

Z - N E W S

Austin, Texas

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Zilker Neighborhood Association

Next Meeting

Monday April 28, 2003

6:30 p.m. - Meet & greet

7:00 p.m. - Meeting

Kinney Ave. Baptist Church
1801 Kinney Avenue

Homeowners, renters,
and business owners are
welcome!

MEET YOUR
NEIGHBORS, LEARN
ABOUT ISSUES
AFFECTING YOU AND
THE NEIGHBORHOOD
YOU LIVE IN...

The Importance of May 3rd

by Elizabeth Yevich

As Americans, we enjoy the opportunity to choose where we live, the freedom to decide how we want to spend our time and the privilege to vote. A privilege that too many take for granted. During these uncertain and unstable times, it is more important than ever to exercise this right.

Saturday, May 3rd, election day for the City of Austin, is a mere few weeks away. The right to vote should be coupled with the responsibility to be educated about the candidates. You vote for them; they work for you. If someone tells you they have no plans to vote, ask them why. Ask them if they are aware of how important their one vote can

be. And perhaps, remind them that if they give up their right to vote, they forfeit their right to complain.

“Those who are too smart to engage in politics are punished by being governed by those who are dumber.” -- Plato

In May 2002, the overall turnout for the city elections was a dismal 9.3 percent. Though voting in the three precincts that comprise Zilker (325, 332 and 462) is usually higher than in other areas of town, there is room for improvement. Let's set an example in this neighborhood of ours. Familiarize yourself with the platforms of the upcoming candidates. Attend one of the many candidate forums to hear their viewpoints. Then exercise that marvelous right we all have in this country by voting.

Early and mobile voting begins April 16 and runs through April 29. For information on early voting locations or where to vote on election day, contact the Travis County Elections Division at 238-VOTE or ww.co.travis.tx.us/county_clerk/election/dates.asp.

Twenty candidates have filed for the city council races. The mayoral race has eight contenders this year. Names and contact information of candidates is at: www.ci.austin.tx.us/election/.

Remember, many elections, local and national, are decided by less than 100 votes. Your vote does indeed count.

Inside This Issue

President's Message.....page 2

Meeting Agenda.....page 3

Fight the Bite.....page 4

Decoding Codes.....page 5

Neighbor Resources.....page 6

Termites or Ants?.....page 7

Lamar Proposal.....page 8

Business Spotlight..page 9

Zilker History.....page 10-11

Contact ZNA.....page 12

From the President



The ZNA Executive Committee now has a group e-mail address: ZNAEC@yahoo.com. If you write, one of us will get back to you as promptly as possible.

* * * * *

Zilker residents vote! Given that our neighborhood precincts are some of the most active in the city, you probably already know that the municipal election occurs on May 3rd, and in-person early voting is open from April 16-29th. The ZNA is not hosting a Candidates' Forum this time, but there have been numerous opportunities to participate in Question & Answer sessions with the mayoral and city council contenders. When you are evaluating the candidates, I urge you to consider their expressed support for maintaining the integrity of our urban neighborhoods.

* * * * *

Let's all do whatever we can to help support the Barton Springs Road-area merchants negatively affected by the long-term road construction project.

* * * * *

What kind of social opportunities with fellow Zilker residents interest you? A picnic? Block party? Community service project? Had any experience pulling together a neighborhood social gathering? Please share your ideas for large or small scale neighborhood events. Our ZNA general meeting in late July will be primarily social, but I would also like to help facilitate other possibilities.

* * * * *

In the February Z-News, I encouraged participation in the Zilker e-mail list, zilker@yahoogroups.com, as a way for

neighborhood residents to share ideas and opinions, and stay informed. Recently there was some confusion about the nature of that e-mail group. (I was one of the confused.)

To clarify: The Zilker Neighborhood Association does not own or manage an e-mail group or list. We currently have no on-line mechanism for communicating with ZNA members and other Zilker residents other than by using the Zilker Yahoo!Group graciously established and maintained by fellow resident Richard Gravois. The fact that Richard is now an active member of the ZNA executive committee and maintains a website for ZNA, and also that several other committee members have helped sign up folks, undoubtedly added to confusion about the relationship between ZNA and the Yahoo!Group. Please be aware that membership in ZNA and in the Zilker Yahoo!Group are independent.

* * * * *

Thanks again to the 30+ people who braved the icy weather to attend the February 24th ZNA general meeting. I hope to see lots of folks at our next meeting on Monday April 28th.

* * * * *

Last but by no means least: It's never too late to volunteer. Your neighborhood needs you. If you are willing to deliver newsletters, organize a project, and/or serve on the executive committee, please let me know.

Your neighbor,

Deborah Bice-Broussard

Monday, April 28th Meeting Agenda

- 6:30 Social time: meet & greet your neighbors
7:00 Call to order, introductions & announcements
7:10 Update on area crime - Officer Mike Summers, APD
7:20 Austin Community College presentation
7:35 Austin Clean Water: update on Barton Springs lift project
7:50 Capital Metro project
8:00 Wheatsville Cooperative presentation
8:30 Updates & news:
 - Barton Springs Road construction
 - Kinney Avenue hill sidewalk
 - Zoning & Board of Adjustment cases
 - Grocery store in Lamar Plaza shopping center
 - Membership
 - ZNA Opportunities
- 8:50 Discussion and New Business
9:05 Adjourn

Make your neighborhood a better place by becoming a ZNA member today!
All residents of Zilker are welcome, not just homeowners.



April 2003 Membership Form

Name _____

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Date _____

Annual Dues: \$7 per person or \$25 Sustaining member

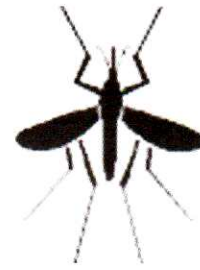
Circle One: New Member Renewal

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to Zilker Neighborhood Association, Memberships, PO Box 33546 Austin TX 78764-0546.

Help Fight The Bite

by Melanie Williams

April showers bring May flowers, but they also bring a major pest in our neighborhood - the pesky mosquito. Ever try and talk to your neighbor in the yard, play with your children, or walk your dog, only to be driven indoors because you are being eaten alive? Not only are mosquitoes a nuisance because of their itchy bites, they also pose a serious public health risk to both people and pets!



Mosquitoes spread diseases such as Dengue Fever and encephalitis. Encephalitis is a serious and sometimes deadly disease that causes inflammation of the brain. West Nile virus is one form of encephalitis spread by mosquitoes that attacks people, birds, horses and even dogs. Did you know the only documented case of West Nile virus in Travis County was in a dead bird found in Barton Hills?

If there are places around your home where water collects, you may be raising mosquitoes. Just a thimble of water is enough. Even if they are not bothering you, mosquitoes hatched in your yard will spread to your neighbors. By taking a few simple precautions we can make our outdoor time safer and a lot more pleasant.

Recommendations from the Texas Department of Health and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

- Get rid of old tires, cans, bottles, jars, buckets, drums and other containers, or drain them.
- Empty your kiddie pool at least weekly.
- Repair leaky pipes and outside faucets, and move air conditioner hoses frequently.
- Clean rain gutters and drain pipes, and keep them clear.
- Empty and change the water in flower vases, bird baths, fountains, planters, potted plant trays and animal water dishes at least twice a week.
- Empty standing water in toys, potted plant trays, and plastic covers or tarpaulins.

For more information contact the Texas Department of Health Zoonosis Control Division at www.tdh.state.tx.us/zoonosis/ or (512) 458-7255.

Note: Mosquito Dunks, a BTi-based product, are sold locally and on-line for use in outdoor water collection or holding containers. Product information says this biological pest control product kills mosquito larvae but is completely non-toxic to animals such as fish, birds, wildlife and pets. I put 1/4 Dunk in each of my rain barrels once a month. - Deborah B-B

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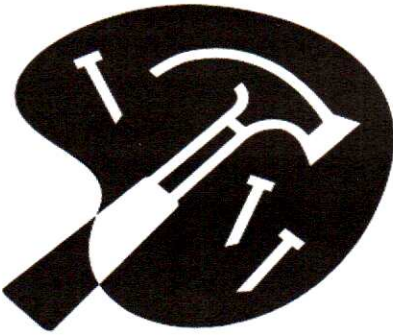
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Decoding Codes

by Michael Heffernan

Codes and zoning are a lot like taxes. Most people only think about them when they absolutely have to. They do, however, greatly impact our neighborhood. Even though it might seem un-



necessarily restrictive, there are good reasons for codes and they help protect the neighborhood.

The ZNA zoning committee is here to answer questions and to help make

sure the process works. We don't make the decisions, but serve as advocates and support for the neighbors and the neighborhood. The rules are set by the city and county, but everyone has to play by the rules!

Codes and Zoning 101

Most lots in the neighborhood are zoned Single Family-3 (SF-3), which permits a duplex to be built if the lot is at least 5,700 square feet.

Most lots adjacent to Lamar Blvd. are zoned commercial, even if they look like a residence. This allows for many uses for the lot. Conditional overlays are restrictions placed on a commercial lot. These can limit the use of a lot, such as for car or liquor sales.

Deed restrictions vary according to the subdivision within the neighborhood. What is allowed on one block may be different from the next, depending where the subdivision lines are drawn. Know the codes and deed restrictions of your subdivision before you build!

Restrictions include things like setbacks, easements, impervious cover, maximum building coverage, etc.

If you wish to build something that does not

comply, you must obtain a variance. Variances can only be obtained if there is a hardship due to the physical nature of the lot. As an architect, I deal with the variance process and have learned it should never be used as a design tool.

If you want to get a variance, you must follow the process. First, fill out an application with the city. The city will notify your neighborhood association and all neighbors within 300 feet. You (or your representative) may have to appear before the Board of Adjustments, the Zoning and Platting Commission and/or the City Council to state your case.

Contact the zoning committee and we'll answer your questions and help in any way we can!

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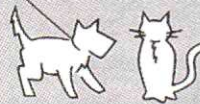
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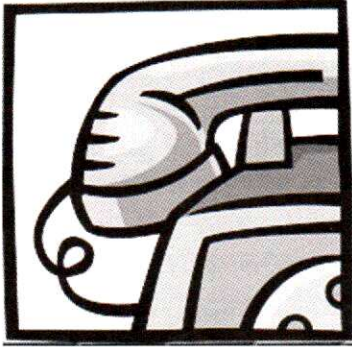
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NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCES (CLIP AND SAVE)

Have questions about a city related or regulated activity? Need to report a traffic light out? Wondering how exactly your property is zoned? Although there's no single source for all the answers, here are a few places to start.

Handy web sites:

- City of Austin's frequently asked questions: www.ci.austin.tx.us/faq/
- City of Austin's resource guide: www.ci.austin.tx.us/neighborhood/resource.htm
- City of Austin's customer service directory: www.ci.austin.tx.us/help/directory_a.htm

Handy telephone numbers:

- City of Austin's information and referral: 512/974-2000
- Austin Police Department's Representative for Zilker is Mike Summers: 512/974-8241
(Note: Officer Summers is NOT for emergencies - that's 911)
- Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Department: 512/974-7695
- Report a traffic signal out: 512/457-4851
- 24-hour electric dispatch: 512/494-9400

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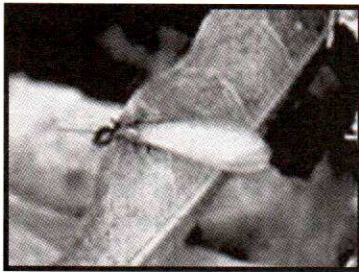
447-2100

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What's Bugging You?

by Wizzie Brown

Termites are often confused with ants. To tell them apart, first, look at the antennae. If the antennae are bent, it's an ant. If the antennae are straight, it is a termite. Next look at the "waist." Ants have a "wasp waist" that is constricted; termites do not.



Termite photo courtesy of Texas A&M

Next, compare the size and shape of the front and back wings. Termites have similar sized wings, whereas ant wings are different. If the insect has shed its wings, look for a stub on the second body segment. Both termite and ant swarmers will shed their wings after mating, but only termites have a visible stub where the wing was attached.

A thorough inspection can detect a termite problem and determine if treatment is required. Inspect window sills and cobwebs for shed wings. Walk around the structure and look for mud tubes going up the foundation, piers or utility entrances. Examine the building for damaged wood; any wood to soil contact is a potential entry site for termites.

For more information contact the Cooperative Extension of Texas A&M Univ. at 512/854-9600.

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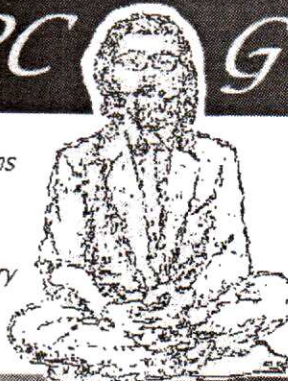
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Commission to Consider Lamar Improvements

by Lorraine Atherton

Later this month the City of Austin Urban Transportation Commission will consider a proposal to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety along South Lamar Boulevard, from Town Lake to Ben White.



Celia Kemp, a cyclist who commutes from south of Ben White to North Austin submitted the original proposal.

The latest version calls for filling the gaps and removing barriers in the sidewalks on both sides of the boulevard, adding a single bike lane on the west side of the street, and providing crosswalks or other crossing improvements at various intersections.

Capital Metro added sidewalks along most of South Lamar about 10 years ago, but major gaps remain. In the Zilker neighborhood the two biggest problems are on the west side of the hill between Bluff and Treadwell and on the east side of the street at Austin's Pizza (where the creek goes under the boulevard).

The other major gap is on the southeast end of Lamar near the Golden Corral. Hopefully, by focusing on those gaps, South Lamar neighbors will be able to secure the commission's support for some short-term improvements to make it safer for pedestrians, bus riders, cyclists and motorists, while laying the groundwork for comprehensive corridor planning toward the end of this year.

If you would like to know more, call Lorraine Atherton at 512/ 447-7681 or contact Tommy Eden through the Urban Transportation Commission at 512/974-7129.

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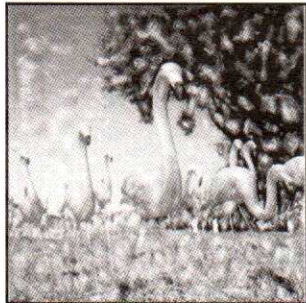
1132 South Lamar
in the Lamar Plaza Shopping Center
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Art in the Heart of Zilker

by Deborah Bice-Broussard

Adding another welcome element to our area mix, Studio2gallery opened last year in the

South Lamar Business Park at Lamar and Collier.



Flamingo Park by Weitz

Four Austin artists create and offer their works there, and exhibit regional art in the main gallery. Owner Tina

Weitz, a Zilker resident and local photographer,

hopes the alternative open studio concept will bring visitors insight into the actual process of creating art and enhancing the art experience for the viewer.

For more information on this gallery go to www.studio2gallery.com or call 448-2622. To learn about many visual arts galleries in Austin, including those south of the river, check out www.inthegalleriesaustin.com.

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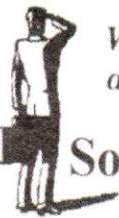
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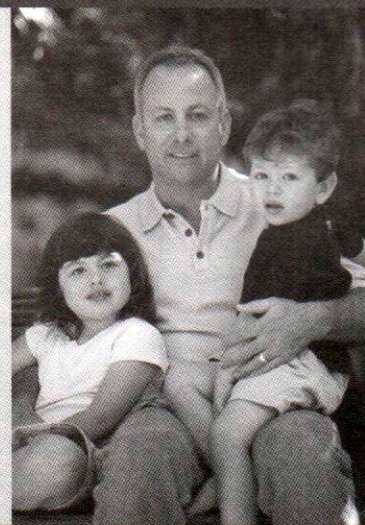
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In Good Company

By Bratten Thomason

Zilker neighbors are fortunate to have a fire station located in the heart of our community. Station Number 11 is located at 1605 Kinney Avenue and has been a part of this neighborhood for more than 50 years. The current fire house was built in 1949 and has been an active station since its construction. Many of us see shiny Engine No. 11 parked out in front of the station as we drive along Kinney Avenue every day. Have you ever wanted to know a little more about Austin firefighters and our own Company No. 11?

History of Austin's Fire Department

Austin's first fire company was chartered in 1858 by John Bremond, a former New York fireman, and local businessman William Walsh. Known as Austin Hook and Ladder Company No. 1, this company of 150 volunteers most likely organized in response to a large fire that burned a livery stable to the ground that same year. Austin's first fire truck was a hand-drawn cart made by a local blacksmith and carriage maker in the late 1850s. It was equipped with wooden buckets that could be used to haul water from the Colorado River and from private wells to help extinguish fires around the city.

In 1871 the city purchased its first steam engine to fight fires, although the fire company was still an unpaid volunteer force. Unfortunately, 10 years later in 1881 the

original Capitol Building was destroyed by fire. The City did not have a professional, paid fire department until 1916.

Milestones in Austin Fire Fighting History

- **1858** First volunteer fire company formed
- **1871** First steam engine purchased for fire company
- **1881** Original Capitol Building burns
- **1912** City of Austin purchases first motorized vehicle for fire fighting
- **1916** City establishes first paid professional fire department
- **1949** Station No. 11 established on Kinney Ave.
- **1952** City of Austin becomes first in Texas to hire African American fire fighters

Company No. 11

Austin city directories first list the Kinney Avenue fire station in 1949. Established as Company No. 11, the station remains in its original structure and is an integral part of the neighborhood's history. Today, Company No. 11 consists of 15 firefighters; five firefighters are on call each shift. Austin firefighter cadets go through 28 weeks of training, which includes intense physical training, academic studies and 200 hours of medical training. After completion, all Austin firefighters are certified as emergency medical technicians as well as firefighters. According to some of the firefighters in Company No.11, they respond to an average of 100 calls a month, of which more than 50 percent are medical responses.



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Company No. 11 enjoys being located in a neighborhood. One firefighter remarked it gives the company a chance to get to know their neighbors rather than being in a location where cars speed by and no one ever notices that there is a fire station in the area. Company No. 11 also enjoys interacting with Zilker Elementary students. During Fire Prevention month in October, firefighters often visit Zilker classes to talk about fire safety and sometimes students visit the firehouse on field trips where they are shown fire safety videos and get to see Engine No. 11 close up.



Station Number 11 at 1605 Kinney Avenue serves the neighborhood

Our neighborhood firefighters had two pieces of fire safety advice:

1. Check your smoke detectors regularly to ensure the batteries are working. When you set your clocks back or forward each year for the time change, replace the batteries in your smoke detectors at the same time.
2. If you have a medical emergency, call 911 immediately. Always call 911 first if you have a medical emergency, do not come to the station. Because the firefighters are on call for fires and emergencies, they could be out on a call and not at the station.

Thanks to Company No. 11 for being such good Zilker neighbors and for protecting the life and safety of our surrounding community every day. So, the next time you see Engine No. 11 parked out on the drive on Kinney Avenue, be sure to wave or say hello to our local firefighters and neighbors. I also hear they make a pretty good catfish taco with chipotle sauce...

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Zilker Neighborhood Association

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Visit us on the web:
members.tripod.com/~znaweb/

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Zoning and Code Compliance

Michael Heffernan, 448-2801

About the Zilker Neighborhood Association...

ZNA holds general meetings on the 4th Monday of February, April, July and October. The executive committee meets on the first Monday of each month, usually at Artz Rib House.

Our Purpose: To improve the quality of life in the neighborhood in matters of land use, environmental protection, public services, consumer protection, preservation of the historic and unique character of the community; to provide support in other matters of neighborhood concern and to promote and participate in the civic life of the city.

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