



NORTH UNIVERSITY  
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

## A Spring Alone Together

By *Brandon Tucker*

**M**arch began as it usually does in the neighborhood with our springtime It's My Park Day event. Scores of neighbors were out on a pleasant morning mulching trees, picking up trash and gobbling up breakfast tacos, snacks and coffee donated by Wheatsville and Starbucks with one another. Just a couple days later, SXSW was cancelled via disaster declaration by the mayor.

By the following week, the festive Austin springtime as we've come to know it was over, and a new, quarantined and social-distancing reality was setting in. And we don't know when it will end.

For the first time in my lifetime and I assume yours, we are being asked to conquer something by staying apart. The only way to succeed, we've been told, is to be collectively alone together. We don't know for how long or how effective it will be. We are shown charts of various curve shapes as investments nosedive and jobs disappear. We don't know when our kids can see grandparents again or if their schools will open anytime soon.

We live in a neighborhood with a tremendous diversity of ages and professions. Our service industry neighbors and small business owners are among those

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who have taken the first economic hit. Meanwhile, doctors in our neighborhood and around the world are putting their lives at risk in a highly contagious environment to save someone's loved one. In one way or another, large or small, this coronavirus will impact us all.

It is very easy to be afraid when the news happens so fast. I recently came across one story about a nurse who reported on what they saw in New Orleans. She referred to treating a seemingly healthy, 30-something male as they struggled and gasped on a hospital ventilator. 30-something male? That's me. For a brief moment I thought I felt all the symptoms.

Stress can compromise the immune system. Walking and eating healthy certainly helps it. I suppose one

Before



After



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benefit about all of this distancing and restrictions is we are all spending a heck of a lot more time in the neighborhood. Our circles are much, much smaller. The weather has been wonderful and our yards are receiving the natural irrigation from above. Strolling the neighborhood it is also quite evident that for many of you, the fruits of your labor are paying off in your gardens. NUNA is in full bloom even if humans have retreated.

It will be up to our minds to trick ourselves into constantly thinking about the positives. The other day I went for an afternoon bike ride and was excited to get out since there are a lot fewer cars on the road that could potentially run me over. A peaceful ride it was, but every closed storefront I passed was a reminder these times are hurting people.

This weekend I came across an Instagram post from an old college buddy. Back at Indiana University he was a gonzo cyclist who competed in the famous

Little 500 bike race. But about a year ago, he suffered a horrific crash. Through rehab he leaned on meditation to overcome the pain of his injuries and in his words, "Learned the importance of love, power of positivity, and was able to observe and witness how powerful negative thoughts are, and how they perpetuate more of the same. I could witness changes in my thoughts merely by exposure to certain types of media, television, and even at a grocery store."

When we go to our neighborhood grocery store we can choose to see some of the bare shelves, no bulk coffee or the new 2x4s and plexi glass between us and the cashier, or we could see the bountiful piles of fruit and the workers in the store who are showing up every day and exposing themselves to a mysterious enemy, and nevertheless smiling the whole time. This divided country has been in need of a little healing for awhile now, and maybe being alone together will ultimately get us a little closer.



# Note from the NUNA Co-President

March 9, 2020, Lynn Marshall

This will be brief and concerns the changes coming to Austin if the City Council passes the titanic revision of Austin's Land Development Code, which may happen very soon.

Parts of this draft code have gone through revision on top of revision, and apparently it has gotten worse, not better, despite lots of pushback by citizens and neighborhood groups.

In the current draft, there are some incompatible uses being proposed such as grocery stores being allowed on every residential lot (which also means Deli with seating for 9), no parking required, and up to 20,000 sq. ft. of floor space. For comparison, Wheatsville is not even 5,000 sq. ft. Deed restrictions will not save you from these changes (the City does not honor deed restrictions); meaning the burden is upon individual homeowners to enforce deed restrictions by suing; a costly enterprise!

Council members Kathie Tovo (District 1), Ann Kitchen (District 5), Leslie Pool (District 7), and Alison Alter (District 10) have been standing up against this scorched-earth rewrite of Austin's land development code. Mayor Steve Adler, Natasha Harper-Madison (District 1), Delia Garza (Mayor Pro Tem, District 2), Sabino "Pio" Renteria (District 3), Greg Casar (District 4), Jimmy Flannigan (District 6), and Paige Ellis (District 8) have been voting for the wholesale upzoning of the entire city.

We each get to vote for just two of the eleven members of the city council, though every one of them votes on every issue that affects every one of us. You can call or write any or all of our elected city

council members about these proposed changes and the termination of your rights as a property owner to protest proposed rezonings near you. Their contact information can be found here:

[www.austintexas.gov/government](http://www.austintexas.gov/government).

You can find great information on the LDC rewrite at the Community Not Commodity (CNC) website ([communitynotcommodity.com](http://communitynotcommodity.com)). Also, watch Zoned Out, a 28 minute film by Austin film maker Steve Mims, at [zonedoutfilm.com](http://zonedoutfilm.com).

*Editor's Note: The final public hearing was scheduled for March 28 at City Hall and the final vote planned for the following week, but the land development code process has been suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic. Stay tuned for updates.*

## NUNA

### 2020 MEMBERSHIP DUES

NUNA dues are used to benefit the neighborhood, paying for neighborhood events, presentation materials, mulch for the parks, signs and small expenses that occur during the year.

\_\_ \$15/person

\_\_ \$25/couple

\_\_ \$10/student

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Make your check to NUNA and mail to:  
Jan Moyle, 200 W. 32<sup>nd</sup> St.

# COVID-19 Notice

## From the City of Austin

### (March 25th, 2020):

COVID-19 is a rapidly changing situation, and some of the information in this notice may be out of date by the time the NUNA newsletter goes to print.

For the most updated information, visit:

[www.austintexas.gov/COVID19](http://www.austintexas.gov/COVID19)

The health of Austin and Travis County residents and visitors is our highest priority. Our public health officials are taking appropriate actions to ensure the health and safety of our community. Austin-Travis County leaders have declared a “local state of disaster” to more proactively increase preventative measures in the region.

There are currently over 240 in the Austin-Travis County area (as of March 31). The confirmation of these cases has elevated the Austin Public Health (APH) response to Phase 5 of our five-phase plan, adapted from our pandemic flu plans. We continue to test individuals in accordance with CDC guidelines. We now have 11 test collection points with a public-private partnership between Austin Public Health (APH), St. David’s, Ascension Seton, UT Health Austin (Dell Medical School) and Baylor Scott & White. Testing sites are referral only and will prioritize individuals who are sent by referral and have an appointment at this time. Those seeking testing should work with a healthcare provider to request testing.

We continue to monitor and re-evaluate the situation daily and our health officials are prepared to respond as needed. We are in constant communication with other professionals in cities, counties, and states across the country, evaluating information and practices from around the world. In order to protect

our health care system, the City is now under **Stay Home-Work Safe Orders**. The Orders require individuals to remain in place at home or place of residence, with exceptions for essential work and activities. When conducting an allowed activity, people must maintain at least 6 feet of social distancing.

In general, essential activities include, for example, going to the grocery store, pharmacy, restaurants for take-out, receiving medical care, or taking your pet for a walk. Essential businesses include:

- Grocery stores, farmers’ markets, food banks, convenience stores
- Hospitals, pharmacies, clinics, veterinary offices and other healthcare services
- Childcare facilities providing services that enable essential employees to continue performing their essential work duties
- Educational institutions, for the purposes of facilitating distance learning
- Gas stations and auto repair facilities
- Banks and financial institutions
- Critical infrastructure including energy, water, solid waste collection and other governmental services
- Hardware stores, plumbers, electricians, and other service providers necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences and other essential businesses
- Businesses that provide necessities of life for economically disadvantaged individuals and shelter facilities

- Businesses that ship or deliver groceries, food, and goods directly to residences
- Roles required for any Essential Business to “maintain basic operations,” which include security, payroll, and similar activities

Non-essential businesses may continue operations if work is performed at their own residences (i.e., working from home). More information about the Stay Home – Work Safe Order can be found at [www.austintexas.gov/COVID19](http://www.austintexas.gov/COVID19). Please review the site for any questions you may have. If you aren’t able to find an answer to your question, please call 3-1-1 or 512-974-2000.

To see all orders and actions taken please visit [www.austintexas.gov/COVID19](http://www.austintexas.gov/COVID19).

Please note, it's important that social distancing does not become social isolation. Keep in touch with your family, friends, and neighbors digitally and via phone.

Additionally, the City of Austin has modified its operations and some public services are suspended until Monday, March 30, 2020. This includes some closures of City Facilities, modified services, and potential impacts to public meetings. This is being done to maintain the health and safety of City employees and the community at large while providing critical City services. A complete list of closures is available on our website and will be updated as appropriate.

If people feel unwell they should contact their health care provider before going to a clinic, urgent care or emergency department, to prevent any potential spread. People experiencing COVID-19 symptoms who are uninsured and do not have an established doctor can call the COVID-19

Hotline at 512-978-8775 for guidance. We have created a section of the website to specifically provide information for people that are sick: [www.austintexas.gov/article/covid-19-information-those-who-are-sick](http://www.austintexas.gov/article/covid-19-information-those-who-are-sick)

Everyone can help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including flu and COVID-19. Critical advice has been issued for people in Austin-Travis County who are aware they have had contact with an individual with COVID-19. The elderly, immunocompromised, and those with underlying health issues are at a higher risk of severe symptoms for COVID-19. For specific actions you can personally take to protect yourself, your family, and the community, please visit [www.austintexas.gov/COVID19](http://www.austintexas.gov/COVID19).

Residents can also follow the City’s Communications and Public Information Office on [Nextdoor](#) and [Facebook](#). [This](#) links to the most recent NextDoor post on coronavirus.

If you require assistance or would like to share ideas on how to help the community navigate this uncertain time, you are welcome to contact Council Member Kathie Tovo’s [office](#).

**NORTH UNIVERSITY  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
ASSOCIATION**  
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**CANCELED**

Due to current city mandate on gatherings, the April NUNA General Membership meeting has been cancelled.

We hope to be back at it for the June meeting at Sparky Park. Stay tuned.

# It's My Park Day, Spring 2020

*By Mike Marcom, NUNA Parks Committee*

It was a cool morning on March 7<sup>th</sup>, but that did not stop a record turnout for the Adams-Hemphill event as part of the citywide IT'S MY PARK DAY.

IT'S MY PARK DAY occurs twice each year in Austin, usually the first Saturday in March and again the first Saturday in November. On those days, volunteers coordinate under the aegis of two groups—the Austin Parks Foundation and the Urban-Forestry Group of the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department—to arrange for projects to enhance and protect our parks. This may involve tree planting and trimming, but the most important aspect is mulching both new and older trees to help ensure the younger ones get a good start and the older ones remain healthy. None of us want to see even one tree give up the ghost, especially the stately pecans. For those of you interested in knowing more about the programs run by these groups, you can learn more at their websites:

[www.austinparks.org/](http://www.austinparks.org/) and [www.austintexas.gov/department/urban-forestry](http://www.austintexas.gov/department/urban-forestry).

In reality, it was a pleasant few hours of activity and exercise for neighborhood residents and park well-wishers to meet and help to make our Adams-Hemphill park one of the nicer community

greenspaces in Austin. There are few of us in the North University neighborhood who do not make use of our local parks in some way, and many residents from other parts of Austin pass through on their way to UT or other places. Whether it's walking through with a friend, four footed or otherwise, attending a meeting at Sparky, playing ballgames at Adams, or just admiring the large trees while driving by, we all benefit from having open spaces nearby. For that reason it has remained high on our priorities list to help keep neighborhood Parks in good condition. That is why we tend to have a good turnout of volunteers at Adams-Hemphill for the citywide IT'S MY PARK DAY.

This year Austin Parks Foundation found itself overwhelmed with the number of projects proposed around the city. It appears that they had in excess of 3000 volunteers at the various projects. As one can imagine, with that many to deal with, some sponsors were unable to participate in more than a funding way and the amount of tools, giveaways and similar



things were limited. Adams-Hemphill was likewise affected. With the fire last fall at Trudy's and the sad ongoing closure to date, we lost one of our stalwart supporters. Many of us remember their tacos fondly. Fortunately, Wheatsville provided much needed snacks and drinks and Starbucks provided hot coffee. Wheatsville also provided tacos which NUNA provided funds to purchase. Thank you Wheatsville, Starbucks and NUNA. (I remain optimistic that one day we will find a craft brewery to step up to the plate. Hint, Hint if any budding brewers are reading, I am especially fond of IPA).

Work equipment and tools were also in short supply again. Many of you know that NUNA provided funds for the purchase of 10 extra large sleds to be repurposed for moving mulch some years ago. I still have ongoing high hopes for enough snow here in Austin one year to try out the sleds for their designed purpose but guess I will have to dream on. Should sled numbers provided by Austin Parks keep dwindling NUNA funding may again be needed. Similarly, fewer rakes, pitchforks and gloves were available. Someone suggested (tongue-in-cheek) that we might have a NUNA PITCHFORK DAY with neighborhood residents checking their garages and donating to NUNA unwanted or spare pitchforks and bow style garden rakes for the next IT'S MY PARK DAY. It can't hurt to suggest it, so If you would like to participate

in PITCHFORK DAY then drop an email to Mike at [451manda@gmail.com](mailto:451manda@gmail.com) and room will be found in my garage to complement all the other NUNA equipment stored there.

So enough of the problems and on to a quick report on the activity during the most recent It's My Park Day at Adams-Hemphill Park. Some 81 volunteers met at 9:00 in the park and checked in at the registration table. Refreshments were provided as already mentioned. Members of local groups including the Texas Ladybirds, Net Impact (UG Engineering Group), the Mu Phi Epsilon fraternity (Butler School of Music) and Impact Melanoma were present Moreover, many Wheatsville managers and employees turned out to help along with a large number of North University Neighborhood Association [NUNA] members and neighbors. I am sure there were other groups participating and beg forgiveness for not giving adequate recognition to these.

Following the short [i.e. because I did it] briefing, the piles of mulch were attacked. Unlike previous park days, this time we were able to get 4 smaller piles somewhat closer to where they were needed. They were quickly reduced to mere memories in record time proving that the "many hands make light work" saying is true. There were 4 piles instead of 2 or 3, but even though the amount of mulch was the same, it





was our fastest time. Due to recent rains the mulch was moist and much compacted so did not seem to go as far, but most trees were still adequately mulched and any missed will hopefully get extra next time. Meanwhile, several volunteers made an impressive mound of black bags filled with trash and debris they collected from the creek and park areas. I counted just short of twenty piled up waiting for pickup. I understand that one of the picker-uppers actually made a profit on the day by proving that some trash does have value. Among the litter was cold hard US currency. Not a fortune, but at least enough for a drink or two. However, if some of you would like to try your luck to see if one man's trash is truly another man's treasure please take a black bag with you when you visit the creek. You should at least get some feel good factor by disposing of the litter you pick up to see if it is green. All-in-all, it was a great opportunity to make a difference in the community while benefiting from the interaction with neighbors and participants and enjoying the outdoors in the park. Speaking of interactions, I was able to talk to and introduce myself to more of the participants than at past park days and enjoyed that. Hopefully they will forgive my poor memory and talk to me anyway even if I don't recognize names and faces the way I should.

For those of you who missed this opportunity to make a difference, visit the websites mentioned above and keep an eye out for signs announcing the next IT'S MY PARK DAY which should be in early November 2020. If you would like to be involved in a less active way, you can always help anytime by sending a contribution marked for MY PARK DAY projects to NUNA. This method works for those who can't participate for whatever reason but want to help behind the scenes. If this approach is appealing, send a check made out to NUNA care of Treasurer Jan Moyle, 200 W. 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, Austin, Texas 78705. As mentioned earlier, if you really are trying to be less active and have an old rake or pitchfork in your

garage that you don't want to tempt you again, let me know and I will recycle it into NUNA's inventory.

In the meantime, thank our sponsors by giving them your business and letting their managements know you appreciate their help. Likewise please thank any members of participating groups.

## Changes Coming to Hancock Golf Course?

*By Janet Beinke*

Hancock Golf Course is one of the oldest courses in Texas. It was founded in 1899 by Lewis Hancock and started life as the Austin Country Club. It was a popular private and then public course in many of the years since. However, its glory days have waned and it has been losing money for many years.

On February 29<sup>th</sup>, the City's Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) held a meeting on the future of the Hancock Golf Course. But, first, to relieve some anxieties, the meeting did not concern Hancock Recreation Center whose future seems assured (if anything in Austin is) as one of the most used recreation facilities in the city. The golf course however is not as popular.

About five years ago, a similar meeting on the course's future was held. In response to that meeting, the Hancock Neighborhood Assn. gave five suggestions to the city on how to resolve the course's financial difficulties. According to a Hancock Neighborhood representative, none of the suggestions were implemented.

PARC commissioned the National Golf Foundation to evaluate "the current condition and future market potential of the five City golf facilities..." NGF's May 2019 report is about public golf courses generally,



with specific recommendations on individual courses. The report notes “the combined five facility Austin golf system is operating with an annual economic shortfall of between (\$150,000) and (\$250,000)”, which includes an annual \$500,000 expense to lease Lions (MUNY) Golf Course. The report also notes “declining golf demand” in Austin as is common both in number of players and rounds in the country generally.

[www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/NGF\\_Final\\_Austin\\_Report.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/NGF_Final_Austin_Report.pdf)

Regarding Hancock, the handout at the meeting states that NGF was asked “to reexamine the sustainability of the golf course as it is today.” NGF noted that the 9-hole configuration is a limitation and that similar courses elsewhere “typically include extensive golf training elements like a driving range and practice venues to help stimulate activity.” It also said that “the course is in declining condition with many antiquated features that will require upwards of \$700,000 to \$900,000 to repair and improve, and this enhancement is not likely to lead directly to increased revenue.” NGF offered three suggestions

for Hancock’s future: 1) make the golf course into a “passive” park with no golf activities; 2) modify the course to a golf learning center operated by the city with a monetary infusion of up to \$1.6 million, and 3) lease the course to a private firm to improve and manage a modern golf learning center under a concessionary agreement.

PARD representatives said they were holding the meeting to get input from the public. Those attending preferred Options 1 and 2 above by a show of hands, but city staff said that, with City Council approval, they would send out an RFP for Option 3. The first two options evidently were already rejected. One attendee suggested that if the City hadn’t already made its decision, the City would have asked for a Request for Information (RFI) rather than an RFP.

You can follow the future of Hancock here: [www.austintexas.gov/department/hancock-golf-course-planning](http://www.austintexas.gov/department/hancock-golf-course-planning)

# Minutes for the NUNA General Membership Meeting

*Feb 3rd, Sparky Park, 6:30pm*

Babs Davis, President, begins meeting:  
Welcome to Aurora Heddleston-Smith  
—newest neighbor just born.

Neighbor Pam Bell: Reports on noise issues with 3412 Speedway (houses on stilts). Pam offered to assist other neighbors who are having frequent noise offenders to assist on the most effective process to get results.

There was a presentation of the Land Development Code by Mary Ingle.

Babs: If you are not on the Google Groups email list, come to a NUNA meeting and add your email to the signup sheet and receive latest neighborhood updates from exec committee.

## Old Business

Treasurer Report: Looking for help soliciting ads for NUNA newsletter and collecting dues for 2020.

Minutes: Neighbor identifies some typos were made in previous publishing of the NUNA minutes.  
Secretary apologies.

## Quardant Reports

Ingle (NE): Google Fiber installation on streets and reports of moving cars. If you can't find your car it may have been moved down the street.

Randy (NW): Some yards have had 4x4 holes dug in them via Fiber construction.

Nomination committee: Randy reports the NUNA nomination committee has nominated the following slate of officers for the coming 2020-21 year: Co-Presidents: Barbara Davis, Lynn Marshall, VP, Mike Marcom, Treasurer, Jan Moyle, Secretary, Abby Tucker. Quadrant leaders: Mary Ingle, Dick Holland, Randy Thompson, Jim Creswell.

No further nominations from the floor. Nominations will be voted on at next General membership meeting April 6th (This meeting was later postponed due to COVID-19)

## New Business

Parks chair Mike Marcom reminds neighbors of upcoming It's My Park Day at Hemphill park. Douglas Plummer also doing something at Sparky Park.

Janet Beinke: We will work with vendors on food and drink donations for the morning, including Wheatsville and Starbucks. Trudy's is closed so we will look elsewhere for tacos.

The neighborhood votes and authorizes Janet and Brandon Tucker to solicit taco donations or discounts and pay for them as needed.

Thank you to neighbor Rosemarie for bringing cookies to the meeting!

Jim Creswell is leading a new communication committee that will investigate options and scope for a new website and message board as well as social media strategy.

ANC Reports: Ingle says a new neighborhood rep is needed for ANC. Rick Iverson offered to do it. if anyone else is interested please let Mary know.

The meeting adjourned at 7:36pm

# Dogs of NUNA

*By Babs Davis*

Señor Pepe and Chiquita Delores- Chiquita is the beautiful, fluffy white dog. She goes by Chicky, as much as you'll definitely hear me. Also, I don't walk as much as my brother Pepe! Pepe loves to explore all parts of NUNA. He'll strut for miles-never get tired! So much to see and smell, it never ends here in NUNA.

Eileen Gill & Kevin Pruitt are the loving parents of these two special pups. We all love living in Aldridge Place and especially being so close to the park. We'd like to apologize for crossing the street when we see you coming our way. Señor Pepe is an anxious rescue that we got from a wonderful foster mom at Austin Dog Rescue. He was our first dog and we thought he'd be our only dog until we saw a Facebook post from our friend and neighbor, Darien Stefani. Darien had found a small, white, starving little dog running in the street. She was looking for leash and some dog food, so Kevin ran down with the goods and then took Chiquita to the vet to see if she was chipped. We spent weeks looking for her owners — but they were never found. So Chiquita decided to stay! She's rounded out our family and now she's the QUEEN! (But don't tell Pepe that!)



# Counter Café Opens in NUNA

*By Dick Holland*

Late in 2019 a number of favorite neighborhood food places shut down: namely Ruby's BBQ and Milto's, next door to each other on 29<sup>th</sup> Street on the east side of Guadalupe. Ruby's was just behind what I always thought was the best location of Antones Blues Club. The story goes that blues notables including Albert Collins and Albert King would come over to Ruby's about 1:30am after their last set and hang out eating brisket and drinking beer. That accounts for the amazing posters there signed by the likes of Muddy Waters. Milto's, of course, was a campus favorite, known for its pizza, Greek salads, Eggplant Parigiana, Gyros, and subs. Both places had a loyal following, and their sudden disappearance was a shock.

Maybe the biggest loss of all was on the other side of Guadalupe also on 29<sup>th</sup>, when Conan's Pizza was suddenly gone after forty-three years in business. Although not technically in the NUNA neighborhood, Conan's was a favorite of many who liked the informal, hippy-like vibe and the thicker, Chicago-style pizza. After it went away the building was empty for several months. And then, sliding into existence on New Year's Eve 2019, here comes a new location of the Counter Café, an Austin tradition.

It did not take long for the NUNA neighborhood or for UT students to discover what a great remodel the Counter is and what an asset it is to 29<sup>th</sup> Street. What could be cooler than a strip with Oat Willie's at one end, Malvern's Books in the middle, and the brand new Counter anchoring the other end? Toy Joy with the nuns on the roof might be gone from the other side of 29<sup>th</sup>, but now you can find homemade sausage and the best little pancake (the "baby cake") you've ever had.

Counter's hours are 7 AM to 3 PM, open daily. Both breakfast and lunch are served all day. The co-owners of the three locations of the Counter are Debbie Davis and Nathan Perry. I met Debbie for breakfast about 10 AM and we chatted for almost an hour. I had two eggs over medium, the sausage, a biscuit, and, surprising to some, a nice portion of southern style bacon-flavored collard greens. If you're going all out in this southern direction you can also get a side of cream gravy. (My father always told me that gravy was "short for graveyard," but I have seen little evidence to prove this.) I did ask Debbie about the bar as you walk in, and she said some patrons like a Bloody Mary with their breakfast.

Debbie greets everyone who walks in and is easily charming. From her perch by the door she can recommend a place to sit including several counter seats if the booths and tables are occupied. Her history in the Austin food business goes back to working in the Whole Foods on Lamar during the 1981 Memorial Day flood, when it started calling itself the "Whole Foods Market." After some schooling there in the ways of organic ingredients, Debbie saw a little building for rent a couple of blocks south on Lamar, right before you get to Waterloo Records.

This became the original Counter, and it was aptly named, being almost all counter seats. It's a great place to eat a late lunch – their Counter Burger was voted No. 2 in the state by Texas Monthly. With the burger I recommend their homemade mayonnaise and the sweet potato fries. Other popular lunch choices are five different salads, and three homemade crab cakes with house-currried peanut sauce and lemon aioli. Grilled items include quail & fries, pork chop & fries and a hangar steak & fries: at \$18 it is the most expensive item on the menu.

Five years ago a second location opened up in east Austin, at 5<sup>th</sup> and Chicon, where a small post office had been. Cynthia and I have been to the new Counter about a dozen times, always for breakfast, once with a writer friend visiting from Nashville. He pronounced the collard greens "tasty," and he's also lived in Oxford, Mississippi, so can be considered something of an expert. My next meal there when they reopen after Mayor Adler's shutdown will be lunch and I think I'll try the Turkey Club or the Grilled Pimento Cheese Sandwich.

Very strange to write a restaurant review during a public health crisis, but this is an excellent place and I really recommend it!

*Editor's note: Counter Café is currently accepting phone and online orders for takeout during the city's COVID-19 stay-at-home order.*

## Scene and Heard

Around the time of the escalation of the Coronavirus outbreak, there was some news on the zoning front. A local judge ruled on the upcoming city code rewrite. In a March 18 decision, the judge said the city violated state law by not notifying individual property owners of the Planning Commission's public hearing regarding changes to their, or nearby properties' zoning and not acknowledging individual property owners' right to protest. The city was supposed to have a third and final reading of the code rewrite on April 2nd but in March the city halted work on the new land code rewrite. (Thank you to Christopher Neely at Community Impact for providing the nuts and bolts in his report).

A huge amount of turnover with small businesses had been happening prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, and with many businesses shut and restaurants either closed or offering takeout only, it

is a difficult time for neighborhood businesses, and we hope you are able to support them when possible during this challenging time. Some of the businesses that as of press time were offering takeout include: Amy's Ice Cream, Arlo's, Vaquero Taco, Taco Shack, Wheatsville, Via 313.

Texas Monthly had a nice spread about HEB's incredibly thorough pandemic preparedness plan that goes back many years and makes our federal government's flat-footed response look even worse than it is. Considering the Supreme Court has said "corporations are people," can HEB run for president?

Are you eating too many non-perishable canned goods? Wheatsville Co-Op announced they are offering a takeout version of their popular and delicious \$5 Thursday dinners while buffet restrictions are in place for safety. Things are changing rapidly, so check their website for details. [wheatsville.coop](http://wheatsville.coop)

Antone's Records is one of the retail stores that closed down as precaution. We stopped by to hoard some vinyl an hour before they closed up shop.



## Wild! NUNA

*By Janet Beinke*

In late February, I saw a great blue heron in Hemphill Creek. I was thrilled that a magnificent bird appreciated the park as much as my neighbors and I do. I hoped to see the heron again soon. I got my wish, but I wasn't as thrilled as I anticipated. A few days later there was the heron standing on the side of my pond, snacking on my goldfish. He flew but only to my electric line, obviously not wanting to leave such an easy meal behind. The heron looked gangly as he gingerly balanced his tall body on the small wire. I haven't seen him in the creek or my yard since.

If you have Wild! NUNA tales to share, send them to [nunanews@gmail.com](mailto:nunanews@gmail.com).



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