBNA organization is a "labor of love" and operates through a network of dedicated volunteers. Without that dedication, community support, and monies raised through dues and donations, the WBNA would cease to function. Your annual "pledge" to support our neighborhood group is in the form of a voluntary membership.

Annual dues are \$25.00. You may renew online at: <https://wbna-inc.square.site>. When you renew online, if you would like a calendar, please forward a copy of your receipt to mmsufke@gmail.com and a volunteer will make sure you get your calendar.

If you prefer, you may also renew via mail. Please use the enclosed envelope and the membership form on page 16. Note on your form if you would like a calendar. Remember there are only a handful of copies left.

The WBNA team and the community is truly grateful for your support.



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To pee...or not to pee? by Dr. Liz Klekman, PT, DPT

It's been an hour since your morning coffee kicked in and your gigantic to-do list looms. You're looking at 2 hours of shuttling kids around along with all the basics of preparing for the week. Really, you don't have to pee before you leave. But you pee anyway. *Just in case.*

That's what we call it in the pelvic health world: just in case peeing. It's a habit that seems like a good idea at the time. What if you get the urge to go and you're in the check out line? What if you get stuck in traffic? What if you wet your pants in public? Plus, most of us have been trained to just in case pee since childhood. It's the sensible thing to do, right?

There are a few types of incontinence, but the two I see the most are urge incontinence and stress incontinence. Stress incontinence is the one we've all heard about where you leak when you cough, sneeze, jump, or laugh. Urge incontinence is a bit different. Urge is a brain issue. When you pee, just in case, you begin to train your brain to send the urge signal to your bladder inappropriately, before it's actually full. After a few years of this, you're knocking your family over in your rush to get to bathroom, and you don't quite make it. The need to pee hits hard and fast and is sometimes triggered by the sound of water or unlocking your front door. Next, frequency is an issue. You have to go every hour. You're constantly on the lookout for the nearest bathroom and you find yourself arranging your road trips around rest stops.

Sound familiar? So, what now? Understand that having children or an enlarged prostate does not make urinary incontinence normal. It's never normal, but it is incredibly common. You should be urinating every 3-4 hours or so, around 6-7 pees in a day. Once in the middle of the night is fine, but we don't want any more than that.

First step is to understand the norms, the next step is to ignore inappropriate urges. You went an hour ago, you don't need to pee. Ignore it by staying calm. Cross your legs. Breathe and kegel (yes guys...you can kegel too). Sit down and distract yourself. The panic to get to the bathroom increases that brain signal to go; so, if you still need to pee, calmly walk to the bathroom, pausing to cross your legs or kegel if you need to. If you pee every hour, set a timer for every 1.5 hours and stick to it. Once it's easy to wait to pee, extend it to every 2 hours and so on. And don't be afraid of your local pelvic PT. We'll work within your comfort level and get you some exercises to help you out.

You really don't have to live a life arranged around your bathroom. Pee to live, don't live to pee.

The Importance of Picking Up Pet Waste

While most pet owners know it is responsible to clean up after their dogs in public spaces, it is important to know the significance of this simple act, especially when visiting a contained space like Willow Bend Dog Park. Pet waste left unattended can lead to a host of problems, affecting not only human health but also our beloved environment in Wells Branch. When picking up your dog's waste, think about the reasons why you are doing it.

Disease Control: Dog waste may contain harmful bacteria, worms, and parasites that pose a threat to both humans and pets. Some of these pathogens can remain in the soil for extended periods, putting the neighborhood at risk of infections.

Watershed Protection: Neglected pet waste can wash into nearby streams, impacting water quality. In areas like ours, where we're part of a vulnerable watershed, maintaining water quality is crucial to safeguarding our ecosystem.

Pest and Rodent Control: Dog waste becomes an attractive food source for rodents in suburban areas. This can lead to rodent infestations, carrying additional health risks for the community.

Cleanliness: Beyond health concerns, stepping into dog waste during a walk is an unpleasant experience. It's unsightly and disrupts the enjoyment of public spaces.

To tackle these issues when visiting Willow Bend Dog Park, follow these tips for cleanup and disposal:


Utilize the District's Mutt Mitt Stations. We have several Mutt Mitt stations with doggie bags available in Willow Bend Dog Park, as well as throughout our parks and trails. If you do not have a bag, take one from these receptacles.

Carry waste bags. To make responsible pet waste cleanup more convenient, consider carrying your own bags when visiting the dog park. Many clip directly on the leash or come with convenient storage options.

Never leave dog feces on the ground. Do not throw doggie bags over the fence or leave them on the ground. Dog waste always poses an environmental hazard. Use a trash receptacle and safely dispose of the waste.

By picking up after pets, you contribute to a cleaner, healthier, and more pleasant space for all. Let's keep the Willow Bend Dog Park safe and beautiful together!


This article was originally published as an online reminder by the Wells Branch MUD district office.



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WBNA Arts at the Library:

Crafter's Marketplace Program Update

The first ever WBNA Arts at the Library program was a tremendous success. Dozens of community members stopped by the WBNA information booth to thank us for putting together a true "community-based" pop-up marketplace.

There were nearly 40 vendors, most living in Wells Branch who had signed up! Each vendor brought something unique to the market. Price points ranged from \$1 so even the youngest child could have the thrill of discovering a true treasure, and up to \$100 or more for beautiful large hand crafted wooden or glass items. Pottery, jewelry and textiles were all on display. There were tasty food and plant based products and personal care items such as soaps and lotions.

Many delighted vendors requested as to when the next event would be, hoping for a monthly venue. While a monthly market is not possible, we are looking at perhaps twice a year (spring and fall). The WBNA team is currently working with the library to set the 2024 dates.

The WBNA would like to sincerely thank Donita Ward, WB Library Director, the WB Library Board of Trustees and the library staff for allowing us to use their facilities. It was the perfect venue. The library was also able to showcase their crafting programs and equipment.

A favorite mental image I took away was one of a charming little girl cuddling a beautiful new plush crocheted kitty and was told by her, "this is the best ever"! Her mom just smiled and said it was only \$2! So it seems that in Wells Branch total happiness can be had for just \$2. This is a truly amazing community. We'll "pop-up" again later this year. See you there!



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GIRL SCOUT COOKIE NEWS! by Emily Berver

The annual Girl Scout cookie sale is already underway and there are lots of Girl Scouts in Wells Branch participating in this fun & tasty fundraiser. Ordering online for "Girl Delivery" is back again this year with a new, updated website interface. Be on the lookout for door hangers, flyers or yard signs with ordering information and QR code. There are no extra fees to order girl delivered cookies. After you enter your contact information and place an order, the girl's parents will receive an email and can confirm if they have the required cookies and can deliver.

This year's cookie line up has the classics; Thin Mints, Caramel Delites aka Samoas, Peanut Butter Patties aka Tag-alongs, Lemonades, Peanut Butter Sandwiches & Trefoils aka Shortbreads, along with the more recent flavors, Toast Yay & Adventurefuls Cookie along with the gluten free Caramel Chocolate Chip Cookie. Cookies are \$6/box with the gluten free cookies at \$7/pouch.

If you want to buy in person, be on the lookout for Girl Scouts out and about selling or have set up a cookie stand in their own yard. Also the Girl Scouts of Central Texas website, <https://www.gsctx.org>, has information on the locations and hours for a cookie booth near you. The Girl Scout cookie program will continue through February 25, 2024 unless extended due to weather. All profits from the sale stay local and help girls gain valuable new skills. Thank you for supporting Girl Scouts!



Advertising & Article Submission

Do you have a business or service you would like to advertise? Have an article of interest to other WB residents? If the answer to either of these questions is yes, please visit wbna.us/newsletters for advertising rates or contact Margaret Sufke at info@wbna.us for more information. Deadline for the March 23 newsletter is Friday, March 8.

The WBNA does not accept political advertising.

All article submissions are subject to editing.

All ads must be pre-paid.

Thank you for your support!

McNeil HS Maverick Band Mulch Sale

Despite the freezing temperatures, spring is in the air! The band is selling mulch as their spring fundraiser. We have two types: black and hardwood @ \$5/bag. All orders must be placed on line, but customers can pay by cash, check or Venmo via the band website (mcneilband.org). **Delivery is available for orders of 10 bags or more (within the delivery area map).** **Orders of less than 10 must be picked up at Kelly Reeves stadium by 2:00pm on March 2.** **Orders must be completed by February 12.** We have many McNeil High School Band students in the Wells Branch area. If you know a student personally please input their name so they can get credit for your sale. If you don't know a student personally, that's OK, all sales are very important to us! The band was very successful this year and it is in large part due to the generous donations of our supporters. Thank you so very much.

Order online by 2/12: mcneilband.org

MAV BAND MULCH SALE

- Hardwood
- Black Label
- \$5/bag

10 BAGS: Delivered to you on 3/2

1-9 BAGS: Pick up at Kelly Reeves Athletic Complex on 3/2



American Red Cross Lifeguard Course

**March 11-13 10:00am-6:00pm |
\$200 Course Fee**

Gain lifeguard skills and get certified at the ARC Lifeguard Certification Course!

Upon successful completion of the course you will receive your ARC Lifeguarding/First Aid/CPR/AED Certifications. After you complete course, we encourage you to apply for a lifeguard position with Wells Branch!



Red Cross LIFEGUARD CERTIFICATION

To see everything happening at the library, including closings and regular program schedules, check out our website at WBLIBRARY.ORG.

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

PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES

So many stories and storytimes

Did you know that the library has ELEVEN storytime programs every week? We have stories in Spanish, stories in Sign Language, stories with crafts, and even storytime for kids too wiggly to sit through a story, all for FREE!

****First Friday– Lunar New Year Crafts:** Feb 2 at 6:30pm
Celebrate and learn about the Year of the Dragon with fun family crafts.

****Ramblin Rita Concert:** Feb 17 at 10:30am
Wild-west themed stories and songs for the family.

****Kids' Writing Club:** Mondays at 4pm
Ages 8-12 can come do fun creative writing activities!

STEAM LAB 2.0: Tuesdays at 5pm
Ages 5+ can learn and play with a variety of rotating STEAM kits, including many new offerings for 2024.

Open Table D&D: ages 10+, Feb 12 & 26 at 5pm
Drop-in fun for new and experienced gamers! Every week is a new game.

****Kids' Yoga:** Monday, Feb 26 at 6pm
Ages 6-10 can learn and practice with a trained instructor.

ADULT PROGRAMS

****Nail Stamping:** Feb 17 at 4pm
In this class, learn the basics and even try your hand at it.

Traveling Tea Book Club: Feb 1 at 6pm
Come talk about books we are reading and drink some tea together.

Macramé Wall Hang: Feb 3 at 4pm
Learn to make a macramé hang with us and take it home.

Spice of the Month Club: Feb 10 at 4pm
Pick up your spice kit at the front desk any time, cook with the spice before the meeting, and then share with friends old and new.

Bullet Journals : Feb 29 at 6pm
Keep your notes and life in order. We will create personalized journals with modge-podge and set them up to start the new year in organized style.

Bird Talk and Seed Exchange: Feb 24 at 4pm
Learn how native plants help birds and get acquainted with some that are easy to grow.
Join us before (3:45-4pm) and after (4:45-5:30) to participate in a seed exchange. Trade seeds and plants while sharing tips and ideas with local gardeners.

Make an appointment for Crafts & Tech Help

Having trouble getting a hem straight or downloading books to your Kindle? Need to use the cricut or a sewing machine? Adults can contact the library to reserve some one-on-one training or use of our LAB equipment.

Looking for a new hobby? The library hosts a free Knit, Crochet, & Crafts night on the 2nd Wednesday of every month from 6-8pm. No age requirements or registration required. Bring a craft you're doing or come ready to learn.

****Teen Craft LAB–** Hands on learning for ages 10-18: Feb 25th at 2pm or 3:45pm is Paper-crafting with the Sissix Machine.

****Adult DIY classes– now on Sundays, too!** Our craft classes are so popular we've added extra sessions on Sundays in addition to Wednesday evening sessions. In February, we'll have workshops on wood burning, paper roses, and creating a wreath from old books. Classes are different every month and always free, but you must reserve a seat to attend.

Valentine's Day Family Dance

Wednesday, February 14 | 6:30-8:30pm

WB MUD Rec Center | 3000 Shoreline Drive

Bring the whole family out to the annual Valentine's Day Family Dance! Open to all ages, this fun event includes an open dance floor, snacks, drinks and roses. Stop by for a bit of romance with your loved one or bring your friends—this is a special night for all! Hosted by the WB MUD Parks & Rec Dept.

Wells Branch Wild:

Wildlife Habitat Certification

Thursday, February 15 | 7:00-8:00pm

WB MUD Rec Center | 3000 Shoreline Drive

Join Wells Branch Wild and learn how to get your property certified as a wildlife habitat! This hour-long discussion will outline the five pillars of a habitat with practical tips and plenty of photos!

Wells Branch Wild: Bird Identification Walk presented by the Audubon Society

Saturday, February 17 | 8:00-10:00am

Mills Pond Park

Come out for a Bird ID walking tour sponsored by Travis Audubon in partnership with Wells Branch Wild. Meet at the parking lot off Wells Port Drive (southeast end of the pond). Participation limited to the first 20 people. Wear walking shoes and bring binoculars if available.

Visit wellsbranchmud.com/parks-a-recreation/events to register.

Wells Branch Wild:

Gardening for Birds with Native Plants

Saturday, February 24 | 4:00pm

WB Community Library | 15001 Wells Port

Do you want to attract more birds to your yard or neighborhood greenbelt? In this talk, you will find out how native plants help birds and get acquainted with several easy-to-grow native plants that appeal to birds and other wildlife.

Join us before (3:30-4 pm) and after (4:45-5:30 pm) for a seed and plant exchange. Trade seeds & plants with other local gardeners and chat about what you would like to grow this year.

WBNA Annual General Meeting & Election

Thursday, February 29 | 6:30-7:00pm

WB MUD Community Center | 2106 Klattenhoff

Each year the WBNA board hosts a general meeting which is open to all Wells Branch community members. The purpose of the session is two-fold. First and foremost, the WBNA wants to engage with community members and review upcoming civic programs and community events. Secondly, the WBNA holds their annual elections for board members, including taking any nominations from the floor. If anyone is interested in joining the WBNA board there are currently two open board positions.

Please contact Margaret Sufke for additional information at info@wbna.us or 208-869-5224 (direct cell).

WBNA Meeting: TCSO Neighborhood

Watch Block Captain Training Program

Thursday, February 29 | 7:00-8:30pm

WB MUD Community Center | 2106 Klattenhoff

Deputy Alexis White, TCSO Community Outreach Program

The WBNA is proud to host Deputy Alexis White from the TCSO Community Outreach Program. Deputy White will lead a Crime Watch Block Captain training program; this is part of the National Neighborhood Watch program. As follow up to the November TCSO Community Safety meeting and the related survey, results indicated that 76% of the Wells Branch community did not have an active neighborhood watch program in place. The WBNA team received several responses that community members were interested in establishing updated crime watch groups. This training session is open to all community members and will focus on training new or existing block captains on the latest community safety techniques.

Please contact Margaret Sufke for additional information at info@wbna.us or 208-869-5224 (direct cell).

American Red Cross Blood Drive

Saturday, March 2 | 9:00am-3:00pm

WB MUD Rec Center | 3000 Shoreline Drive

Wells Branch MUD is partnering with the American Red Cross to host a blood drive at the Recreation Center. Donations are always in high demand, so save lives and consider donating!

To donate, visit the link below and enter the Recreation Center zip code (78728). Scroll to the option that says Wells Branch Recreation Center, and select your time to donate!

Link: wellsbranchmud.com/parks-a-recreation/events.

Disc Golf: It's My Park Day

Saturday, March 2 | 9:00am-Noon

Wells Branch MUD Disc Golf Course on Owen Tech

Participants will spread mulch around existing trees along the disc golf course to prevent soil compaction and drought, plant several new trees, and pick up litter. We also have some seeds to plant for black-eyed susan flowers and inland sea oat grasses.

Please wear long sleeved shirts and closed toed shoes. Volunteers will receive a free "It's My Park Day" by registering here: wellsbranchmud.com/parks-a-recreation/events.

KWBB: It's My Park Day

Saturday, March 2 | 10:00am-Noon

WB MUD District Office | 14611 Wells Port

Join Keep Wells Branch Beautiful (KWBB) for "It's My Park Day," an Austin Parks Foundation (APF) annual event to get the public involved in sprucing up their local parks. APF provides free supplies for the project.

This month we'll plant spring seeds along the Wells Branch creek. Trash bags and grabbers for a spring clean will be available as well! Visit wellsbranchmud.com/parks-a-recreation/events to register.



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WB MUD Bulk Trash Days

Saturday, March 9 | 8am-12pm

WB MUD P & F Yard | 13905 Thermal

For more info on accepted items, visit: <http://wellsbranchmud.com/bulk-items/bulk-trash-household-waste>

St. Patrick's Day Bagpipes Concert in the Park

Sunday, March 17 | 7:00-8:00pm

Courtyard at KF Park | 2106 Klattenhoff

Put on your best green outfit and come out to our St. Patrick's Day Concert! Celebrate with a complete marching pipe band performing Irish and Scottish music. March behind the Silver Thistle Pipes as they lead a parade through KF Park, ending with a performance in the Community Center Courtyard. This event is free and for all ages (cancelled in the case of inclement weather). Hosted by the WB MUD Parks & Rec Dept.

Wells Branch Wild: The Attraction of Moths

Tuesday, March 19 | 7:00-8:00pm

WB MUD Community Center | 2106 Klattenhoff

Please Join Wells Branch Wild at this fun presentation "The Attraction of Moths" by Jack Cochran. After the presentation at the community center, we will walk to specially set up mothing stations in the park to attract and observe these nighttime insects.

People who spend time outdoors have surely noticed butterflies, especially in Texas where there are over 400 species, including Monarchs that migrate in large numbers during spring and fall. But even people with keen natural interests often overlook a related and even more numerous winged insect – the moth. Moths are important to Texas ecosystems as bird and bat food and as pollinators. And moths show a wide range of interesting shapes and color patterns, which makes them fun to watch. This presentation will serve as an introduction to the variety of Texas moths, including those that might be seen in the Greater Austin, Texas region. Seeing moths can be as easy as turning on a light!

Jack Cochran is a retired analytical chemist with a lifelong love of the natural world. Jack's hobbies include wildlife photography and community science through iNaturalist (jcochran706). He is a Texas Master Naturalist in the Good Water Chapter.

March Open Mic Night

Thursday, March 21 | 7:00-9:00pm

WB MUD Community Center | 2106 Klattenhoff

Showcase your talents and enjoy live entertainment at the March Open Mic Night! No matter the skill you want to showcase, this is your chance to shine among your neighbors. We invite all performers beginning or advanced to take the stage. It's an excellent opportunity to show off your skills and connect with fellow community members who share your passions, or simply cheer on your neighbors as they display their talent. Light refreshments will be provided for the whole family, so sit back, relax, and savor the entertainment. Hosted by the WB MUD Parks & Rec Dept.

WBNA Easter Egg Hunt Extravaganza!

Saturday, March 30 | 10:30am | Come Early!

The Homestead at KF Park | 2106 Klattenhoff Drive

Hop into Spring! Join your friends, neighbors and The Easter Bunny, himself, at the annual Wells Branch Easter Egg Hunt. "Hunts" will be by age group and begin at 10:30am. Plan to come early and visit with the Easter Bunny or have fun at our craft table.

Those of you who've attended our hunts in the past know we have very few rules, but we do ask parents to follow those rules and be courteous and respectful of your neighbors so that all of our children may enjoy the hunt.

Age Groups:

0-18mos & 18mos-3yrs

*Only 1 parent per child in egg hunting area

*Watch out for potential choking hazards

4-6yrs • 7-9yrs • 10-12yrs

* No parents allowed in egg hunting area



BE ON TIME (early is better) AS THE "HUNTS" GO QUICKLY • Wait until your age group is called • Check all eggs for prizes • Let a volunteer know if there's an issue • Recycle your eggs with the WBNA • MOST of ALL, Have FUN!

The Easter Bunny will be available for photos beginning at 10:00am and will stay until everyone has had a chance to talk to him. Photos will be posted to an album on the WBNA Facebook page or you're welcome to use your own camera.

Details to follow in our Spring issue or visit wbna.us.



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Wells Branch Wild -

A Community Wildlife Habitat by Jill Douglass

What do the United States Department of Agriculture, Texas A&M Forest Service, Texas Fish and Game, the Xerces Society, and the National Wildlife Federation all agree on? Leaving the leaves!! All of these organizations support wildlife, and they all promote using the fallen leaves in your yards as cover, food, and nurseries for animals. With eight trees in my backyard, I do have trouble finding a spot for all those leaves. The leaves on the gravel paths get blown or raked into the flower/landscape beds. Some get piled into a small compost pile. The ones on the grass get mowed and left in place (though shredded leaves will not provide the same cover as leaving them whole). My lawn is small so the mown leaves are few. In the end, a few bags of leaves do make it to the curb to contribute to our community composting. Leaving the leaves provides two basic benefits. First, the leaves provide food, cover, and a place for animals to raise their young. Butterflies, bumble bees, lightning bugs, moths, frogs, and turtles are just a few examples of animals that rely on leaf litter. Without the leaves providing a habitat for insects, many birds will not have food. Second, leaf mulch provides valuable organic matter to your garden. No need to buy mulch if you are using your leaves.

To learn more about how to support wildlife, follow Wells Branch Wild on Facebook and Instagram (both can be found by searching Wells Branch Wild). To date, we have 57 certified wildlife habitats in Wells Branch. We are one-quarter of the way to our goal of 200. If you are interested in certifying or have questions on how to proceed, visit www.nwf.org/Certify or message us on Facebook or come to our presentation on February 15. We would love to help.

Wells Branch Wild's mission is to lead, inspire, and engage our community in stewardship of a healthy and sustainable ecosystem.



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Garden Guild News by Susan Gillespie

Garden Guild meetings are held on the 3rd Saturday of the month at 10:00am at the Rec Center on Shoreline unless otherwise noted. Meetings are open to anyone interested in gardening.

If you are new to the area or in joining our group please visit our Facebook page to request access.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/WBGardenGuild>

Our group is also actively supporting the Wells Branch Wild group, chaired by Jill Douglass. Please see her update below.

Wells Branch Photo Club

WB MUD Rec. Center | 3000 Shoreline Dr. Rm 100

Meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month | 6:30pm

Meetings are a drop-in format and everyone is welcome. The club includes members of all skill levels. We share tips, tricks and offers to help those new to the hobby.

After receiving several suggestions, we've planned some great photo sessions. Some folks noted that San Antonio might be a bit far, even for a special weekend shoot, so we are going to start closer to home.

Feb. 13 | 6:30pm | Hands on lab | Macro techniques

Mar. (date TBD) | 10:00 am | Saturday meet-up |

Bluebonnet run location TBD

May (date TBD) | 9:00am | WB Garden Guild Garden Tour | details to follow

Watch for updates via the WB Google Group, WBNA Facebook Page, WB Photo Club Facebook Page, and wbna.us. Questions? Contact Margaret Sufke at mmsufke@gmail.com or 512-341-0425 (msg)




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Debbie Brown
1952-2023

Debbie Brown has been described as a force of nature. She certainly defined the true spirit of Wells Branch, selflessly giving her time and support to so many areas of the community. Regardless of the program or contribution, her focus was to help each individual and she never forgot a child's name. She was the heart and soul of Northwest Elementary. Her grace, charm and wit touched everyone within the community. Her ability to make something happen for the good was matchless.

The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give that gift away. — Pablo Picasso

Debbie gave of her gifts every day.

During her recent celebration of life gathering, her husband Bill noted that Debbie would have been completely humbled by all the folks who came to honor her. She will be missed but she carries with her the appreciation and affection of the entire community. Please share your memories of Debbie by adding a note to the memory book. <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/deborah-brown-obituary?id=53645082>



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Register to Vote by Mail

It's a new year, which means that if you want to vote by mail in elections this year, it's time to sign up again! It is a requirement to renew your vote by mail registration every year. If you want to vote by mail in the primaries, your application must be received by February 23.

Who Can Vote By Mail?

According to the Texas State Law, you may vote early by-mail if you are registered to vote and meet one of the following criteria:

- 65 years of age or older on Election Day
- Sick or disabled
- Expected to give birth within three weeks before or after Election Day
- Away from the county of residence on Election Day and during the early voting period
- Confined in jail, but eligible to vote

However, only applicants who are 65 years of age or older or are disabled qualify to apply for the Annual Application for Ballot By Mail (ABBM). Applying annually ensures that qualified voters will receive a mail ballot for ALL elections held during a calendar year. Annual applications may be submitted starting January 1 but must not be submitted later than the 11th day before the first election in which you seek to request a ballot by mail.

If you live in **Travis County**, download and print your application to vote by mail at:

<https://elections.traviscountytexas.gov/voter-information/ballot-by-mail/#AbsenteeBallotSearch>

If you live in **Williamson County**, download and print your application to vote by mail at:

<https://www.wilcotx.gov/450/Voting-By-Mail>

Here are some tips when filling out the Annual Application for Ballot By Mail:

- Make sure you are registered to vote in the county you are applying to vote by mail in.
- You will need to provide your Texas Driver's License Number, Texas Personal ID Number, or your Election Identification Certificate Number – all of which are issued by the Department of Public Safety. If you do not have any of these numbers, you must provide the last four digits of your Social Security Number.
- If you do not remember what number is linked to your voter registration, it is best to provide your Driver's License or ID Number **AND** the last four digits of your SSN.
- Make sure to indicate in Box 4 of the application that you are applying for the "Annual Application". This will ensure that you get a ballot for every election this year.
- Take a photo of your signature on your application, so you will know how to sign your ballot envelopes in a similar way.
- Track your Application for Ballot By Mail and your ballots via the Secretary of State's website.

Questions? Contact the **Travis County Clerk's Elections Division at (512) 854-4996** or, for **Williamson County, 512-943-1633**.



Become a Volunteer Deputy Voter Registrar

If you have registered in the past as a VDR, it's time to renew for 2023 / 2024. If you are new to the process of registering folks to vote, it's an easy and rewarding process and a great way to get involved in the community.

There are 3 ways to get certified / recertified. Below are two links or you can also join an in person training with Bruce Elfant.

The following link is to the online video training with a required exam at the end.

<https://www.screencast.com/t/bKTbPJENACYd>

This link is the sign up for zoom training.

<https://campsite.bio/tcvdr>

If you have any questions about being a VDR, you can call Meg (512 854 7801) with Bruce Elfant's office.

Other helpful links:

TX VDR Guide: <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/pamphlets/deputy.shtm>

Training Slides: <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/volunteer-deputy-registrar-training.pdf>

Important Primary Dates:

Tuesday, February 20—Friday, March 1: Early Voting

Friday, February 23: Last day to apply for Ballot by Mail for the Primary Election

Tuesday, March 5: Election Day for Primaries

Save the Date! 2024 WB Eco Fair

Saturday, April 6 | 1-4pm

WB Rec Center | 3000 Shoreline Dr

Go Green! The WB MUD Parks and Recreation team is gearing up to host another great community Eco Fair. The WBNA is partnering with the WB MUD and will host a complete recycling section. **We are seeking recycled arts and crafts for display. All items will be returned.** Please contact Margaret Sufke at mmsufke@gmail.com or 512-341-0428 (msg).

Boxes Needed for the

Easter Egg Hunt Extravaganza!

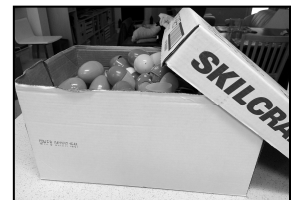
The WBNA is seeking 40-50 "paper boxes" which are clean with a usable lid.



These cardboard "paper boxes" (11 x 17) or 11 x 14 file storage boxes (see image) are needed for the upcoming Easter Egg Hunt. We use these boxes to get the eggs to/form our wonderful volunteers who stuff the eggs and then we transport the stuffed "bunny eggs" on the morning of the event.

It's a huge job and we will be calling for volunteers once we have the boxes in hand.

Contact Margaret Sufke at mmsufke@gmail.com or 208-869-5224 (text) for pick up.



Silver Branchers

WB MUD Rec. Center • 3000 Shoreline Dr.

Meets every Thursday from 1:00-3:00pm

in Meeting Room 100 / 101

Open to active adults, the Silver Branchers bring neighbors together for camaraderie and good laughter. Join this welcoming group for social activities, dominoes, cards, board games, and great company.

Spring Day Trip – Texas Science & Natural History Museum, Thursday, April 18. We *leave* the Rec Center at 10:00am for the museum and then go to Hoover's for lunch at 1:00pm, returning around 2:00pm. **Cut off for registration is April 4.**

Texas Science & Natural History Museum:

<https://sciencemuseum.utexas.edu/>

Parking at the San Jacinto Garage:

<https://parking.utexas.edu/parking/garages/san-jacinto-garage-sjg>

Lunch at Hoover's:

<https://www.hooverscooking.com/>

On day trips, you are responsible for paying your entrance fees and meals. We'll arrange to car pool when we gather at the Rec Center before heading downtown. Please RSVP by calling Wells Branch MUD customer service at 512-251-9814 or in person at the Wells Branch Recreation Center before the cut off date.

For more information or to join the email list, call Glen at 512-461-1665.

Wells Branch Drop-in Mahjongg Club

Did you know there's a new WB Community Club? Please welcome the **WB Drop-In Mahjongg club**. The group just started in January of 2024. So far, we have had a couple of meetings and are very excited to see so much interest. Here are the basics:

Group: **WB Drop-in Mahjongg Club**

Group chair: Margaret Sufke | mmsufke@gmail.com | 208-869-5224(Text)

Club dates: 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month (subject to facility access)

Location: WB Rec Center | room 101

Purpose: Teach new players, host gaming tables and share strategies and information

The Game: American Mahjongg, a complete club brochure is available at the WB Rec Center

While there are several versions of Mahjongg, the group will play the American four player version. The tile set used for the American version includes 152 tiles plus eight jokers. It's worth noting that the four player game is very different to the computer based Mahjong solitaire game. The club is open to all members of the Wells Branch community. Membership in the National Mah-Jongg League is NOT required and beginners are welcome.



Lead the Adventure!

With Venturing Crew 1409

Venturing is a youth-led program for youth between the ages of 14 and 20. Venturing Crew 1409 is a diverse group of youth and adult advisors who enjoy all things outdoors. Our group does everything from casual weekend camping to week-long trips that include canoeing and backcountry backpacking. We do at least one outdoor trek every month and go on week-long adventures during Spring Break and Summer. A multitude of topics are discussed during our weekly meetings, including planning for upcoming trips, discussing service opportunities, and skills training.

Whether you're seeking adventure, looking to make new friends, or simply wanting to enjoy the outdoors, Venturing is for you.

Weekly meetings are on Tuesdays from 7:00—8:00pm at the WB MUD Admin. Office @ 14611 Wells Port Dr.

Crew 1409 continues to provide bulk trash pickup every month (*except March*) as a youth fundraiser for a minimum requested donation of \$20. Please note that we are unable to take any items that the MUD does not accept. We are only able to pick up household chemicals, including paint, in April and October for Extreme Clean. Also note that this service is provided only for household bulk items. We are not able to pick up contractor debris from home improvement projects.

<http://www.crew1409.com> to learn more
info@crew1409.com for more information

Aquafit Classes

Willow Bend Pool | 2801 Sauls

Meets every Tuesday & Thursday from Noon-1:00pm

Water aerobic workouts are a form of fitness training that can be beneficial for people at any fitness level. Fitness training with water aerobics can improve athletic performance, aid in rehabilitation and improve activities needed for daily living. Free with Pool Tag or All Facilities Rec Tag.

This is really a great way to get fit! The impact is minimal and we really do have fun! Please wear swim attire, bring a water bottle and towel. See you at the pool! For more information, contact Katie Hutcheson at 512-516-2621 or khutcheson@wellsbranchmud.com.



Winter Wastewater Averaging

Winter wastewater averaging occurs during three-month billing period between Dec. 7, 2023 and March 6, 2024. During this time frame, your average monthly water usage will be used as your monthly wastewater usage for the next year. To save money all year, use less water during this period. Wellsbranchmud.com/wwa

2023 WBNA National Night Out was a huge hit with Wells Branch friends and neighbors gathering to celebrate residential fire and home safety programs, meeting with first responders from Travis Co. and Pflugerville! Several vendors and community groups showcased their organizations and special programs. The WB MUD hosted an "Event Tent" with games and prizes! Grill masters Chris Carby and Steve Lyons served up tasty hot dogs and brats, while the WB Friends of Library dished out Culver's custard!

Post event comment clips clearly sum up the spirit of the event! Great food, wonderful sense of community and a practical learning experience for home safety!

"National Night Out was a blast! I didn't get any pictures (several others posted images, check the WB Melting Pot FB page), but I put out a fire and saw a bunch of really wonderful mustaches." --Steph D.

"I bet you are a pro at putting out fires... WOMAN of the house!!" --April S.

"Plus I didn't have to cook and clean! We thoroughly enjoyed the hot dogs and custard." --Amy W.

The WBNA board would like to thank the following organizations for supporting our amazing community.

1st RESPONDERS and Guest Speaker

Pflugerville Fire Station and ESD #2 | Chief Nicholas Perkins, Asst. Chief Daniel Burger and the ESD#2 Crew.
<https://www.pflugervillefire.org/>

Travis County Constables Office, Pct.2 | Lt. Michael Deleon, Officer Jack Paxton
<https://www.traviscountytx.gov/constables/2>

Travis County Sheriff's Office, Honorable mention for Officer Robert Phillips. <https://www.tcsheriff.org/#>

Commissioner Jeff Travillion, Travis County, Precinct One | <https://www.traviscountytx.gov/commissioners-court/precinct-one>

EVENT SPONSORS:

Austin Community College | ACC Community Outreach team. <https://www.austincc.edu/>

Card My Yard, outdoor signage | Rebecca Sheridan | 512-730-1231 <http://www.cardmyyard.com/>

HealthMarkets, a United Healthcare Insurance agency Sherrie Arrington | 512-924-2327
<https://www.healthmarkets.com/local-health-insurance-agent/sarrington>

Grill Masters Chris Carby, Chef and Pitmaster and **Steve Lyons**, President of Lyons Electric | <http://www.lyonselectric.com/>

WB MUD Parks and Recreation Staff | 512-251-9814 | <https://www.wellsbranchmud.com/>

COMMUNITY GROUPS:

Get Ready Central Texas | Vicky Linsalata

GSA Troop 45805, Leader Kathy Brown and **St. Andrew's Food Pantry**

Register to VOTE! | Susan Gezana
<https://www.vote411.org/>

Venture Crew 1490 | Stephen Dzurenko
<https://www.troop1409.com/>

WB Community Library | Community programs staff
<https://www.wblibrary.org/>

WB DEMS | Jeananne McNulty
jeaneanemcnulty@gmail.com

WB Friends of the Library & Culver's (custard) | <https://www.wblibrary.org/about-us/friends-of-the-library> | <https://www.culvers.com/>

Wells Branch Wild | Wildlife Habitat Certification Jill Douglass | 512-293-9022

LAST BUT NOT LEAST: Thank you to all our **COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS** and the WBNA Board members. We truly appreciate the generous support and donated time from the friends and families of Wells Branch who help make these events possible. Kudos one and all. See everyone next year!



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2023 WB Luminary Fest, creating holiday memories!

The holidays flew by even faster than Santa's sleigh! We hope you and family enjoyed everything the traditional Wells Branch Luminary Fest had to offer.

The warm glow of the holidays twinkled as our trails were lit up with over 1500 traditional paper luminaries each night. A very special thanks to Dave DeVore for sharing a magical video clip he captured using his drone camera. The entire KF Park complex just sparkled. The WB MUD Parks & Rec Dept outdid themselves!

Festive folks greeted friends and neighbors to join in on the caroling hayride or rode on the Holiday Express Train as it traveled through the lighted trails. Santa made a special stop and greeted children and families in the Homestead. While children waited to meet Santa, folks participated in a traditional homestead holiday activity, thanks to Curator, Gwendolyn Johnson.

The WBNA team filled the WB Community Center with crafting supplies and friends and families came together to create wonderful ornaments and holiday memories! The WB MUD hosted delicious hot chocolate and cookies. On Saturday evening, compliments of the Wells Branch MUD, a festive holiday karaoke session "rocked the halls". Shout out to the WB Friends of the Library for providing fun filled seasonal tattoos.

The WBNA would like to thank the community volunteers who prepped the supplies or hosted a craft table during the event. Extra kudos to those neighbors who helped clean up after the event.

Lara Bennett, Cheryl Dillis, Chrishinda Dobbs, Jill Douglass, Marion Frazer, Suchitra Gautam, Susan Gezana, Carla Gordon, Elizabeth Grimsley, Katherine LaPierre Mikella Maughan and husband John, Michele Mauldin, Dave and Joan Mead, Luciana Papasidero Ruiz, Mauricio Ramos Jr., Doug Schwartz, Ralph and Tracy Simon, Sonya Shaffer and the Shaffer family, DeLane Spriggs, Faith Ward, Liam Ward, Lisa Ward, Sarah Ward, Diane and Denise Wolfe, and a very special shout to Alexander from the Wells Branch MUD team for going above and beyond on Saturday morning, December 9th. As always we have tried to capture everyone's contribution. If we accidentally overlooked someone, please let us know.

Best wishes for 2024!

Bob and Darlene Bauhs: Times they are a'changing!

Bob and Darlene have been dedicated Wells Branch community members for 27 years. As the Bauhs transition into the next chapter of their lives, it's worth noting their valuable contributions to our wonderful community.

Together Bob and Darlene supported the St Andrew's Presbyterian Church and the Wells Branch Community Library. Darlene served with local tutoring programs and volunteered at the library. They actively supported several environmental programs.

Bob Bauhs, a former WB MUD director, initiated the "Trees for Trails" program working with former WB MUD president, Chuck Walters in 2011. This forward thinking park improvement program encouraged neighbors to help set the priorities and goals, demonstrating the true community spirit of Wells Branch.

Today that legacy continues through "grow zones", replacing invasive non-native plants with new plantings to promote native species and wildlife and the latest Urban Forest program. The entire Wells Branch parks and trail network continues to thrive; offering popular green spaces along the trails, at Mills Pond, the wildlife viewing station and the WB Butterfly Garden.



As you enjoy our park system, please consider these special friends, neighbors and nature enthusiasts; they have made a difference to us in Wells Branch, and they will be missed.

Bob and Darlene invite you to stay in touch. They may be reached at The Hacienda, 60 Del Webb Blvd, Unit 3524, Georgetown, TX 78633. They will always welcome Wells Branch visitors.

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Name(s) _____ **E-mail:** _____
Address: _____ **Phone:** _____

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

MAIL TO: WBNA Membership, 2104 Klattenhoff, Austin, TX 78728 | **ONLINE:** wbna.us/membership/

