



HOT FILMS

Our annual summer movie preview  
■ Today in Austin360

SPA TIME

Packages are the ideal way to thank the  
moms in your life. ■ Style Matters, D5

Digging for gold turns up fresh cash for charities in down economy

The gated, cliffside Mediterranean-style mansion with its edgeless pool, miniature donkeys and horses, and separate party facility overlooking Lake Travis is more than mesmerizing.

Will one of the “Real Housewives of Orange County” or Donatella Versace answer the door?

Instead, I meet the energetic host, Ronda Gray, an Austin native, University of Texas graduate and former school teacher who runs a field trip camp for teens called Camp on the Move. She invites me in to join her and a few of her closest girlfriends for a midday party, which includes Togarashi seared beef tenderloin with wasabi mayonnaise on black pepper biscuits, seaweed salad, eel rolls and chocolate-dipped strawberries from Pink Avocado.

Food isn’t our main agenda, though. We gather for one of the hottest girlfriend



MARQUES G. HARPER  
STYLE & SUBSTANCE

events to take root in this turbulent economy, the gold party. This one is through Red Swan, the Narberth, Pa.-based division of Lippincott LLC. (For nearly 20 years, Lippincott has offered customers a way to sell gold, platinum and fine jewelry items). Gray heard about Red

See HARPER, D5



Cindy Mokry, left, Jenny Palmieri, Ronda Gray and Mindy Bakker gathered for lunch at Gray’s home to raise money for the March of Dimes.

Deborah Cannon  
AMERICAN-STATESMAN

A COFFEE WITH ... ■ BOB MCGIVNEY



Kaitlin Ballard AMERICAN-STATESMAN  
Bob McGivney picks up recycling from 12 businesses and 22 residences in Austin, Blanco and Wimberley.

Working to make recycling a larger part of area’s plan

By Kaitlin Ballard  
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

In the middle of the night Bob McGivney found himself driving through town with a truck full of flowers. He wasn’t going to surprise his girlfriend or decorate his home — he was recycling them.

His midnight run sprouted from a lazy summer afternoon at Barton Springs with friends, one of whom was a wedding planner. While talking to her, he found out that all the flowers used at weddings — including one that was coming up — are typically thrown away, despite their weeklong lifespan after an event.

Disheartened by this news, McGivney, 34, decided take them to a local hospice center and give them new life. “I showed up at midnight after the wedding, picked them all up and had a pickup full of flowers. That’s pretty much how it started,” McGivney said while enjoying a Fireman’s #4 at Jo’s on South Congress.

Wandering River Recycling began in June 2008. But recycling had always been a part of McGivney’s life, especially in San Francisco, where he lived for 15 years after graduating high school in San Antonio.

Throughout his years as a bartender and waiter in the Golden Gate City, McGivney never had a problem recycling on the job.

“In San Francisco, recycling is just a part of how you throw things away. On the curb of the restaurant, there were always three bins: one for garbage, one for compost and another for recycling — and the garbage bin was the smallest of the three.”

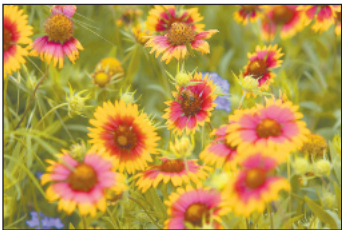
This practice resonated with McGivney when he moved to Austin three years ago. He noticed that though Austin recycles, the scale is much smaller than in San Francisco.

Through his work in advertising and dealing with business owners, McGivney realized Austin does not offer recycling for small to medium-size businesses or for apartment complexes with 100 tenants or fewer. Even if they wanted to recycle, it’s expensive and not everything is picked up.

Initially, it began with the flowers, but Wandering River, which traces its name from the twists and bends of the Colorado River, picked up Lamberts in the Second Street District as its first client. McGivney would wake up early before work at his full-time job and head over to pick up the assorted recyclables. He would then take them over to Ecology Action, a non-profit recycling center.

He was surprised to find more than just

See COFFEE, D4



MUELLER NEIGHBORHOOD ■ BLACKLAND PRAIRIE RESTORATION

Native instincts



Larry Kolvoord photos AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Where runways and parking lots once paved over the native prairie plants at Robert Mueller Municipal Airport, parks landscaped with native plants now dot the redeveloped neighborhood. Residents such as Janelle Dozier, left, Babs Harcketts and Don Dozier also plant natives in their yards.

Parks and yards at former airport are returning to their roots



Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center is helping with landscaping and teaching residents to tell the difference between natives and weeds. Harcketts photographs a plant she wants to identify.

By Carrie Alexander  
SPECIAL TO THE AMERICAN-STATESMAN

When Mueller residents Janelle and Don Dozier sit on their balcony, their view includes not only the state Capitol off in the distance but also an uncommon swath of Blackland Prairie.

Gone are the parking lots and runways that were a part of the former Robert Mueller Municipal Airport. In its place are at least 30 different types of prairie grasses and wildflowers that create a lively interplay of color, shape and texture, with each plant playing its part in the local ecosystem.

Even though it’s in the early stages of restoration, this landscape featuring native plants found in the endangered Blackland Prairie ecological region that runs through eastern Travis County already is teeming with birds, frogs and butterflies.

“It’s like everything is coming back to life,” says Janelle Dozier.

The Mueller redevelopment project was designed to be a model of sustainability, with a system of interconnected parks and trails that weaves through the 711 acres and connects the new community to established Austin parks such as Bartholomew and Patterson. In all, 20 percent of Mueller will be parkland, with

See Mueller development on Parade of Homes

The 56th Annual Parade of Homes will showcase five homes at Catellus Development Group’s Mueller neighborhood May 23 through June 7. It’s the first time in decades that the Home Builders Association of Greater Austin’s tour has focused on Central Austin. The homes from local builders are described as ‘ultra-green, ultra-urban.’ Prices of homes on tour start at about \$1 million and range from 3,000 to 4,500 square feet. Hours: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday through Tuesday, weather permitting. (Call 454-5588 to see if homes are open during bad weather.) Tickets: \$15 general admission; \$12 seniors and children 5-17. No credit cards accepted. www.AustinHomeBuilders.com, www.muelleraustin.com.

functional and aesthetically pleasing lakes, native plants and a combination of young and mature trees.

The homes all have received at least three of five stars from Austin Energy’s Green Building

See PRAIRIE, D4



COLLECTIC home

2785 Bee Caves Rd • one blk west of Mo-Pac • 512.347.1616 • www.CollecticHome.com

Collectic Home is a lofty, upscale furniture store created with one decorating rule in mind: there should be no rules.



This clever design is one of our favorites. Our 17" high Cameron Ottoman features a top cushion that’s removable: just flip it over to reveal a versatile, hardwood serving tray. Choose the 18" square or 19" diameter round style; each is crafted in bicast leather with sophisticated French stitching. At only \$149 they’re an exceptional value, too. Available in Brown, Red, Ivory, and Robin’s Egg.