



CASTLEWOOD-OAK VALLEY

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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Letter from the president

By Denise Sample



Happy fall, y'all! This season has been busy as my family and I take advantage of the cooler weather by going out to enjoy some live music, dining outdoors, and working in the yard. This is hands-down my favorite

time of year.

Who else got to witness another epic Halloween in our neighborhood this year? Our little slice of South Austin has become a trick-or-treating destination with roving packs of costumed kids (and kids at heart) decked out in creative and fun costumes. Handing out candy and interacting with the revelers hitting the streets of COVNA was a real treat!

But it's hard to believe that 2024 is quickly coming to a close. I look forward to our annual Holiday Party and Elections happening on Saturday, Dec. 7 at Veronica's lot at Castledale and Woodshire. Additional event details will be shared through the email listserv and on Facebook.

As a reminder, the terms of Vice President, Treasurer, and Austin Neighborhood Council Representative are up for election this year. I am thrilled to report that Will, Ron and Rita have expressed interest in running again to continue their great work and service to this neighborhood. We are lucky to have them serve! ■

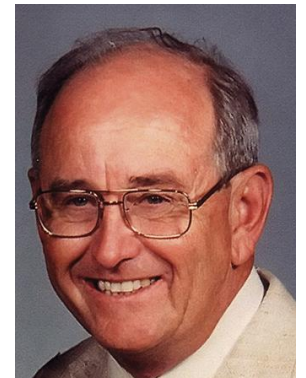


Dozens of neighbors turned out for COVNA's National Night Out, which included a tour of a fire engine from the Austin Fire Department on Oct. 1.

Castlewood Forest: Celebrating generations of neighbors, nature

By Dorothy Trainer

Original owners affectionately describe our neighborhood as "out in the boon docks," when it emerged as a peaceful haven in the 1960s and 70s. The neighborhood was crafted by visionary developer Don West, who joined with builders L.A. Felder, Don Leach, and Art Thompson to realize his dream of energy-



Don West was the developer for Castlewood Forest neighborhood and the famed Gruene Hall. He died in 2010.

Castlewood-Oak Valley Neighborhood Association Board

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efficient homes nestled in nature—a concept ahead of its time. West’s love for preservation reached beyond Castlewood to historic Gruene, Texas, where he famously restored landmarks like Gruene Hall and the Gruene Mansion, rekindling the town’s 1880s charm.

For early residents, Monarch Drive served as the single entryway, adding to the feeling of seclusion, with many neighbors recalling the occasional stray cow wandering past their homes. Its appeal drew families stationed at the nearby Bergstrom Air Force Base, many of whom have stayed on. Today, retired military men and women are still a proud part of Castlewood and Oak Valley. Generations of families have grown up here, making memories over evening strolls, backyard barbecues, and under the expansive, shady oaks.

That strong community spirit was fully evident in 1993, when oak wilt threatened Castlewood’s treasured trees. Residents rallied together, volunteering and fundraising to save them. This is when COVNA, the neighborhood association was born! In partnership with Texas A&M Forest Service, they developed an innovative oak wilt prevention project that became a model for the state, preserving countless trees across Texas. This collective effort reflected the neighborhood’s heart and commitment to preserving its natural beauty.

While Castlewood is no longer “out in the boon docks,” it remains a beloved blend of longtime residents and new families drawn to its warmth, history, and charm. The neighborhood’s iconic streets have even caught Hollywood’s eye, appearing recently in HBO’s *Love and Death* and other productions.

In honor of Castlewood’s legacy, I’m gathering memories, stories, photos, and video interviews that capture our neighborhood’s rich history. If you have special moments or family stories to share, please consider contributing to this collection to celebrate and preserve Castlewood for future generations. Together,

let’s continue the story of Castlewood Forest—a place that’s always felt like home.

To share your memories, reach out to Dorothy Trainer at dorothytrainer@jbgoodwin.com or 512-796-3723. ■

New police chief, city manager meets with ANC

By Rita Thompson

As the end of the year approaches, the Austin Neighborhood Council continues to address the concerns of our neighborhoods and communities.

Within the past few months the City Council has hired a new City Manager, T.C. Broadnax, and a new Chief of Police, Lisa Davis. They attended the ANC meetings to share their vision regarding their service to the Austin community. To better understand the concerns of our neighborhoods, the city

manager agreed to meet periodically with the ANC executive committee.

Davis said she wanted to engage with all of the communities to learn what challenges they are facing and how Austin Police Department can be better partners. She said APD district representatives serve as liaisons between neighborhood communities and the police department regional commands. Our representative is Ofc. Miguel Alameida, who can be reached at 512-974-6210.

As previously reported the ANC continues to address the

ongoing concerns with the significant changes to the Land Development Code since the passing of the HOME 1 and 2 initiatives. The ANC encourages all of us to contact our city council members as well as the members that serve on boards and commissions with our concerns. Ryan Alter serves as our District 5 council member, and can be reached at 512-978-2105.

It has been my pleasure to serve as your ANC representative. Please feel free to reach out if I can be of help. ■

