



# NEWS

Newsletter of the  
Zilker Neighborhood  
Association

FEBRUARY 2012

Austin, Texas  
Established 1981

## Sustainable Zilker

by Kim McKnight, Friends of  
Little Zilker Neighborhood Park

### Zilker Elementary Rainwater Harvesting and Urban Orchard

ON MARCH 3 the Zilker school community, in partnership with the larger Zilker neighborhood and beyond, will celebrate the recent rains and onset of spring with the installation of a small urban orchard on parts of the school's large front lawn. The Zilker Sustainability Committee, working with AISD, local businesses, and the non-profit organization TreeFolks, has designed a rainwater catchment system that will irrigate the fruit and nut trees (granted to the school through TreeFolks urban orchard program) using gravity flow. The system, including a beautiful stainless steel tank that holds 2,500 gallons, will be eligible for a City of Austin rebate. The school planning group has designed the project so that there will continue to be plenty of open space in front of the school, while the community enjoys caring for the trees and sharing the seasonal fruits and nuts. The Zilker community has been busy fund-raising



Rainwater tank at Zilker school

## ZNA Meeting February 27

Monday 6:30-8:45 PM

Zilker Elementary School  
1900 Bluebonnet



Meet Constable Candidates  
Cyclocross in Zilker Park  
Safe streets and Local Area  
Traffic Management  
Connectivity and the new  
Lamar Plaza

Zilker CIP requests for  
the next bond proposal  
Yard Parking Option  
Register to Vote



Newcomers, old-timers,  
homeowners, renters,  
business neighbors

All Welcome



**Ready, Set, Vote** As this ZNews goes to press, the timing of the Texas primary election is still in doubt. It is unlikely that the primaries will be held as scheduled, on April 3, but we should all be registered to vote by March 5. This will be a long and busy year for Austin voters, and no self-respecting Zilker citizen would miss a single vote. Richard Gravois, the long-running election judge for voting precinct 332, will be at the February 27 ZNA meeting to answer your voter registration questions. Otherwise, check out the Secretary of State Web site, [votexas.org](http://votexas.org).

## Invasion of the Parking Garages

*A Message from ZNA Prez Andrew Elder*

SITE PLANS HAVE BEEN PROPOSED for seven multi-family and mixed-use projects within a few blocks of Lamar Plaza, at South Lamar and Treadwell, with enough dwelling units to double the population of Zilker. Most are just as car-centric as any suburban development, partly because there are few options for their future residents besides a car. Sure, folks can walk short distances around South Lamar for restaurants, maybe bike if they brave the shifting bike lanes. But other than Treadwell and Lamar Square, stoplights are a rare commodity, leaving people to bolt (Continued on page 6)

and will provide matching funds and labor to pay for the project. You can help by

- ◆ Adding a tree (\$75 will help buy a shade tree to replace the dying sycamores on site or supplement the orchard with a citrus tree)
- ◆ Adopting a tree (\$50 will help keep the trees well maintained and watered from the school's rainwater system)
- ◆ Joining us from 9 to 2 on March 3, It's My Park Day, to dig and plant.

### Little Zilker Park News

**March 3, It's My Park Day:** This year, Friends of Little Zilker Neighborhood Park will support Zilker School's Rainwater Harvesting and Urban Orchard Project on our spring workday. We need all hands on deck! Activities include tree planting and installing irrigation. Participants will be treated to coffee and snacks. Please bring your shovels and wheelbarrows, and don't forget your hats and gloves. To RSVP, e-mail [littlezilker@gmail.com](mailto:littlezilker@gmail.com).

**A new drinking fountain** was installed in Little Zilker Park the week of February 6, marking the completion of another park improvement coordinated by the Friends of Little Zilker. On city parkland adjacent to the new playscape at Zilker Elementary, the fountain was funded by both the Zilker PTA and ZNA's Rolling Stones parks fund.



*Damaged oak*

In addition to the new fountain, the Rolling Stones fund has helped to build the running track, install irrigation systems, plant trees, and wire more efficient field lights. The most important benefit, though, has been the establishment of the Friends of Little Zilker, which has brought together dozens of volunteers from the neighborhood and the school to plan and maintain our neighborhood park.

Please thank these neighbors for their work on the fountain project: Sallie Burchett helped with the design, Aaron Odland prepared a plan needed for approval, and John Imbert brought us the plumbing contractor. We are grateful to Joan Singh and John Estrada of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department for the decomposed granite to finish the project. Neighbor Gina Diehl devoted countless volunteer hours over the last two years to coordinating this and other projects for the Friends of Little Zilker.

**Tree mutilator strikes again.** During the week of February 6, someone removed all the lower branches from most of the oaks planted last year along the southern boundary of Little Zilker Park. This is the third time that our young trees have been damaged by unauthorized pruners. Pruning trees in city parks without permission is illegal. If you see

someone vandalizing trees in this way in Little

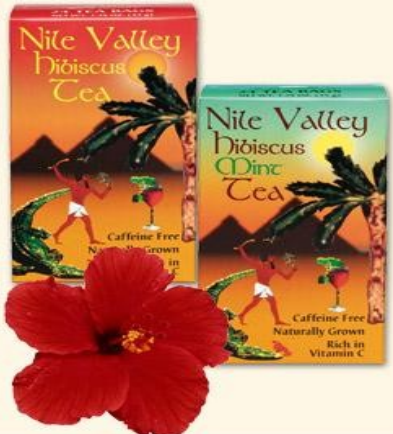
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Andrea and Claudia are among the first to try out the new drinking fountain.

Zilker Park, please call 311.

Gardner Sumner, ZNA's Parks and Environment chair, has been working with Austin's Parks staff and foresters to train volunteers in appropriate watering, mulching, and pruning techniques and to establish pruning and maintenance schedules for mature and recently planted park trees. If you are concerned about our park trees, please call Gardner to find out how you can help the Friends of Little Zilker Park keep our trees healthy.

For more info,  
e-mail [littlezilker@gmail.com](mailto:littlezilker@gmail.com).

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*\*Assumes an average-sized home and irrigated yard.*

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Friday, March 2, 5:30-9 PM  
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 behind Zilker Elementary School  
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**the Minor Mishap Marching Band!**  
 (more bands TBA)  
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 Learn about the urban orchard project  
**FREE** to the public  
 All donations for activities and bands  
 go to Zilker PTA

**Crime Stats Show Good News**

*by Connie Temple, ZNA ANC delegate*

IT MAY BE A BIT disconcerting to use the term "good news" when referencing crime, but that's how recent crime statistics are looking here in Zilker. The 2011 crime statistics reflect a decrease not only nationally and in our city but also in our neighborhood.

In December, the FBI reported that violent and property crimes continue to drop despite tough economic times. In November, the Austin Police Department announced "we are currently experiencing a five year low in property crime in Region 4 (South Austin). We are certain this has to do with you the citizens who are reporting suspicious activity and helping us catch criminals." After reading several articles like these about the downward trend of crime, I was curious to see if the trend held for our neighborhood as well. I found that based on data on the SpotCrime Web site, crimes reported in Zilker decreased not only in 2011 but also in 2010 as compared to 2009.

There is always room for improving our Neighborhood Watch Program, but I echo the sentiment expressed by the representative from APD. I believe that neighbors watching out for neighbors, walking and biking our 'hood while wearing our bright yellow



**Mentors Needed for Zilker Students**

ZILKER NEEDS MENTORS, especially men to work with male students. Qualified volunteers would meet with their partner students weekly for about half an hour. Austin Partners in Education will provide a brief one-hour training to get you started. If you are interested, please contact Zilker counselor Stacey Feldman at Stacey.Feldman@austinisd.org or call her at (512) 414-3318.

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Zilker Neighborhood Watch T-shirts and using the Zilker Yahoo-group to communicate with one another has had a positive impact. Keep up the good work Zilker!

MEET WILLIE THE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH DOG and his best friend, Fig. Check out Willie's cool Neighborhood Watchdog coat. This unique coat was created by Brenda, our Zilker neighbor. In exchange for a donation of time or



*Willie and Fig on patrol (that's Willie on the left, in Zilker yellow.*

funds to the Zilker Neighborhood Watch Program, Brenda has offered to sew a few Watchdog coats. Brenda has sewn dozens of these coats made of fleece and donated them to Austin Pets Alive.

If you have a sewing machine and would like to make your own Neighborhood Watchdog coat, Brenda is willing to provide the pattern and sewing tips.

*Read expanded versions of both Neighborhood Watch stories on the ZNA Web site at [www.zilkerneighborhood.org](http://www.zilkerneighborhood.org).*

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## ZNA Joins Kite Festival March 4

THANKS to the generosity of our Zilker neighbors in 2011, the Zilker Neighborhood Association is pleased to be a sponsor of the 2012 Kite Festival at Zilker Park, promoting creativity and healthy homes for children in ZNA and across the city.



The festival's chief sponsors are the Exchange Club of Austin and the City of Austin. The Exchange Club created the event as a kite tournament in 1929, with a mission to encourage creativity in children.

The national mission of the all-volunteer civic club is the prevention of child abuse. This year, the festival is supporting the Pebble Project of Communities in Schools. This program, in their own words, "believes that all children have a right to be safe, strong, and free." As Bunnie Twidwell of the Exchange Club put it, "These folks go out into the schools to teach children how to protect themselves, and inevitably they identify kids that need immediate help." Pebble suffered huge budget cuts last year, so the Exchange Club is hoping to help through the Kite Festival.

Zilker's donation is our way of supporting fun, family, and free community events in our most treasured park, while continuing to provide for all of Austin's children.

(Continued from page 1) across unprotected lanes rather than walk the half mile to a light. Bus service has been declining, not increasing, and the coming rapid bus service actually removes stops along Lamar in order to speed up transit times for Oak Hill commuters. No rail will reach Zilker anytime soon, so what are the options for a car-free resident?

From inside the neighborhood, this means more of what we saw on Hether recently, where motorists treat residential streets like an extension of Lamar, endangering pedestrians and pets. Streets become less pedestrian friendly, not more, when there are more cars on them. ZNA's next course of action has to capture a combination of things:

- ◆ Push for more transportation options: more and better bike lanes, more and better sidewalks, more and better bus options. The current options don't cut it.
- ◆ Enforce the difference between commuter roads (S. Lamar) and residential streets: Hether is not supposed to be the fastest way to get from A to B, so it should be designed and used to put the priority on people rather than vehicles.
- ◆ Learn from current developments: the VMU strategy has brought density to the corridor, but is it bringing other benefits along with it? All the developers we talk to are rejecting the parking discounts and development bonuses that the city offers, in favor of "fully parked" projects. The current rules for affordability mean there are

84th Annual Zilker Park Fun, Family and Free!

# Kite Festival

Sunday March 4, 2012

presented by:

Free Kite Contest for home made kites  
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some units that will be less expensive, but most are going to be \$1500 efficiencies. Will that bring kids to Zilker Elementary, or provide an affordable alternative to retirees, or allow artists and college students to live close to work and school? Other cities have been able to provide diverse housing options with new development, and Austin should strive for "community" more than just "density."

These issues of urban connectivity (bikes, sidewalks, roads, and housing) will be big topics at the ZNA general meeting on Feb. 27.

Recently I have been encouraging Zilker neighbors to take advantage of the city's latest program to address speeding in neighborhoods. Introduced in January, the Local Area Traffic Management program allows individuals to request remediation in specific locations. Only a limited number of applications will be accepted for this first wave, so we in Zilker should put our requests in the system immediately. While we're at it, we should also be setting our neighborhood priorities for capital improvements that we would like to see included in a November bond election.

There will be a LATM representative at our Feb. 27 meeting to help everyone learn more about the process and possible solutions. Any questions or requests that come up at the meeting will certainly have more weight if we have applications for trouble spots already on file. Visit the city Web site ([austintexas.gov/department/local-area-traffic-management](http://austintexas.gov/department/local-area-traffic-management)) to download the information packet.

And be sure you are registered to vote by March 5. See you at Zilker Elementary on Feb. 27.

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**Join ZNA Today, by Connie Temple, Membership Committee Chair**

The Zilker Neighborhood Association (ZNA) was established more than 30 years ago with the mission of protecting the character of our neighborhood and enhancing the quality of life for all of our residents. ZNA is a volunteer organization that works to ensure appropriate code enforcement, resolve traffic safety issues, maintain our historic and cultural resources, protect our environment, and ensure that our neighborhood’s interests are heard at City Hall.

To be effective in our mission, we need your participation in the association. Membership is open to all Zilker residents who are at least 18 years old. Membership dues support our neighborhood newsletter, *ZNews*, as well as activities such as our summer Watermelon Social. Additional contributions above the annual dues are welcomed and support neighborhood projects such as the Holiday

**BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY**

Membership is open to Zilker residents (renters or homeowners) 18 years old or older. Nonresident property owners are not eligible for membership.

Membership affords you the opportunity to vote on important issues that are addressed at our association quarterly meetings. Please note that voting privileges are activated thirty days after membership dues are received. However, if you were a paid member last year, you can renew your membership anytime this year (prior to and including the general meeting dates) and retain voting privileges.

Be sure to note issues that are important to you in the comments section below.

**Annual dues are \$7 per person. Please list each member name and email address below.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Additional contribution: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

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

ZNA Memberships, 1115 Kinney Ave. #42, Austin, TX 78704

or bring this form with you to the next ZNA meeting

Comments:

Questions? Please email: [membership@zilkerneighborhood.org](mailto:membership@zilkerneighborhood.org)

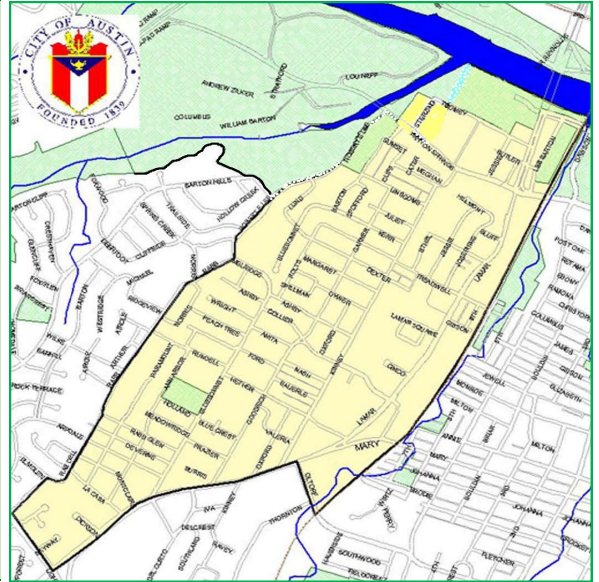


Families Fund (see page 10).

The Zilker Neighborhood Association has a proud history of strong advocacy for our neighborhood. We encourage you to become a member today and help keep Zilker the most wonderful neighborhood in town!

It is now possible to pay dues through PayPal on the ZNA Web site, [zilkerneighborhood.org](http://zilkerneighborhood.org). Alternatively, you can mail in the form on page 8 with your payment or bring the form with you to the Feb. 27 ZNA meeting. Please be sure to note issues that are important to you in the comments section of the form or in the comments box on the PayPal check-out page.

*ZNA boundaries include Zilker Park and Rabb Road on the west and extend to the railroad tracks on the east. The south boundary is Barton Skyway, and the north limit is Lady Bird Lake. Residents on both sides of boundary streets are eligible for membership.*



## 2012 ZNA Officers

FOR THE FIRST TIME in many years, the Zilker Neighborhood Association elected a full slate of officers at the fall general meeting. These neighbors will serve as officers from November 2011 through October 2012:

- President:* Andy Elder
- First VP:* Richard Gravois
- Second VP:* Steve McGuire
- Secretary:* Ryan Stryker
- Treasurer:* Skip Smith
- Social Chair:* Matt Ditlow
- ANC Delegate:* Connie Temple
- ZNews Editor:* Lorraine Atherton

The ZNA executive committee also includes these neighbors serving in the positions listed on page 12: Barbara Cossie, Bill Neale, Dave Piper, and Gardner Sumner.

There are many other ways to participate in ZNA. If you want to get involved but do not want to hold an elected office or commit to serving on the executive committee, talk to any of the neighbors listed on page 12, and they will be happy to help you find just the right job.

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## Zilker Has Another Very Merry Holiday

*by Barbara Cossie, ZNA Holiday Families Program Coordinator*

A BIG THANK YOU goes out to all our Zilker neighbors who donated money, gifts, and time to the ZNA Holiday Families Program. Because of the fine support received, ZNA was able to assist eight families with 27 children from Zilker Elementary School with toys, clothes, household items, and HEB and Target gift cards.

ZNA started this holiday program in 1997, by helping out a single Zilker family. It is just one of the many ways that our neighborhood shows our compassion and concern for each other. In spite of difficult economic conditions,

**Donations** *These are some of the wonderful neighbors who contributed money and gifts to ZNA's 2011 Holiday Families Program. Others wished to remain anonymous. (If I left anyone off the list, please forgive me!)*


Laura Albrecht  
Alison & Dusan Balic  
Gretchen Barber  
Kevin Bice  
Luan & Charles Bogeson  
Pam & Nick Bradley  
Tisha Breitschopf  
Bill Bunch  
Lila Carl  
Dorsey Cartwright  
Jan Castleberry  
Kathy Codova  
Pat Cramer  
Tom Doyle  
Janet Dunkelberg  
Sara Earl

Andy & Rachel Elder  
Pat Elias  
Shudde Fath  
Susan Geist & Brian Lewis  
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Katherine Gregor  
Aletha Huston  
Jeff Jack  
Katy Kappel  
Tivon Lee  
Eileen McNally  
John Meadows  
Mike Meier & L. Atherton  
Amelia Parks  
Linda Quasebarth  
Mary Christine & Robert Read  
Jo Reichler

Peach & Cynthia Reynolds  
Jill Rhoden & Family  
Bobby Rigney  
Raf Robinson & Staff, Irie Bean  
Coffee Bar  
Mary & David Rogerson  
Cissy Sanders  
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Zilker neighbors were so generous last year that the ZNA executive committee did not have to dip into the newsletter and membership reserves to supplement funding of our Holiday Families Program. As a result, ZNA is now able to sponsor one of the finest, longest running children's programs in Texas, the Zilker Kite Festival. (Read about the Kite Festival on page 6.)

**Thank you, neighbors! You are the best!**



*Zilker elves Skip Smith (page 10) and Mike Meier (right) unload a ZNA sleigh.*

*Photos by Connie Temple*

**Zilker Elves**

*A very special thank you goes out to our Zilker elves, who wrapped and delivered the presents to our families.*

- Lorraine Atherton
- Pam Bradley
- Barbara Cossie
- Janet Dunkelberg
- Shelly Eager
- Pat Elias
- Stacey Feldman
- Richard & Paulette Gravois
- Mike Meier
- Jill Rhoden
- Bobby Rigney
- Skip Smith
- Connie Temple
- Kaye Trybus
- Zilker Elementary School

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

[www.zilkerneighborhood.org](http://www.zilkerneighborhood.org)  
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*Editor:* Lorraine Atherton, 447-7681  
*Ad Sales:* Dave Piper, 916-9636  
*Distribution:* Matt Ditlow, 590-0929

## **2012 Executive Committee of ZNA**

### **Elected Officers:**

*President:* Andy Elder, 428-9180  
*1st VP:* Richard Gravois, 441-3430  
*2nd VP:* Steve McGuire, 447-2928  
*Secretary:* Ryan Stryker, 431-4245  
*Treasurer:* Skip Smith, 592-8038  
*Social Chair:* Matt Ditlow, 590-0929  
*ANC Delegate:* Connie Temple, 592-8039  
*ZNews Editor:* Lorraine Atherton, 447-7681

### **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.

### **Committee Chairs:**

*ACL Festival:* Steve McGuire  
*Holiday Family Program:* Barbara Cossie, 447-4437  
*Membership:* Connie Temple, 592-8039  
*Parks and Environment:* Gardner Sumner, 468-6200  
*Sound:* Bill Neale, [williamneale@hotmail.com](mailto:williamneale@hotmail.com)  
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