

Z-NEWS

Austin, Texas

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Zilker Neighborhood Association

Success on Kinney Ave. Sidewalk! Happy Neighbors break it in!



Helpful Tips Regarding Voting In the Upcoming General Election

By Elizabeth Yevich

In case you had not heard, there is an election coming up on Tuesday, November 2nd, 2004. Early voting begins Monday, October 18th and ends Friday, October 29th. The nice thing about early voting which many fail to realize is that you can vote anywhere during these days. On election day, you are restricted to voting at and only at your own precinct. And if you wait until Election Day itself, you might be in for a long line at the polls this exciting Presidential Election year so I would encourage everyone to vote early. For a complete listing of early voting mobile and permanent locations, visit Travis County's Election Division website at: www.traviscountyelections.org or (512) 238-VOTE (238-8683).

The other trouble with waiting until election day is that many folks do not know what precinct they

live in. Though all this information is printed on your voter registration card, it is far easier to go online and look up the information. And far more fun! By the way, you do not need to have your voter registration card with you when you vote; an identification card is sufficient.

(continued on page 3)

Next Meeting

Monday, October 25

6:30 p.m. — Meet & Greet

7:00 p.m. — Meeting

ZNA Election * Cap Metro

*ACL Festival

*Zilker Botanical Garden

Location:

Zilker Elementary

1900 Bluebonnet

Homeowners, renters, and
Business owners are welcome!

Meet your neighbors,
Learn about issues
affecting you and
the neighborhood
you live in!

What's Inside

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President's Message



by Robin T. Cravey

Everyone talks about the weather, but no one does anything about it, Mark Twain once commented. The latest issue of *Scientific American* carries a story about

some scientists working on a way to change the course of a hurricane. Reading it, I thought to myself: Dadgum! I wouldn't want to be on the committee that has to decide which way the hurricane goes!

That's one way to look at land use planning, except that it happens much, much slower. From that perspective, neighborhood planning committees should decide to turn the horrible hurricane of change away from our little community. Hurricane Density has formed up in the Gulf. It has deluged Houston. It's headed our way!

We seem bound to argue about density. But we never argue about population growth. We deplore our local population increase as if it were the result of a Chamber of Commerce conspiracy. We ignore the fact that the world population is increasing rapidly. This is the result of billions of conjugal conspiracies the world over. Those couples ought to slow down with the procreation. Adding fuel to this raging storm of human multiplication is the conspiracy of medical workers and sanitarians who are insidiously lowering the death rate. That just compounds the increase. So the committee to decide which way the population hurricane goes is going to be one mighty committee.

So what are we talking about when we talk about density? We're talking about where we're going to put our population increase. The question is whether we will put the increase in our population in existing cities, towns, and neighborhoods, or spread them over our dwindling open space.

Are we really going to let go of the natural heritage of our country? Will we pave it all?

Over a hundred years ago, historian Frederick Jackson Turner wrote a book called *The Closing of the Frontier*, in which he took note that America's population density had reached the level of Europe's at the time of the discovery of North America. In the middle

of the last century Austin's own Walter Prescott Webb elaborated on the theme in a book titled *The Great Frontier*, in which he showed how much of the wealth and dynamism of our country was built on the seemingly endless supply of free land. That's all gone.

More cars parked on the streets. Higher property taxes. Most of these negative effects are caused not by urbanization but by bad public policy. Good transit and mixed-use zoning can make car ownership less necessary. More people could walk to work, or to the store. (Or ride scooters!) More could take transit. A state income tax could rescue our schools from dependence on local property taxes.

Not long ago our neighborhood lost its grocery store. The market was too small. If the neighborhood was more urban, maybe it could support a grocery store. And maybe more people walking in the neighborhood would enrich the sense of community.

There's a lot to think about. And maybe Twain will have the last laugh, and nothing we do can really turn the hurricane. But we're a dynamic people: I expect we'll do something.

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Classes forming monthly. Cost is \$360. If you are interested in learning more about this workshop, please contact the program leader, Ellen Shannon, LMSW, licensed professional counselor intern, at 663-9464 or www.CounselingAustin.com.

Presented by the offices of Steve Milan, LCSW & Associates.

continued from Page 1:

Travis County Voter Registration has recently re-vamped their website at: www.traviscountytx.org/goVoters.do Once there, click on 'verify your registration' where you enter your first/last name. Once your name pops up, click on your voter certification number to locate your neighborhood polling place, location directions, and even a display map! Jurisdiction codes appear as well where you can identify your district representative – but everyone knows this by heart, right? Representative contact information such as, name, address, telephone number and email address is also available so I encourage all to visit this new and vastly improved Web site.

Please remember that if you or any friends or family members intend to vote by mail, the final day that Travis County can accept these applications is Tuesday, October 26. And please, exercise that wonderful right we all have to vote. And encourage your children, parents, and friends to do so as well. Other useful links:

Travis County Democratic Party:
www.traviscountymocrats.org

Travis County Republican Party:
www.traviscountygop.org

Texas Secretary of State: www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/pamphlets/voter.shtml

Are you planning to vote? New Polling Location For Some In Zilker! Check to see if this applies to you!!

Zilker is actually comprised of three separate precincts: 325, 332 & 462. If you live in precinct 325, you vote at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 2128 Barton Hills Drive. If you live in pct. 332 you vote at Zilker Elementary School at 1900 Bluebonnet Road, and **if you live within the boundaries of precinct 462 you folks now have a new and more convenient polling location!** The former location was at the Parks and Rec. Department next to Zach Scott Theatre at the north end of the Lamar Bridge. Only trouble was 75% of the folks in this precinct lived on the other side of Barton Springs Road in the Zilker Neighborhood with a large population being disabled voters living on Cinco and Lamar Square. These voters regularly navigate the sidewalks around this area without assistance but could get to the former Parks & Rec. polling

location only with assistance. **Therefore, the location of precinct 462 has now been moved to 1700 South Lamar, Suite 101 which is the Austin Travis County MHMR building.** And kudos to ZNA Executive Committee member Richard Gravois (of precinct 332) who submitted a resolution to 'Change the Polling Station Precinct 462' to his Democratic Precinct Convention on the evening of the Primary on March 9th, 2004. This resolution then passed favorably at the Travis County Democratic Party's County Convention held on March 27th at the Palmer Center at which point it was forwarded to the County Election Division where they obviously thought Richard's idea a very good one as well. So please, if you live in precinct 462, spread the news of this polling location around to all your neighbors!

Thanks to neighbors who contributed to the Watermelon Social in July; we appreciate you!!

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Shady Grove Restaurant
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Vulcan Video

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Wednesday Prayer Meeting at 6:45 pm

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The Density Debate: Dense pack our neighborhoods or sprawl

By Jeff Jack and Lorraine Atherton

In the July *Z-News* we noted that the neighborhood's occupancy rate, or number of people per housing unit, is much lower than the Austin average, which means that our current housing stock could accommodate many more people without major redevelopment. Since then, we have also estimated that if all of the neighborhood's residential lots were fully built out under their current zoning, we could house 8,939 people. Compared with our current population of 5,936 and 8.15 people per acre, that would be an increase of more than 50%, for a density of 12.31 people per acre, without changing any of our existing residential zoning.

The push to increase density in our older neighborhoods has been based on the projection that Central Texas will double in population in the next 20 to 40 years. Where are these folks going to live? The reasoning is that they should live in Austin and that we must redevelop our older residential neighbor-

hoods at much greater densities to increase our tax base, reduce traffic congestion, support mass transit, and prevent sprawl. But is dense packing central Austin really our only option?

There are two other alternatives for accommodating this projected growth that do not overwhelm our neighborhoods or encourage sprawl. In 1999 the Austin Neighborhoods Council calculated how many new people could be accommodated in Austin's Desired Development Zone (DDZ) by a combination of "infill" and "greenfield" development. Within our city limits there are about 28,000 acres of undeveloped land in the DDZ, essentially east of MoPac. This area is outside
(continued on page 6)

Z-News Deliverers Needed

It's good exercise, and feels good too. Routes generally take about 30-45 minutes every 3 months. Contact Andrew Murphy at 442-9380 to learn how to get involved.



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Officers

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1st Vice President: OPEN
2nd Vice President: Hill Abell
Secretary: OPEN
Treasurer: Andrew Murphy
Austin Neighborhoods Council Rep: OPEN
Z-News Editor: Peggy Kelley
Social Chair: Annick Beaudet

Committee Chairs (Appointed by Exec-Comm)

Zoning & Code: Michael Heffernan & Bobby Rigney
Newsletter: Andrew Murphy
Neighborhood Planning: Dave Piper
Membership: OPEN

Other Appointees

APD Commander's Forum: OPEN
Zilker School Liaison: Andrew Murphy
Z-News Ad Sales: Fontaine Maverick
Webmaster: Richard Gravois

AUSTIN CITY LIMITS MUSIC FESTIVAL: YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Was the Sept 17-19th ACL Festival in Zilker Park an unqualified success for all, a disaster for the neighborhood, or something in between?

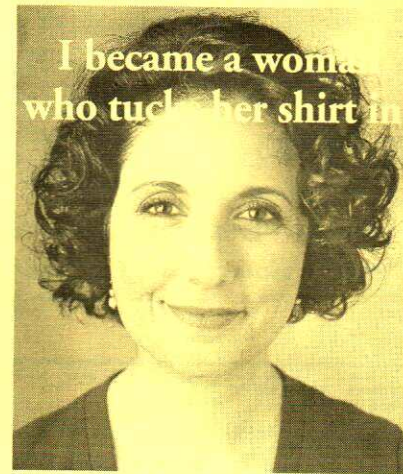
What was your experience of the impact of the Festival on the Zilker neighborhood? If you wish to report problems or praise, the more specific your comments are, the more useful they will be in helping the ZNA Executive Committee understand and reflect your point of view while working with the people who are planning for the 2005 festival.

You can e-mail your comments or suggestions to zilker@yahoo.com if you have joined the Zilker neighborhood's Yahoo!Group, or to only the ZNA Executive Committee at znaec@yahoo.com. You also may offer feedback or ask questions at the October 25th ZNA meeting.

Charlie Jones, Executive Producer of the ACL Festival, and Warren Struss, Acting Director of the Austin Parks and Recreation Dept. will attend the Oct 25th ZNA meeting along with additional staff from their organizations, to receive feedback and answer questions. (See meeting agenda, this page.)

Zilker Neighborhood Association Membership Meeting Agenda October 25, 2004, 6:30 pm, at Zilker Elementary

6:30 Happy half hour--Social Time
7:00 Call to order, introductions, & announcements
7:15 Election of officers
7:30 Zilker Botanical Gardens: Craig Nazor
7:45 Austin City Limits Festival Feedback
with Charlie Jones, CS&E, Warren Struss, PARD
8:15 Capital Metro presentation on transportation plan
8:35 New Business
Members, bring your issues!
9:00 Adjourn



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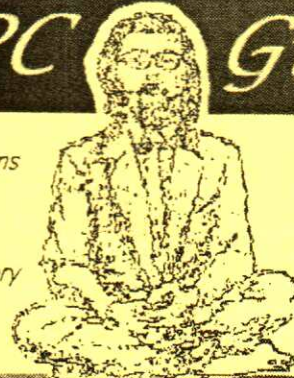
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the environmentally sensitive areas where sprawl is most damaging. Of that undeveloped land, around 19,000 acres are suitable for much higher densities than we have in our existing neighborhoods. Also in the DDZ are more than 8,000 vacant lots that could be built out (infilled) at the same density as surrounding properties. The Neighborhoods Council estimated that those greenfields and infill lots could house almost 400,000 new people, without wholesale redevelopment of our existing neighborhoods or sprawling over the aquifer.

What does that mean for the Zilker neighborhood? With the completion of the new developments on Kinney Avenue, Zilker will have almost no undeveloped land and few vacant lots within its residential areas. There is, however, a third option for housing new population, and it could be applied to Zilker. "Brownfield" development refers to developed areas that are under-utilized, abandoned, or just run down. The proposal to redevelop the industrial areas on Burnet Road near the UT Pickle Research Center is a large-scale example. On a smaller scale here in Zilker, we could add residential uses to the 190 acres of commercially zoned property along South Lamar and Barton Springs Road. A mixed-use zoning overlay there would allow the construction of enough residential units to house an additional 5,603 folks in our neighborhood. This would bring our total potential population to about 14,500, a 145% increase, with a density of over 20 people per acre, without changing any single-family zoning.

As we consider what the density of Zilker should be, we need to move beyond the myth of density vs. sprawl. If the population in Central Texas does double over the next few decades, the city of Austin has significant opportunities to capture much of this growth without dense packing our older neighborhoods and without promoting sprawl. It is also clear that Zilker can protect its existing character and shoulder its civic responsibility through a neighborhood plan that accommodates a reasonable amount of growth by carefully building out our current residential zoning and optimizing our commercially zoned properties.

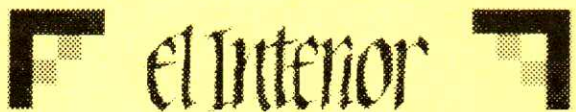
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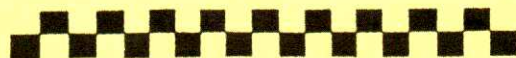
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Zilker Neighbors Helping Neighbors at the Holidays

By Barbara Cossie, ZNA Holiday Family
Project Coordinator

Shopping at Walgreen's the other day, I couldn't help but notice that the Hallmark tree decorations were on display. And, of course, that made me think, "It's time to remind Z-neighbors that the holidays are just around the corner!"

I'm not telling you anything new when I tell you that the Zilker neighborhood is one of the best places to live in Austin. Anyone who has lived here more than six months knows that is true. Neighbors give a friendly "hello" as they pass down the street.

Neighbors help each other with chores. A call for assistance from Zilker School is a call to action for our neighbors. We live in a great neighborhood, don't we?

In the spirit of giving to those families who need help for the holidays, six years ago the Zilker Neighborhood Association created the Holiday Family Project. The project provides toys, household items, clothes and food to folks who live in our area and need assistance at the holidays. The families come from Zilker Elementary School and are selected by the school's counselor. Each family provides their own wish list of items they need or want. ("Needs" are usually provided by mom or dad and "wants" are provided by the kids. But, isn't that the way it is in every household?)

And, here is where the real spirit of giving comes in. Zilker neighbors select an item they want to purchase for a family member from off their wish list, and

BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY

ZNA Membership Types

Zilker Residents [regular, full membership]

- A basic annual individual, \$7.00 dues
- B sustaining annual individual, \$25.00 dues

ZNA Friends [live outside Zilker (no voting privilege)]

- C basic annual individual, \$7.00 dues
- D sustaining annual individual, \$25.00 dues

| Name and e-Mail address | Category (A, B, C, or D) | Dues (\$7 or \$25) |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
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| 3) _____ | | |
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| Additional contribution for ZNA general fund..... | | |
| Additional contribution for ZNA special project (specify: _____) | | |
| Total Enclosed | | \$ |

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ZNA Memberships, P.O. Box 33546, Austin TX 78764-0546.

purchase the gift. Sometimes, with so much to do at the holidays, neighbors will just donate money to the Holiday Family Project, and gifts and food are purchased in their names. Either way, this effort provides several families with a happy holiday season. I don't know if any other neighborhood association provides this kind of holiday sponsorship to those living in their area, but I am very proud to say that Zilker does! Last year the ZNA sponsored five families. This year, we would like to see that number increased to six families. The need is there. We just need folks to fill that need.

If you want to give a family a happier holiday, your donations in any amount will be welcome. In November, the counselor at Zilker School will be contacted for her list of the recommended families and their needs. You may purchase a gift (or food) yourself, or send a check to the ZNA. The gifts and food will be taken to the families on December 19.

If you have any questions or need more information on how you can help, call 447-4437.

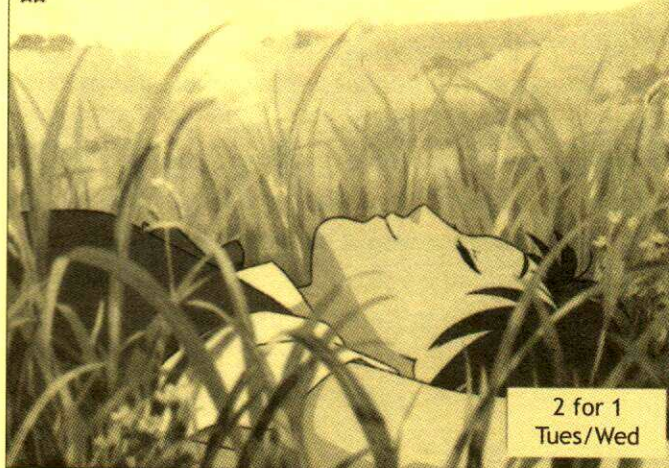
Thanks, folks! You are the best. I am proud to be part of this neighborhood—because of you!

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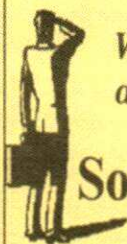
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Neighbors Helping Neighbors

By Tina Heffernan

One of the things that makes our neighborhood unique is the creative, diverse and impassioned people who live all around us. Community projects and community parties are the norm. There is a general belief that we live in a small village surrounded by a large city.

One of our neighbors, Awad Abdelgadir calls the "Zilker village" home, but the village where he grew up is never far from his thoughts.

Awad owns Nile Valley Herbs, a small, local business selling hibiscus teas. He sells his teas in many local groceries and restaurants, including our neighbors Sun Harvest and Kerbey Lane. The hibiscus flowers are grown in the silt of the Nile, and the Egyptian and Sudanese people have been using them for teas and dyes for centuries. His family lives in Al-Zawrat and he donates a large percentage of the profits from the sale of his teas back to the village.

Al-Zawrat is a village of 4,000 people located in the Northern Province of Sudan, the ancient home of Nubia. Sudan is a country torn by civil war - infamous for its poverty, refugees, "ghost houses" and child soldiers.

But that is just one side of life in Sudan. In Al-Zawrat, daily life goes on as it has for hundreds of years. Crops are planted, children are raised, and families come together to make a community. Women weave beautiful baskets and rugs using techniques handed down through generations. The simple architecture evokes a long history of life along the Nile. There are few cars, computers, or TVs in Al-Zawrat. Residents must depend on each other to survive in the harsh climate of the desert. The Nile River provides life for the villagers as it has for centuries.

Because of Awad's devotion to his community and his efforts to raise money, the village now has running water. Women no longer have to carry it from the river. Awad is currently working to build a health clinic that will serve 17,000 people in Al-Zawrat and the surrounding villages - neighbors that currently have no access to medical care in a place where most die of measles or diphtheria. There is no maternity, routine postpartum or well-baby care, and emergency services don't exist in Al-Zawrat. A clinic would change many lives.

Right about now I hope that you are saying, "How can I help?" There are many small ways that will make a huge difference:

- Form a neighborhood group to send school supplies and books and to raise funds for teachers. A teacher's salary is \$20 per month, usually paid for by the donation jars at places like Kerbey Lane and Phoenicia Bakery.
- Make a donation for the clinic (the Westlake Rotary Club has opened an account for the project). A facility can be built that will host a doctor, pharmacy, dentist, mid-wife, educational consultants, and minor surgery for approximately \$125,000.
- Buy Nile Valley Tea. Encourage every person and restaurant that you know to buy Nile Valley Tea.
- Think of ways that our neighborhood can partner with Awad's village and help to

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connect the two communities - the Zilker neighborhood and the village of Al-Zawrat.

If you would like to learn more about Awad, his village, the clinic project, or earlier projects, please call Awad at 442-6907 or visit the website at www.nilevalleyherbs.com

"ZILKER ZAMBOREE"

Zilker Elementary School
Saturday, October 23, 2004
12:00 - 4:00 pm

Games for the Kids

Silent Auction for the Adults - local artists' works, restaurant certificates, classroom theme baskets

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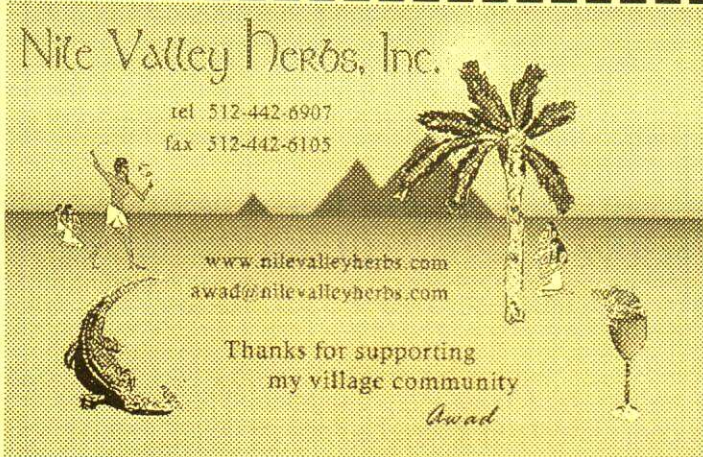
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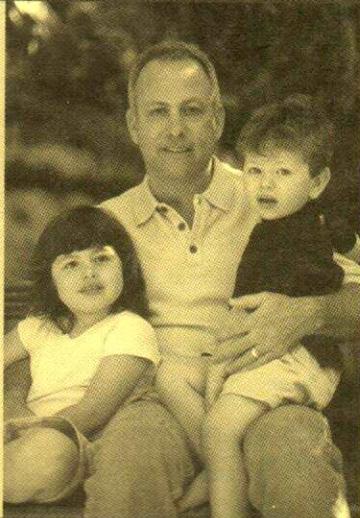


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Michael Heffernan, 448-2801

About the Zilker Neighborhood Association

ZNA holds general meetings the 4th Monday of February, April, July, and October. The Executive Committee meets at 7 pm 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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