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NEWSLETTER

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DECEMBER 2022

Luminarias Along Arroyo Seco

The long tradition of luminarias along Arroyo Seco continues this year, its 28th anniversary. Every evening starting on Thursday, December 22nd through Christmas on Sunday, December 25, the lights along the arroyo will be a sight to see. Neighbors volunteer to be responsible for small, manageable blocks along the arroyo. Many of these Block Captains are long-time volunteers, and this responsibility is a family tradition. Those twinkling lights along the arroyo are a beautiful sight at night and even more enjoyable while strolling the hike and bike path with family and friends. Thanks to all of the volunteers whose work gives us four enchanted evenings!

You might ask where did the tradition of luminarias begin?



No one knows for sure, but one story has it that luminarias lit the way for Mary and Joseph in their search for lodging in Bethlehem. Others place the tradition back even earlier, linking it to the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah, when people mark the

miracle of the container of oil that was only meant to last one day but lasted eight.

City Council Approves Statesman PUD

At their meeting on December 2nd, the mayor and a city council majority approved a plan to redevelop the 19-acre Statesman property that sits on the shore of Lady Bird Lake. Award winning journalist Briget Grumet has written a column questioning that decision titled Should Tax Dollars Aid Growth of Austin's Shoreline?. The article starts by saying no one looking at the old American-Statesman site on South Congress Avenue – perched on the tree-lined shore of Lady Bird Lake, within shouting distance of downtown – would imagine this prime tract wouldn't be redeveloped. Nor would the 1980s office building, empty for just a year, be considered "blighted."

This is important because using tax dollars for the redevelopment is dependent upon the site meeting certain criteria. The article continues: "That has fueled a fierce debate over whether the area deserves the kind of tax incentives that the Austin City Council just unlocked for the South Central Waterfront District, a 118-acre swath that includes the 19-acre Statesman site." The incentives for the entire district will total at least \$153.6 million over the next two decades, under a formula the council approved Thursday evening.

Mayor Steve Adler emphasized that diverting those tax dollars won't shortchange the city's general fund, which pays for things like police and parks. But that means the rest of us taxpayers will pay a little bit more to make up the difference. Adler argues the entire city benefits if the waterfront district — the south shore area from South First Street to Blunn Creek — is developed at much greater density. Several critics have argued, however, that the developers cashing in on these lucrative projects should pay for the infrastructure they need. After all, we're talking about high-end development in one of the most desirable parts of town. "The whole idea that you're

going to argue that this type and scale and location of development can't scratch out a profit without us putting tax dollars into it is just absurd on its face," said Bill Bunch, an attorney and the executive director of the Save Our Springs Alliance.

The tool being used here is called a tax increment reinvestment zone, or TIRZ. It siphons off some of the tax revenue that the district would normally send to the city, and it returns those dollars to the district to pay for road projects and other upgrades. State law says this tax incentive structure should be used only in areas where "development or redevelopment would not occur solely through private investment in the reasonably foreseeable future." "No one is saying that this area wouldn't develop if we didn't do this," the mayor said at the council meeting "It's just not going to develop the way we would want it to develop."

But a 1999 Texas attorney general's opinion says the tool can't be used just to spur greater growth in areas that will grow anyway. "An area may not be designated as a reinvestment zone 'simply because (the) municipality contemplates that greater future development would occur in that area if a tax increment zone were created than if it were not created,'" that 1999 opinion found. Rather, the city must show the area truly qualifies as underdeveloped.

The article explained that the funding vote on the waterfront district was a split decision (7-3-1), with Council Members Alison Alter, Kathie Tovo and Mackenzie Kelly opposed and Ann Kitchen abstaining. Alter and Kitchen expressed concerns about the lack of a finalized plan for the waterfront district.

To access the original article, view <https://www.statesman.com/story/news/columns/2022/12/04/bridget-grumet-should-tax-dollars-aid-austin-lady-bird-lake-shoreline/69684463007/>

Grumet is the Statesman's Metro columnist.

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CNA General Meetings are held the second
Monday of every month at 7:00 PM at the
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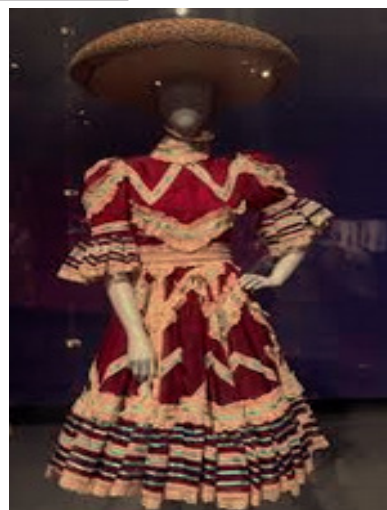
Bob Bullock Museum Exhibit on Dresses

The exhibition *Hilos de Tradición: Dresses of Mexico*, is running at the Bob Bullock Museum through February 26, 2023. This exhibition, in collaboration with the Brownsville Historical Association, presents Mexican textiles as living traditions with roots that can be traced back thousands of years to the earliest peoples in Mesoamerica.

Hilos translates roughly as "threads". The tools, patterns, materials, and techniques of crafting these textiles have evolved over the centuries. But the common thread in all of the textiles is the link they represent between Mexico's past and present. The dresses reflect both the indigenous and European influences that have shaped Mexican culture and tradition.

Through it all, color and pattern shine brightly as a testament to the vibrant and varied regions of Mexico. "Hilos" features 37 traditional outfits representing the states of Mexico organized by themes that help visitors appreciate the weaving and embroidery traditions on display and how the dresses are used in dance, fiesta and ceremonies. Dresses in the exhibition include a vibrant fiesta gown from the state of Chiapas, a dress embroidered with an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe from Colima, an intricately woven dress from the village of Acaxochitlan in Hidalgo, a festival ensemble from Oaxaca and a bright dress designed for dancing from the state of Sinaloa. Visitors of all ages will also have the opportunity to touch and examine cloth, embellishments, embroidery and woven designs and try out basic embroidery stitches through interactive elements within the exhibition.

According to Bullock Museum Deputy Director of Interpretation Josefa González Mariscal, this exhibit "showcases the nature of the multifaceted Mexican identity. Some outfits were woven in the millenary indigenous back strap loom tradition; some embellished with Spanish and Flemish style lace; others amalgamated Asian embroidery techniques brought through the colonial trade. Through their varied shapes, materials, embellishments and motifs the dresses allow us to discover the climate, geography, history, industries and resources, beliefs and festivities each Mexican state has. To some, the exhibition will bring longing for a homeland, to many a desire to travel, and to others an admiration for the creativity and craftsmanship of the women who made the dresses."





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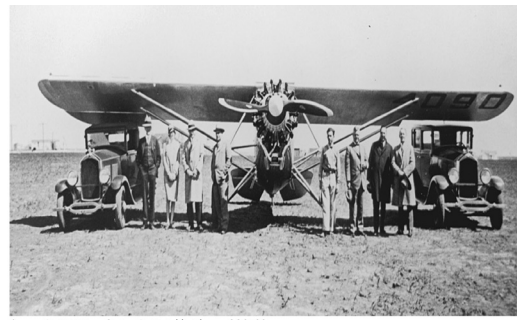
By Marc Airhart

If you've lived in Austin a while, you know that Austin-Bergstrom International Airport was not the city's first. You might even have fond memories of the city's previous (and quirkily quaint) airport, Robert Mueller. But did you know that one of the city's first airports was situated next to what is now Crestview?

In 1926 Webb Ruff, a former UT law student, bought a 138-acre field near the intersection of modern-day Lamar and Airport Boulevards and established University Airport. According to Kenneth Ragsdale, author of the book *Austin, Cleared for Takeoff: Aviators, Businessmen, and the Growth of an American City*: "At that location Ruff sold Waco (pronounced WAH-co) airplanes, offered charter service, gave flight instruction, and featured airplane trips to all out-of-town University of Texas football games. The fixed base operators became the wellspring of Austin's commercial aviation industry."

It was here that Austin's first commercial air passenger service began on the morning of Saturday, March 30, 1929 when a six-seat luxury monoplane carrying the former Texas governor Pat Neff and others landed at University Airport. The air carrier, Texas Air Transport, later became part of American Airlines. They were greeted by Mayor W. McFadden and other local dignitaries. The new passenger service ran from Dallas to Brownsville, with stops in Waco, Austin, San Antonio and Corpus Christi.

In the early days, passengers were few and far between and the airport itself was not particularly glamorous. "Situated some five miles from the heart of the city, departing passengers objected to the long drive to the airport, and on arriving there,



Source: Austin History Center, Austin Public Library, CO2699.

complained of the lack of passenger accommodations. They could choose between waiting for their flights in Webb Ruff's cramped airport office or in his 'filling station,' located

some thirty yards north of the hangar on Fiskville Road [Lamar Boulevard]," wrote Ragsdale.

In 1940, with support from a new federal program to train pilots, Robert Browning leased University Airport and began teaching students. When the U.S. joined World War II, some of the newly minted pilots went on to aid in the war effort.

In October 1930, the city dedicated Robert Mueller Municipal Airport on land near modern-day I-35 and 51st Street, and air mail and commercial passenger service moved there. Meanwhile, the privately owned University Airport continued operations through the 1930s and 1940s, then was redeveloped in the 1950s as homes and businesses.

You can still see traces today of the airport in a couple of hangars along North Lamar Boulevard, across from Midtown Commons. One hangar, with a distinctive triple-arch roof, is now an office for Red Velvet Events. Next to it is a hangar with a single-arch roof occupied by Alamo Glass.

Given the amount of time that has passed, it's a long shot, but is there anyone in the neighborhood who has more details or photos—maybe passed down from an earlier generation of family or friends who lived here—to share of University Airport? If so, I'd love to check them out. Drop me a line at marcairhart@gmail.com.

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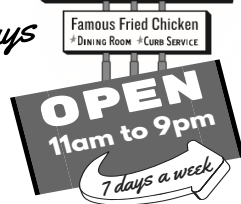
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Why Experts Say You Shouldn't Bag Your Leaves This Fall

As leaves across America make their annual autumn pilgrimage from the treetops to the ground, lawn and wildlife experts say it's better to leave them around than to bag them. First, because it keeps leaves out of landfills.

Every year, about 8 million tons of leaves end up there. And second, because leaves help the grass.

Leaves are full of nutrients, including nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. "Those nutrients are being returned to the soil," Susan Barton, a professor and extension specialist in landscape horticulture at the University of Delaware, said on NPR. "But probably even more important than that, it's the organic matter. It's the fact that you've got this tissue that then eventually decomposes and improves the soil health."

They also provide a habitat for insects, spiders, slugs — and depending on where you live — possibly turtles, toads and small mammals, according to the University of Delaware's College of Agriculture & Natural Resources. While this may not seem desirable at first glance, garden spiders can actually reduce harmful plant pathogens in your yard by controlling pest insects. And many insects which occur in lawns are beneficial as they provide a natural form of control for pest insects or assist in the breakdown of organic matter so nutrients can be returned to the soil.

In order to optimize your fallen leaves, some maintenance is recommended. It's best to run over a thin layer of leaves with a lawn mower or cut them up via other means so that they will break down more quickly. Thick layers of leaves are



actually bad for the grass as well. "If you just leave the leaves on the grass, it will exclude light. And then the grass won't be able to photosynthesize. Eventually, it would die under a thick layer of leaves," Barton said.

Rake excess leaves into a landscape bed and it will turn into mulch. Shredded leaves can also be piled into a garden. "Ideally, you want to let them decompose a little bit and they'll form a very nice mulch. Instead of going out and buying hardwood bark mulch, which is expensive, you can have a better mulch that's free," she said.

In Austin, leaves can also be placed in paper lawn bags or in the city's green composting bins to be collected for composting at a central facility where they are turned into mulch. Leaves buried in landfills don't have enough oxygen to decompose and will end up releasing a significant amount of methane.

At the same time, city dwellers should be mindful that wind and rain can push leaves into streets and clog up drainage systems — creating a flooding hazard.

How people deal with leaves is just one part of a longer-term issue of environmental sustainability. "We want to think about those leaves as being a resource and not a problem," Barton said. "And when you think about sustainable landscaping, well, one of the things we say about sustainable landscaping is let natural processes happen. And that's a natural process."



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In Memoriam

Longtime Crestview Resident and CNA member Lora Beatrice "Bea" Templeton, age 91 passed away on Wednesday, October 19, 2022.

Bea was born on April 2, 1931, in rural Lampasas County, Texas to King Lemuel (K.L.) Lindsey and Pearl (Walker) Lindsey. She was the last survivor of their eight children.

In 1951 Bea married Billie Charles Templeton of Llano County, Texas. She once described their marriage as "enchanted". They had been married for sixty years when Billie passed in 2011.

Bea was a wonderful mother to her children and a great homemaker. She was a long-time and active member of Faith Lutheran Church in Austin, Texas. Her dogs Misty, Spooky, Little Bit, and Tippy brought her much joy and contentment.

Bea will be greatly missed by her family, neighbors and many friends.



Community Feedback Requested From Artists Selected For The Burnet Corridor Public Art Project

Courtney Bee Peterson from Mothership Studios, Jeff Grauzer from Grauzer Mosaics, and Michael Mares Mendoza from augzoo® have been selected as a team by the City of Austin to design and create a permanent public artwork to be located along the Burnet Road Corridor. They are currently in the initial community engagement stage collecting thoughts and feedback through this survey:

<https://forms.gle/mkSfwA8yMjb5mhQv9>

Please consider taking the survey and providing your feedback.

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Time to Renew Your 2023 CNA Membership

A new year is just around the corner and all Crestview Neighborhood Association dues are up for renewal.

Since the early 1980s when the Crestview Neighborhood Association was formed, CNA has been dedicated to preserving and promoting the quality of life, safety and residential character of our neighborhood. Any resident living within the boundaries of Crestview (Lamar, both sides of Justin, Burnet Road and Anderson) are eligible to join the association. Dues are \$10 per year per household (up to 4 adult members) and are paid on a calendar year basis. To join the association or to renew your membership through December 2023, please use the form below. Make checks payable to Crestview Neighborhood Association or CNA. Or you can use PayPal by going to <https://crestviewna.com/join/>. Any questions regarding your membership can be directed to the Treasurer at joincrestview@gmail.com.



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