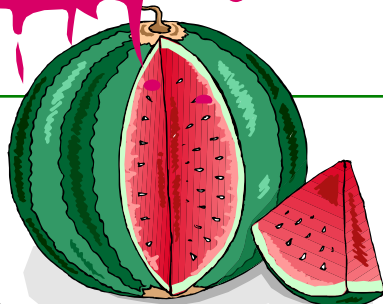


Newsletter of the
Zilker
Neighborhood
Association

JULY 2008

Austin, Texas
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Celebrate the Best of Zilker

A message from Jeff Jack, President of ZNA

With recent temperatures over 100, we are fortunate to have a summer tradition that will help ease these dog days: our Zilker Neighborhood Association annual Watermelon Social. Instead of our regular ZNA business agenda, we can look forward to a relaxing evening enjoying cold watermelon and visiting with old and new neighbors. This year one of those newcomers will be Randall W. Thomson, the recently appointed principal for Zilker Elementary School. ZNA has had a great working (and playing) relationship with Zilker Elementary, and we look forward to continuing that tradition with Principal Thomson. So please mark your calendar for Monday, July 28, and come join us in celebrating the old and new at the Outdoor Learning Center behind the school.

Trees and the Barton Place Condominiums

The pecan grove behind Restaurant Row on Barton Springs Road has gotten a lot of publicity recently, as residents and visitors have mourned the loss of dozens of trees. Whether it is your favorite music venue torn down for an office building or another lake view marred by a condo tower along the shore, the pang of loss has become all too familiar to those who appreciate the special character of Austin. The loss of grand old trees when new development is approved by the City Council is especially painful. The Barton Place Condo project is no exception, and many people deeply regret the removal of so many trees from the site (*Continued on page 2*)

Watermelon Social

Monday, July 28, 2008

Outdoor Learning Center

Zilker Elementary School

1900 Bluebonnet

6:30-8:30 P.M.

☆ ☆ ☆

Meet and Greet Social
Watermelon eating and
seed spitting

Newcomers, old-timers,
homeowners, renters,
parents, teachers, and
business owners

Everyone welcome

Neighborhood Safety Starts Now

by Lorraine Atherton

In May, burglaries of cars and homes surged in the Zilker area. At about the same time, a lot of you discovered our neighborhood Yahoo group (zilker@yahoogroups.com) and started warning others about the crime wave. Some of you worked with the police department's Southwest detectives and district reps, and ZNA alerted Police Chief Art Acevedo's office. APD responded with directed patrols and various crime prevention efforts, and four arrests have been made in connection with

burglaries in the area.

The crime wave reminded us all of the importance of getting to know your neighbors and watching out for each other. To build on that awareness, we hope that our District Rep, Officer Dwayne Kinley, and Mario Renteria with the National Night Out program will be able to join us at the Watermelon Social July 28 to talk with those who are interested in forming Neighborhood Watch groups. National Night Out will be October 7 this year, and now is the time to start getting together with your neighbors to make Zilker a safer place to live.

behind Austin Java and Uncle Billy's restaurants.

ZNA has always worked to sort fact from fiction in growth and development issues. During almost a year of negotiations between the Barton Place developers and ZNA, we dealt with the fact that the property owner had commercial zoning already in place that would allow 95% impervious cover, essentially allowing them to cut down every tree on the site while providing only minimal mitigation under the city's tree ordinance. Fortunately, the owner of Austin Java and Uncle Billy's, who was leasing those sites, wanted to keep his restaurants, and that gave us the opportunity to work with the condominium developers to save as many of the existing trees as we could. (Also, in March 2006, the property owner, Susan Toomey Frost, donated 31 pecan trees to Town Lake Park, in effect planting a new pecan grove a few blocks to the east.) Of the 40 protected trees on the site, all of which could have been removed, we secured an agreement that retained the 8 trees around the restaurants, 3 trees in the Toomey Road setback, and the largest tree on the site, a 54-inch pecan in the middle of the property. The developer also agreed to move 5 other pecan trees off the site and replant them across Toomey on city parkland. This agreement saved 17 of the 40 protected trees on the site. Plus, the developer agreed to respect the Waterfront Overlay ordinance and compatibility standards triggered by homes across the street, provide community access across the site, and donate at least \$500,000 for affordable housing in our neighborhood. These community benefits were significant, and the compromise was presented in ZNA news-

letters and at the April 2007 quarterly meeting, where it was endorsed by ZNA.

The five pecan trees were ready to be moved when the May wind storm struck. Arborists for the City and the developer assessed the damage and determined that four of the five trees would not survive (their roots had been pulled out of the root ball). The four were removed from the site, and the fifth was transplanted to a spot near the ball fields as planned. City staff, based on the current tree ordinance, agreed to allow the developer to provide eight new 8-inch trees to mitigate the loss. ZNA executive members believed that the developers should do more, and we have continued to work with them to make sure that the trees lost will be replaced by the same number of caliper inches and that the funds budgeted for the tree relocations will all be spent on new trees. In a meeting on July 10, the developers agreed to our requests, and the parks department is now studying the best places around the ball fields north of Toomey Road for these new trees.

To be clear, the developers did not cut down any trees that they did not have City approval to remove, they are protecting the trees that were to remain, and they did *(Continued on page 10)*

ZNA WANTS YOU!

Volunteer now—get to know your neighbors and make a great neighborhood even better.

The Zilker Neighborhood Association will be nominating officers and committee chairs in September to serve in 2009.

Now is the time to think about what leadership role you could fill in the 'hood. Call Jeff Jack or any other ZNA officer,

or come to the

Watermelon Social on July 28

and sign up for

the ZNA of the future.



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Little Zilker Prepares for Fall Projects
by Heather Way

Lots of exciting improvements are still being made to our neighborhood park next to Zilker Elementary School. In the fall, the Austin Parks and Recreation Department will be planting a large number of new trees. Ahhh, wonderful shade. The steering committee for the Friends of Zilker Neighborhood Park is also looking at new benches and picnic tables, overseeing a committee studying safety issues, and setting up a fall park workday. Drop in at the Watermelon Social on July 28 to see how the park is coming along and to sign up to help with these and other park projects.

The Friends' steering committee is a group of volunteers appointed by the Zilker Elementary School PTA and Zilker Neighborhood Association Executive Committee to implement the master plan for our neighborhood park. If you are interested in helping out with any of the park projects, please contact Heather Way (hway@austin.rr.com) or Kim McKnight (663-6422; kimmcknight@austin.rr.com).

Big News for the Big Park

The master plan for **Barton Springs Pool** will be presented to the Planning Commission on July 22, and it will probably be scheduled for a public hearing before the City Council in late August.

The **Austin City Limits Music Festival** is set for September 26-28 this year, in Zilker Park. Check the festival Web site at ACLFestival.com for updates.

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Lights Out on the Court: For some time now, the tennis court lights at Little Zilker were coming on hours before sunset and staying on too late into the night, wasting a lot of electricity. Gardner Sumner (chair of ZNA's parks and environment committee) contacted John Wright's department at Parks and Rec. In short order, thanks to Ray Navarro, the light switch was repaired and reset to turn off after an hour, with lights out for the night at 10 pm. If you want to play tennis after dark, just push the button, but only till 10.



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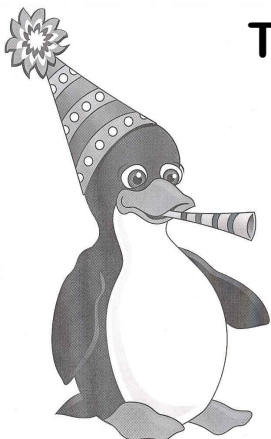
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Kinney Avenue Wastewater Work Wraps Up *by Crispin Ruiz, for ACWP*

The Barton Heights/Kinney Avenue Wastewater Improvements Project is almost finished!

The contractor is in the final stages of repairing curbs and gutters on Treadwell and rehabilitating manholes on Kinney Avenue between Treadwell and Nash before final paving of all the impacted streets. (Kinney between Barton Springs Road and Treadwell already has been repaved where the new sewer line was installed.) All water and wastewater service connections to the new lines have been completed.

New water and wastewater lines have been installed in Josephine, Jessie, Juliet, and Hillmont and in Treadwell between Jessie and Kinney. As a result of the extensive construction work necessary to install both water and sewer lines, these streets will receive curb-to-curb repaving. Streets with just the sewer work will be repaved over the trenched area only. The second half of Kinney Avenue between Treadwell and Nash will be repaved where the new sewer line was installed.

After the street paving, grassy areas disturbed by the service connections will be restored in like or better condition.

All of this work is expected to be completed by the end of July or early August. The Project Manager is Larry Mendez, phone 974-1581, e-mail Larry.Mendez@ci.austin.tx.us.

Thanks very much for the extraordinary patience you and your neighbors have shown during the many months of construction. We are pleased that this \$6.7 million project has resulted in new water and wastewater infrastructure for the neighborhood.

The ACWP Web address is

www.ci.austin.tx.us/ca/.

You are also welcome to call the

ACWP hotline at 684-3204.

The hotline is answered 8–5 during the work week. If calls come in after hours, or on a holiday or weekend, we will return the call as quickly as possible on the next working day.



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The **Austin Clean Water Project** constructs new wastewater lines to replace aging lines that leak raw sewage into our creeks and yards, creating a serious threat to public health and the environment. The Environmental Protection Agency has set a deadline of June 2009 for completion of Austin's sewer improvements. If the City does not meet the deadline, the financial penalty is \$27,500 per overflow per day.


Other water-wastewater projects continuing in the neighborhood include the area bounded by Bluebonnet, Hether, and South Lamar. See the ACWP Web site for updates.

Farewell . . . For as long as most of us can remember, Richard Kroger was the City staff person that we went to with all our traffic issues. Last month, however, Richard retired. . . . **And Welcome to South Austin:** He has been replaced by Ronnie Bell in the Transportation Division of Public Works (974-7015; ronnie.bell@ci.austin.tx.us).



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Zilker Iconoclast Recognized for Affordable Modernism

by Andy Elder

The living history of our neighborhood is constantly being rewritten as its residents and structures change, sometimes in dramatic surges. For relative newcomers such as myself (2002), the most tangible historical perspective may come from the feel of a home or street rather than a documentation of its past.

A recent exhibit by the University of Texas School of Architecture helped connect our modern-day neighborhood with the work of A. D. Stenger, who developed several original tracts within Zilker and Barton Hills. Spearheaded by faculty members Riley Triggs and Bill Jackson, the exhibit drew from a variety of historical resources, including original plans, photographs, and newspaper articles documenting the progress and impact of Stenger's work. These were augmented with new drawings and models for five homes that are representative of his design aesthetic.

A Stenger house is relatively easy to spot from its distinctive features; low-pitched roofs

and stone walls are typical exterior signatures, while interiors often have broad stone fireplaces and breezy floorplans. The architecturally inclined observer will also recognize clerestory windows and pronounced rafter tails, but most of us will simply intuit that the homes represent some type of postwar modernism.

It is appropriate, and perhaps not at all coincidental, that Zilker contains the work of such an iconoclastic man. Stenger never graduated from UT's architecture program, and he refused to join the American Institute of Architects in order to build his own designs. Since Stenger's design features did not comply with FHA standards of the time, he secured outside funding and developed his own subdivisions in places like Zilker (then outside the city limits) to realize his vision.

Aside from his legendary Arctic hunting trips, Stenger is locally renowned for the iconic homes of John Henry Faulk and Cactus Pryor, but with 106 homes built in the fifties and early sixties, his lasting impact is much broader. Many

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Several houses in the Zilker neighborhood are still recognizable as Stenger creations, like this one on Bluebonnet, with its low roof, clerestory windows, and stonework.

of these homes were modest, between 1000 and 1500 square feet, bringing the promise of affordable modernism within reach for a wide variety of individuals. Thanks to their lasting design and a continuing appreciation for mid-century modernism, Stenger homes continue to leave a substantial stylistic imprint on our neighborhood.

The influence of Stenger's style is not accidental. Not only did he avoid standards that conflicted with his goals, but Stenger also codified his preferred design elements in deed restrictions. By establishing basic limits around height and building composition, he ensured that the

homes and neighborhoods he developed would emphasize an open, natural environment. Decades later, many residents continue to embrace these elements as a way to preserve the distinctive feel of their homes and streets.

Your yard may already qualify as a **Backyard Habitat**. Find out how easy it is at www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife/, or call Wildlife Austin at 327-8181 ext. 29 to join Austin's Habitat Challenge.



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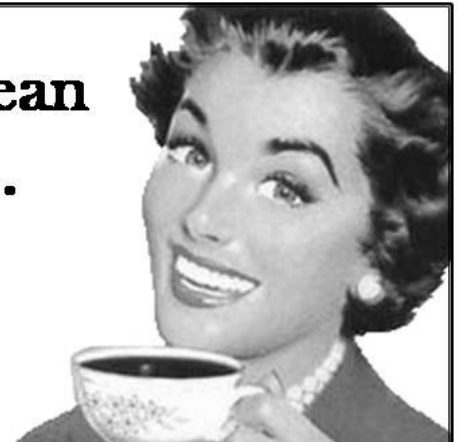
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Remembering a Zilker Original: Effie Marshall Robinson Edwards 1920–2008

by Sissy Shugrue

This is to honor one of Zilker's originals. Years ago I first worked with Hortense Lawson at an early voting polling place at the University of Texas. When I mentioned where I lived, she told me she had grown up at 1711 Kinney Avenue, right next to the church. Through Hortense, I got to know her sister, Effie Edwards. They were both outstanding women, and we became friends.

When the neighborhood was looking for ways to help maintain the Barton Springs Baptist Church and cemetery on Goodrich, I was able to call on Hortense and Effie for advice and contacts. (Mary Clark tells me that the church foundation is getting ready to make more progress on the church.)

Mike Meier and I were honored to visit with some of Effie's friends who had grown up in the Zilker area before the fifties. They told us so much about the early days of the neighborhood. Effie led the whole thing and was a very interesting person. They told us about the church on Goodrich and how it was the center of the neighborhood. There were weddings, christenings, funerals, and Sunday services. They seemed to be happy memories, and the people we met seemed to be just like the Zilker neighbors we have today. It was a close-knit group of friends and neighbors, full of interesting stories.

Effie told about getting an education, which her family wanted all their children to have. She started at Brackenridge Elementary on West Elizabeth Street. After the fourth grade, she went to Olive Street Elementary in East Austin, Kealing Junior High, and the old L. C. Anderson High, which was later moved.

She attended many colleges, starting with Tillotson College, then Our Lady of the Lake for extension courses, Texas Southern, Prairie View A&M, and finally the University of Texas. She earned a masters degree and became a teacher. Her first job was in a one-room school, Hornsby Dunlap School out by Walter E. Long Lake, where she taught for 12 years. She then taught at Webberville for 2 years. Eventually she became a teacher in the Austin Independent School District. In fact, she was one of the first black teachers in Austin. She taught for 22 years at AISD. A highlight of her career was in 1975–1976, when she was Teacher of the Year at Walnut Creek Elementary School. She had a long career, starting in 1942, and retired from the school district after 36 years of teaching.

Effie and Hortense have been important figures in their communities. It was such a pleasure being friends with Effie, and I will miss her. I hope you will each take a moment to remember one of our originals.

Thanks to Mary Clark for helping me with the information here.

BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY

Membership is open to Zilker residents (renters or homeowners) 18 years old or older.
Annual dues are \$7 per person. Additional contributions are welcome. (Many couples pay \$25.)

Name: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Name: _____ **E-mail:** _____

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

Thanks for Voting

Thanks to everyone who voted in the recent City Council races. As we deal with issues like tree protection, we will need the support of Council members who understand our neighborhoods. We hope that the election of Laura Morrison, past president of the Austin Neighborhoods Council, will provide new City leadership on neighborhood issues. We congratulate Randi Shade on her election and look forward to working with both of them to strengthen the tree ordinance and to create a comprehensive growth management policy that will help us retain what is special about Austin. *Jeff Jack*

City Council Election Results

As usual, Zilker's voter turnout for the 2008 City Council elections was well above the city average, but it was very low compared with past elections. Only 530 of Precinct 332's 2,861 registered voters (19%) turned out in May (14% for the runoff). In 2005, 32% showed up. In Prec. 462, east of Kinney, only 9% voted (6% for the runoff); the 2005 turnout was 20%. Citywide, the May 10 turnout was an abysmal 35,858 voters, or 8%, with only 5% for the runoff. Plummeting turnout in City elections has

renewed interest in some form of single-member districts for council members. Look for discussion of a charter amendment this fall.

Lee Leffingwell won Zilker with about 68%, and Randi Shade got about 62%, reflecting the citywide margins in those races. In Place 4, Zilker neighbor Robin Cravey won Prec. 332 with 51% but did not make the runoff. In the June runoff, about 84% of Zilker voters chose Laura Morrison, who won with 65% citywide.

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(Continued from page 3) attempt to honor their agreement on the relocation of five trees. Since the wind storm, they have been cooperating with ZNA to mitigate the loss of those trees. This is no substitute for the community's desire to save all the trees, but it is consistent with what the developers had agreed to do and were legally entitled to do with this property. Again, we all feel a deep sense of loss as this part of the neighborhood changes. To have a better chance to protect what is special about Austin, however, we need our City Council to stand up for our community and not give up what is best about Austin just to accommodate growth.

Next in Line: Mobile Manor

Although we hope our new City Council members will be more sympathetic to protecting Austin's unique character, many projects are in the pipeline that do not need Council approval. The next big one in our neighborhood will be the conversion of the Mobile Manor trailer park on Barton Springs Road, just east of Chuy's, to a five-story (60 feet), 224-unit apartment complex. This site extends

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from Barton Springs Road all the way to Toomey. The developers have already filed a site plan, and since they are not asking for any variances or zoning changes, there will be no opportunity for the community to weigh in, as we did with the Barton Place project. The site has about 100 trees of varying sizes, but the site plan shows that only 10 will be saved. Again, the existing commercial zoning and our weak tree protection ordinance allow this. The site plan does leave the option to have a restaurant pad site on Barton Springs Road, preserving the Restaurant Row character for now. Unlike the Barton Place Condo project, where ZNA negotiated a restrictive covenant to ensure that the scale of the restaurants is preserved, we have no such leverage here, and someday we could see 60-foot-tall buildings all the way to the street, and we could lose the few trees that are now being spared.

ZNA will continue to monitor this project as it works its way through the city's approval process, but for now it looks like we are going to lose many more trees in the near future.





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Z Newsletter of the Zilker Neighborhood **NEWS** Association

www.main.org/znaweb

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Distribution: Kim McKnight, 663-6422

2008 Executive Committee of ZNA

Elected Officers:

President: Jeff Jack, 447-5877

jjack2@austin.rr.com

1st VP: Richard Gravois, 441-3430

2nd VP: Bobby Rigney, 471-3758

Secretary: Ryan Stryker, 431-4245

Treasurer: Andy Elder, 428-9180

Social Chair: Bill Bunch

ANC Delegate: Kurt Koegler

ZNews Editor: Lorraine Atherton

Committee Chairs:

Holiday Family Program: Barbara Cossie, 447-4437

Membership: Kim McKnight, 663-6422

Neighborhood Plan: Dave Piper, 916-9636

Parks and Environment: Gardner Sumner, 462-0210

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

Zoning: Peggy Pfaff, 383-1595

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.

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