

SAVING TOWN LAKE, RESTAURANT ROW, AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A Message from Jeff Jack, President of ZNA

When the Hyatt was built in the early 1980s, the community was outraged that the hotel was so massive and so close to the shore of Town Lake, where Lady Bird Johnson's dream of a beautiful park was taking shape. To prevent further intrusions along the lakefront, and to protect the scenic vista provided by the open space around the lake, the City Council adopted the Town Lake Waterfront Overlay ordinance in 1986.

In 1999, however, a "Plain English" revision of our land development code weakened the ordinance. Each project approved under the weaker ordinance infringed a little more on the lakefront. Recently, several new projects are trying not only to skirt the intent of the original ordinance but also to get variances from the current restrictions. On the south shore alone, the proposals for new high-rise buildings stretch from the edge of Zilker Park all the way along Lakeshore Drive to Pleasant Valley Road.

In response, concerned citizens from all over Austin have organized to protect our lakefront. Save Town Lake is a new organization bringing together neighborhood associations, park advocates, environmental groups, and business interests to raise awareness of the need to protect this valuable resource by upholding the intent of the original ordinance.

The ZNA Executive Committee has already endorsed this effort, and we urge all our neighbors to learn more at the Web site SaveTownLake.org, sign

★ **Alamo Draft House Free Passes** ★

The first 20 individuals who sign in for the February ZNA meeting will get a free movie pass to the Alamo Draft House on South Lamar. If you want a pass for your Valentine too, you need to bring him or her with you to the ZNA meeting. If you don't have a Valentine, just bring a neighbor or a friend. Everyone is welcome at our ZNA meetings!

Thanks to the folks at Alamo.

Next Quarterly ZNA Meeting

Monday, February 26, 2007

**Zilker Elementary School
1900 Bluebonnet**

Meet your neighbors.

Learn about issues affecting you and
the neighborhood you live in.

6:30 pm Happy Half Hour

7:00 pm Business Meeting

Sewer Work on Kinney

Pandemic Flu

Mobile Food Vendors

Rolling Stones Park Fund

Homeowners, renters, and business owners
all welcome.

the online petition, send your comments to the City Council and Planning Commission, and donate to the cause. As Austin grows and changes, we need to hold on to what makes Austin special. Preserving the scenic vistas of Town Lake, maintaining open space along the shore line, and keeping intrusive buildings from dominating our parkland should be a top priority. Please take a few minutes to let our City Council and Planning Commission know that you care about Town Lake and want them to deny any variances to the Waterfront Overlay.

BARTON PLACE CONDOMINIUMS

Butler Shores, a section of the Waterfront Overlay, affects most properties in the pecan grove area of Barton Springs Road. Rick Engel, owner of Austin Java, has teamed with a local development group to purchase an option on the property that includes his restaurant. They have proposed building condominiums on the back of the site while maintaining the two restaurants on the front along Barton Springs Road. Their original proposal called for a variance to the 35-foot setback along Toomey Road required by the Waterfront Overlay and waivers from com-

ZNA Executive Committee for 2007

ZNA officers elected for 2007 are:

Jeff Jack, President, a 23-year resident of Zilker, is an architect who works on commercial and residential projects. As a past president of the Austin Neighborhoods Council, he has served on advisory groups representing neighborhood interests to the City, Capital Metro, AISD, and Envision Central Texas. He was ZNA president in 2002 and has returned to serve during the development of our neighborhood plan, which he hopes can be completed before the next ice age!

Richard Gravois, Vice President and Web master, is a founder of ZNA, going back to the day before the Memorial Day flood of 1981. That makes him and Paulette antediluvian residents of Kinney Avenue. Their children went to Zilker Elementary, and maybe their grandchildren will also.

Bobby Rigney, Vice President, has enjoyed Zilker living since 1988. He assists with searches for public records, he says, "in support of informed decisions. Solution-worthy information serves Zilker best in addressing our development and ordinance questions."

Ryan Stryker, Secretary, is celebrating the first anniversary of the completion of his new house on Goodrich. He hails from the frozen northern province of Wells Branch, and is still jazzed about being a Zilker resident.

Andy and Rachel Elder, Treasurer and Social chair, are celebrating the birth of their first human child, a baby girl named Anwen. But you will still see them walking their other baby, Emmy the Wonder Weimaraner, around the neighborhood.

Robert Singleton, ANC Delegate, lives in the Stoneridge Apartments, at least for the moment. In his spare time, he's a bookstore manager.

Lorraine Atherton, newsletter editor, grew up in East Austin and has lived in Zilker since 1983. She works at home as a freelance copy editor.

Besides the elected officers, ZNA relies on members to fill some very important unelected positions. Those committee chairs for 2007 are:

Dave Piper, Neighborhood Planning chair, is a telecommunications network operations manager who moved to Zilker in 2003 because of its central location and wonderful, eclectic character.

Peggy Pfaff, Zoning chair, has lived in and around the Zilker area since 1998.

Gardner Sumner, Parks and Environment chair and executive committee rookie, is a crystallographer and pathologist who moved to 78704 in May '06, after dreaming of a home in Austin for many years.

Ba Cossie, Holiday Family coordinator, and **Kaye Trybus, Town Lake Park representative**, are also founding members of ZNA.

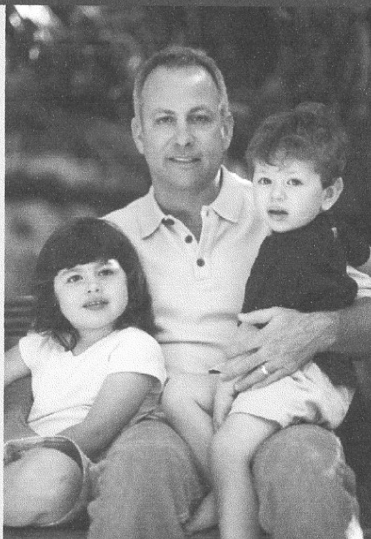
The officers are especially grateful to **Fontaine Maverick, advertising director**, and **Kim McKnight, distribution coordinator**, who make ZNews happen. ZNA also needs a neighbor who can keep track of a spreadsheet and chair our membership committee, and we would like to have someone to serve as a contact or full-fledged committee chair on school concerns. If you can help out, contact any of the officers listed on the back page.

Buying or Selling Your Home?

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resident



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patibility standards triggered by the single-family homes south of Barton Springs Road. The property is currently zoned Commercial Services, allowing buildings 60 feet high. That's the same height as the Bridges condo project under construction behind the Taco Cabana at Lamar and Riverside, a fair example of what could be built along Barton Springs Road now without zoning changes or variances.

In our talks with the developer, ZNA's Executive Committee has created a framework for a possible agreement, including: 1) no variances from the Waterfront Overlay, 2) maintain compatibility standards with single-family homes, and 3) limit any additional height to an internal transfer of existing allowances so that there is no net increase in

the building volume allowed under current code. Also, if any additional height is to be considered, it must meet the Waterfront Overlay provision for significant community benefits, such as more open space, preservation of existing trees, pedestrian access through the property to the park, coordination with future development of adjacent properties, and affordable housing. Benefits of particular interest would be a legal restriction ensuring that the front of the site maintains the scale and character of the existing restaurant row, and protection of the views of downtown from our neighborhood. The developers have not completed their analysis of these factors, but they do intend to file for a zoning change in the near future. We hope they will continue to work with the neighborhood to address our concerns and develop a design for the project that sets a good precedent for the South Bank area.

STONERIDGE APARTMENTS

An unfortunate consequence of the Barton Place project is the loss of about 30 affordable housing units in the existing trailer park. That is at the heart of neighborhood opposition to the proposal at Stoneridge Apartments on South Lamar, where we stand to

How Mobile Do We Want Our Food?

In September the City Council passed a new ordinance regulating the location and hours of operation of mobile food vendors (those trucks or trailers that set up in parking lots or drive to construction sites to sell fast food). The ordinance also allows neighborhoods to choose additional rules, similar to compatibility standards, to apply in their residential areas.

The main ordinance requires mobile vendors to locate in commercial zoning districts. The vendors may not operate within 50 feet of a building that contains both residential and commercial uses, and they may not operate between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m.

If ZNA submits an application by February 28, we may also ask the City Council to prohibit mobile vendors within 50 feet of houses. The additional rules would also limit the hours of operation to 6 a.m.–10 p.m., unless the vendor is more than 300 feet from those single-family areas.

The ordinance can be found in Section 25-2-812 of the City Code.

The deadline is February 28, so we must vote on this at our February 26 meeting.



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4 «Z•NEWS» FEBRUARY

lose 141 truly affordable apartment units, with rents of \$400–\$700. A local developer wants to replace this entire complex with 300 new units and a parking garage, which will require the city to vacate Cinco Street, the cul de sac in the middle of Stoneridge.

This could be one of the first projects in the city to use the incentives of the new Vertical Mixed Use ordinance. VMU's affordability incentives, however, have proven to be a big disappointment for ZNA. The income levels used to calculate affordability are so high in Austin that the developer could offer units at or above Zilker's market rate and call them afford-

able. That would be \$900–\$1200 per month, or almost double the current rents.

The City has long recognized that we have an acute shortage of affordable housing, and a few months ago we passed a bond proposition of \$55 million to address it. Yet the City Council, in approving the rezoning of Stoneridge, is allowing the destruction of perhaps \$15 million worth of affordable housing. Judging from rezonings across the city, it will take all the bond funds just to replace the affordable housing Council has doomed since the bond election. In the 7-0 vote to approve the Stoneridge rezoning on first reading, Council did not even consider requiring a larger percentage of affordable units or a lower income level to make the rents comparable to current rates. The one concession to the neighborhood's affordability concerns was to direct staff to try to get full value for the Cinco Street land and plow that back into buying down a few more units. That is a nice gesture, but the City Council should have gotten more for the increased zoning they gave away to the developer, or they should have backed up their often voiced concern about affordable housing by denying this zoning request.

Jeff Jack, Your Neighbor



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NEW ON THE BOULEVARD: BIRDS BARBERSHOP

by Fontaine Maverick



PHOTO BY BROTHER'S LANE

Moving along South Lamar the past few months, I'm struck by the attractive small developments along the boulevard, little old strip centers, renovated with cheerful colors and populated with small businesses. In a long-empty building, formerly a furniture store, at 2110 S. Lamar is Birds Barber-shop. Birds offers decently priced haircuts in a great atmosphere: a high-ceilinged black and white room offset by big murals and a disco ball, rock and alternative music, a foosball table, and a stage and DJ booth for special events. Birds has turned a cramped, desolate corner at Oxford and South Lamar into a very cool place to be. Other 2110 businesses: Roost (home decor), Downstairs Apparel, Violet Rouge Makeup Boutique, Waxing Studio, Love 365 Shop, Sentient Services, Legendary Beads.

Editor's Note: In 2005, ZNA was approached about a parking variance for an auto supply store proposed at 2110. After ZNA stood firm in its opposition to variances, the building was renovated within code, without a car-oriented business. Parking is still a problem, but at least the site doesn't look like another car lot.

Deliver Z•NEWS

We want to deliver ZNews to all residents in the neighborhood. Please take on a route.

Get a little exercise while getting to know your neighborhood. Most routes take less than an hour every three months.

Contact Kim McKnight at 663-6422



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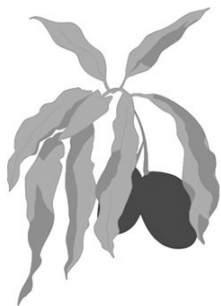


**Zilker Park Kite Festival
Sunday, March 4**

Come join us as homebuilt kites will take to the sky, competing in events ranging from the smallest kite to the largest kite, from the highest flying to the most creative kite. You don't have to enter the competition to fly a kite. Bring your kite and fly it - or just come to see the spectacular view. Hundreds of kites will fill the sky on Sunday March 4. Everyone is welcome!

Rain date March 11

Sponsored by the Exchange Club of Austin, an all-volunteer nonprofit that supports children in need.



Green Mango Real Estate

**Buying or selling in Zilker?
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**Peter Stiles
663.7619**



Rolling Stones Park Improvements

by Jeff Jack, ZNA President

As part of the negotiations surrounding the Rolling Stones concert last fall, the promoters agreed to donate \$300,000 from the event ticket sales to improve Austin's parks. This was beyond the usual fees and expenses associated with the use of Zilker Park as a concert venue. Half of that donation goes directly to the Parks Department to be spent on Zilker Park. The other half is to be divided among the neighborhoods most affected by the concert. Because of this, the Zilker neighborhood needs to consider how to spend about \$31,500 on park improvements. A fund has been set up with the Austin Parks Foundation, which will act as the business agent to disburse the money.

Over the last two months, what has risen to the top of ZNA's wish list are improvements to the City of Austin neighborhood park directly adjacent to Zilker Elementary School. That includes the tennis courts, the children's playscape, and the ball field south of the school.

Through the ZNA Executive Committee, Lorraine Atherton is working with Zilker Elementary Principal Bren McCullar and the Zilker PTA to come up with a priority list of improvements to that park. From there we will work with the Parks Department to price out the projects and determine how they will be implemented. If you have any ideas for improvements to this park or any other park in our area, please let us know (ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com). Projects that are not funded with the Rolling Stones money can be incorporated into our neighborhood plan, where they will be considered for ZNA fund raisers and for future City of Austin bond proposals.

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SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

The work has started! Zilker Elementary will soon have a larger cafeteria! The expansion would not be happening if it had not been for the help of ZNA. The community support for addressing the needs of the school won over the Bond Oversight committee last year, and then ZNA support helped with obtaining permits, etc. from the city. Thank you from all the students, staff, and parents.

The expansion will include a new side door going directly into the cafeteria, making the cafeteria meet the safety standards we want for our children. Also, a new side entrance into the hallway will be added. This entrance will be handicap accessible. Mr. Norman Barker (a former Zilker student) is the district contact for our construction. We look forward to celebrating the addition, and will continue to update the community about the progress.

Thank you. *Bren McCullar*
Principal at Zilker Elementary School



B-BALL RETURNS TO ZILKER ELEMENTARY

Chago and Emiliano Espinosa, former Zilker Elementary students, have turned their dad's garage-sale find into heavy-duty basketball backboards for the court behind the school. Zilker parent Craig Striegler and welder Dave McClinton helped out, but it was the Espinosa brothers (pictured above) who made it happen, with more than three months of after-school work, including waiting for paint to dry in wet and icy weather. Grateful hoops fans have been bouncing with joy since the installation in January. Thanks, guys.

PHOTO BY APOLONIA AND SOFIA ESPINOSA

**DON'T MISS ZILKER'S LIVE MUSIC
EVENT OF THE YEAR**
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Kinney Wastewater Project Begins Construction in Late April

The Austin Clean Water Program (ACWP) will begin construction in late April on improvements to sewer and water lines in the Barton Heights area and along Kinney Avenue. ACWP staff will be available to answer questions about the project at ZNA's February 26 meeting. Some work will also be done on the sewer line on the east side of South Lamar between Barton

Springs Road and Juliet Street, but that work will be done on the weekends, and at least two lanes will remain open for north- and southbound traffic.

ACWP is the city's response to an EPA administrative order that requires Austin to fix aging sewer lines to prevent sewer overflows. All projects must be finished by June 2009, or the City faces fines of \$27,500 per overflow incident per day. Water lines are sometimes replaced at the same time if they are found to be leaking to coordinate construction activities. ACWP last held an information briefing for impacted residents and businesses in January and will host a "Meet the Contractor" meeting before construction begins.

The improvements include:

- Installation of 1,960 linear feet (LF) of 12-inch wastewater line and 2,400 LF of 8-inch wastewater line along Kinney Avenue from Collier Street to Barton Springs Road, with 17 new manholes and 94 new wastewater service laterals. The new line will replace an old 6-inch wastewater line.
- Replacement of existing 6-inch and 8-inch wastewater lines with new 8-inch and 12-inch pipe totaling 7,200 LF on South Lamar, Bluff, Josephine, Hillmont, Juliet, Jessie, Ethel, and Treadwell streets.
- Replacement of existing 6-inch cast iron water line with new 6-inch and 8-inch PVC and ductile iron water lines and new water service lines on Ethel, Jessie, Josephine, and Hillmont streets.

If you have questions, please call the ACWP hotline, 684-3204, or provide your email to cr@groupsolutionsrjw.com to

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Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Dues: _____ Contribution for ZNA general fund: _____

Contribution for special project (specify): _____

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:

ZNA Memberships, 1818 Treadwell St., Austin, TX 78704

receive regular updates on the project. The project will be listed on the ACWP construction awareness Web site, www.ci.austin.tx.us/ca/, as soon as construction begins.

Private Laterals, Repairs and Financing

The Austin City Council last month approved an ordinance requiring homeowners to repair or replace private laterals identified by the City as defective. Grant assistance will be available for low-income residents (maximum amount is \$3,000) and a low-interest loan program (\$1,000 to \$3,000) will be set up for property owners who need to borrow money to fix their laterals.

A private lateral is the pipe on private property that connects the wastewater customer's home to the public wastewater system, generally located at the right-of-way line or the easement line.

The financial assistance programs were put into place after the Utility presented the draft ordinance to the Austin Clean Water Program's Citizens Advisory Group and Private Laterals Task Force and concerns arose about support for those residents who do not have resources to fix the problems.

The City will begin to implement the program by summer 2007. Utility officials said that homeowners often don't know they have a problem with their lateral until sewage backs up in their yard or home. The Utility's goal is to find defects and prevent the impact of wastewater overflows on the public and the environment. ACWP staff will be available to answer questions at ZNA's meeting on February 26.

Crispin Ruiz

*Austin Clean Water Program
448-4459*

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Mortgage Rates Are at Historic Lows. Mortgage interest rates have trended down during the last 6 months. As of Oct. 19, 2006, the average 30-year fixed mortgage rate is 6.36%.

Demand Will Continue. The U.S. is expected to add 14.6 million households in the next 10 years. Strong growth together with rising income will likely translate into increased demand for housing.

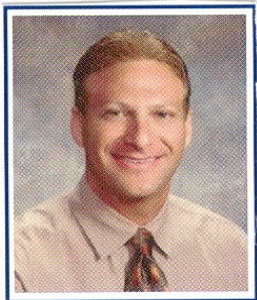
Home Sale Prices Have Increased. Median existing U.S. home sale prices have increased on average 6.5% each year from 1972 through 2005.

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NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING UPDATE

by Dave Piper, Planning Committee Chair

Austin's formal neighborhood planning process, in which neighborhoods have some voice in how they will grow and develop, has been up and running for eight years, and more than 30 neighborhoods have completed plans. The planning process has evolved over time. Zilker neighborhood started the formal process two years ago, as part of the South Lamar Combined Neighborhood Planning Area (SLCNPA), along with Galindo Elementary Neighborhood Assn., South Lamar Neighborhood Assn., Barton Hills Neighborhood Assn., and Barton View Neighborhood Assn. (Each neighborhood within the combined area will have its own plan, but getting the City to agree to that was a major effort.) As a general statement, members of ZNA have expressed a desire to retain the unique character of our interior residential neighborhoods, and if further density is allowed, it should be added along the commercial corridors of South Lamar and Barton Springs Road.

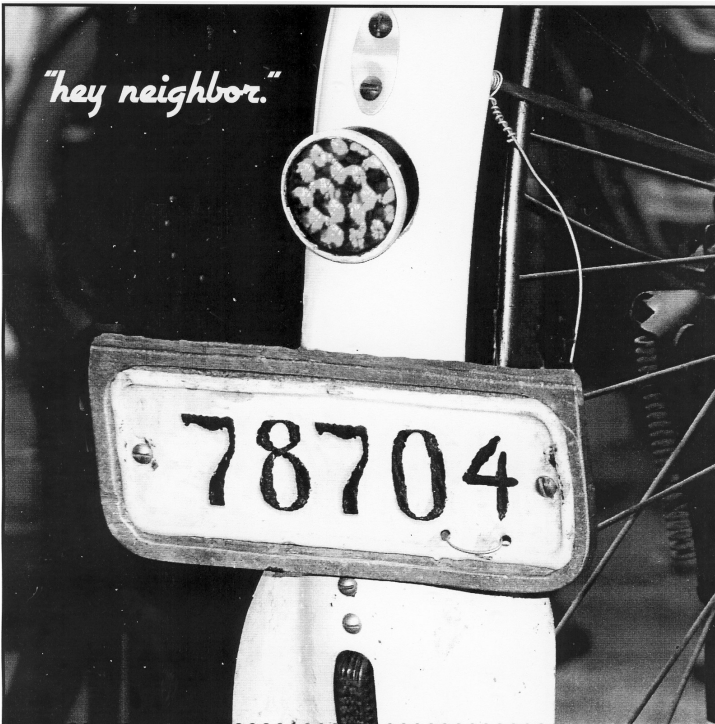
There has not been much progress lately on the SLCNPA. The process has stalled because of a few

major stumbling blocks, such as:

1. *No clear definition of the term "single family."* Part of the process is to designate areas on our future land use map (FLUM) for uses such as commercial, vertical mixed use (VMU), multifamily (MF), and single family (SF). Most of these designations, with the exception of VMU, are not defined well. Of critical importance to Zilker is the definition of "single family," since so much of our area is residential use. Under the present system, the City has zoning districts SF 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, all within the SF use category; but do we want "single family" to include duplexes, condos, and granny flats? What is the minimum lot size for SF? Do we want small lots included everywhere in Zilker?

2. *No clear definition of the term "mixed use."* The recent adoption by the City Council of the VMU ordinance has cleared up much of the ambiguity here, but the old mixed use category remains a factor on our land use map.

3. *A lack of infrastructure information from the City.* Knowing the capacity of our water, sewer, and traffic systems would help us make informed



"hey neighbor."

78704

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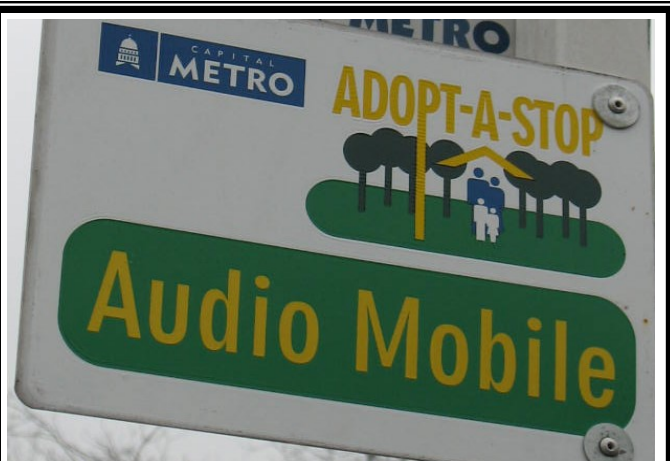
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decisions on future development.

4. *No measure of zoning capacity.* While wanting to be responsible for allowing a reasonable increase in density in our neighborhood, we really do not know if such additional density can already be accommodated within our current zoning. As in item 3, knowing the potential capacity of our existing zoning is essential to making informed decisions on zoning changes.

Because of lack of progress and lack of City resources for the SLCNPA, the City has hired a team of facilitators from the University of Texas to help move the process along. The facilitators are interviewing neighborhood leaders and other participants and will make their recommendations to the City soon about how to proceed.

Another prominent issue is how the south shore of Town Lake will be developed. A wide-ranging mix of people and groups extending well beyond the boundaries of ZNA are calling for a master plan for Town Lake as a whole, and we are very much participating in the effort to make this plan happen and to shape it. (See page 1.)



The bus stop at Hether and Bluebonnet, featured in the July 2006 ZNews, has been adopted by Audiobile, a new business at 2123 Goodrich. Owner Victor Elmur cleans up brush and litter and contacts Capital Metro about graffiti. Check out Audiobile at audiobileonline.com. Anyone can adopt a stop, and Zilker's many bus routes can use the extra attention. Many thanks to Victor and all the other neighbors who are participating in Adopt-a-Stop. *The Editor*

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About the Zilker Neighborhood Association

ZNA holds general meetings the fourth or fifth Monday of February, April, July, and October, at Zilker Elementary School. 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.

2007 Executive Committee of ZNA

Elected Officers:

President: Jeff Jack, 447-5877

1st VP: Richard Gravois, 441-3430

2nd VP: Bobby Rigney, 471-3758

Secretary: Ryan Stryker, 431-4245

Treasurer and Social Chair: Andy and Rachel Elder, 428-9180

ANC Delegate: Robert Singleton

ZNews Editor: Lorraine Atherton

Committee Chairs:

Holiday Family Program: Barbara Cossie, 447-4437

Neighborhood Planning: Dave Piper, 916-9636

Parks and Environment: Gardner Sumner, 462-0210

Town Lake Park Rep.: Kaye Trybus, 447-4437

Web Site: Richard Gravois, 441-3430

Zoning: Peggy Pfaff, pfaffpt@yahoo.com

Thanks, Neighbors!

ZNA's 2006 Holiday Family Program was another big success! Nine families from Zilker Elementary School had a happy holiday because of the generous support from our many Zilker neighbors. The kids received toys, bikes, dolls, and games. Each family received clothes, household items, and food, as well as Target and HEB gift cards.

Since 1999, Zilker residents have been spreading holiday spirit to their neighbors every year. With this holiday season, ZNA has helped 38 families—a record we can well be proud of in 78704! It is with much gratitude that I send my thanks to all those who participated in this year's holiday drive. All of you who gave money, gifts, food, and gift cards can be sure that your donations brought much joy to those who needed it. The spirit of sharing and caring is very much alive and well in Zilker!

Thank you to the Zilker "elves," Lorraine, Mike, Steve, Trish, Bobby, and Kaye. What a crew! The night the elves delivered the presents to the families started out cold and wet and threatening, and then got worse. But they braved the storm to make sure the children would have their presents by Christmas Eve! Thank you, everyone, for your love and support this holiday. May all the good that you have given come back to you ten-fold.

Barbara Cossie



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