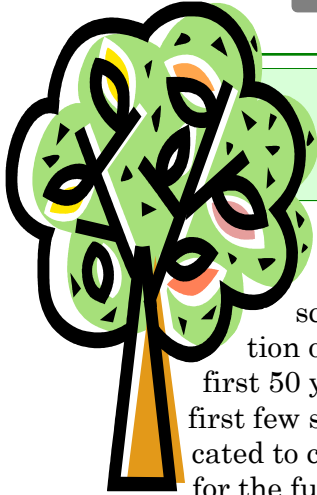


Z NEWS

APRIL 2010

Newsletter of the
Zilker
Neighborhood
Association

Austin, Texas
Established 1981



From the Files of Zilker PTA: 60 Years of Planting a Green Future

ZILKER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL is celebrating its sixtieth birthday this year. In the year 2000, the school community dusted off and added to a collection of photos and documents recording the school's first 50 years. Ten years later, a quick look through the first few scrapbooks reveals a progressive community dedicated to creating a better neighborhood for its children and for the future. The problems they faced and the solutions they pursued are familiar to today's school community.

For instance, on page 4 of this *ZNews*, you can compare parking and traffic problems around the school in 1961 with today's traffic warnings. Or on page 2, compare a 1955 description of the "Dog Problem" with today's listing of the rules of doggie etiquette.

The most remarkable similarities, however, have to do with Zilker Neighborhood Park. A few years ago, ZNA negotiated a large contribution to Austin's park system from a Rolling Stones concert in Zilker Park (the big one). ZNA decided to invest its share of those proceeds in our little Zilker park next to the school. The master planning effort launched by Jeff Jack (then president of ZNA) immediately revived interest in *(Continued on page 10)*

**Next
ZNA Meeting
April 26
Monday 6:30-8:45 PM**

Zilker Elementary School
1900 Bluebonnet



Meet the AISD Candidates

Updates on
ACL Festival Traffic,
Neighborhood Watch,
Outdoor Music Permits



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



School and ACC Trustee Elections

VOTE May 8, 2010, at:

✓ Precinct **332**

Zilker Elementary School,
Bluebonnet at Hether

✓ Precinct **462**

MHMR office, 1700 South
Lamar, Suite 101, off Collier

✓ Precinct **342**

Barton Hills Elementary,
2108 Barton Hills Drive

Or vote early April 26-May 4

School board election: A lesson in tax value

by Lorraine Atherton

IN RECENT CONVERSATIONS with the Austin Neighborhoods Council, Travis County commissioner Sarah Eckhardt and AISD superintendent Meria Carstarphen both suggested that the antiquated property tax system in Texas is crippling our ability to maintain our city and our schools. As a budget crisis looms over the school district, we the voters must try to choose the best candidates for our school board, even though that board may have little real control over the district's resources.

In the April 9 *Austin Chronicle*, Richard Whittaker reported on the big issue facing AISD candidates: our teachers are trying to survive in the most expensive city in Texas while earning the lowest salaries. For example, Dallas is not the highest-paying district in Texas, nor does it have the lowest cost of living, but its average teacher salary is 17% higher than Austin's, *(Continued on page 6)*

From the Files of Zilker PTA

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ten years ago, in 2000, the Zilker Elementary School community collected photos and documents recording the school's first 50 years. Most of the records are from PTA newsletters and annual reports, along with newspaper clippings and school correspondence. The archives trace the growth of the school from an enrollment of 270 in 1950, to 489 in 1953 (requiring two portable classrooms), to 721 in

1963, back to the more reasonable 500 of recent years. A few excerpts from these archives are reproduced here to provide a "then and now" perspective on the spirit of Zilker Elementary, as we celebrate its sixtieth birthday.

Thanks to Jackie Kraal, school librarian (since 1983), who has been working hard to preserve the archives and make them accessible. Most of the records quoted here are from her

The Dog Problem Then . . .

From *Zilker-Zip* (the Zilker Elementary School PTA newsletter) March 1955

DOG PROBLEM:

Almost everyone loves dogs, and most of us keep one as a pet. Nothing is more grateful or more loyal for such a small amount of love and attention.

Dogs at school, however, are quite a problem. They have become a nuisance at Zilker lately because they (1) turn over the garbage cans and scatter the trash, (2) consider an open door as an invitation to enter the school, (3) get in the way of the children and ruin their outside games.

Aside from being pests, there is a certain amount of danger involved in their presence at school. While most of the dogs are pets that have followed children to school, some are strays that are covered with mange, ringworms, and

sores. The children pet and play with these diseased dogs as well as the clean well ones. Another danger is the fact that there are so many skunks in the neighborhood that might possibly be rabid and bite the dogs and they in turn might bite our children.

Something must be done at once about this problem so we are sending out this appeal to all dog owners in the Zilker District. PLEASE TRY TO KEEP YOUR DOG AWAY FROM THE SCHOOL GROUNDS. The dog catcher will be called to pick up all stray dogs around the school. If everyone will cooperate with us, we feel sure that this troublesome situation will be cleared up without having to resort to more drastic action.



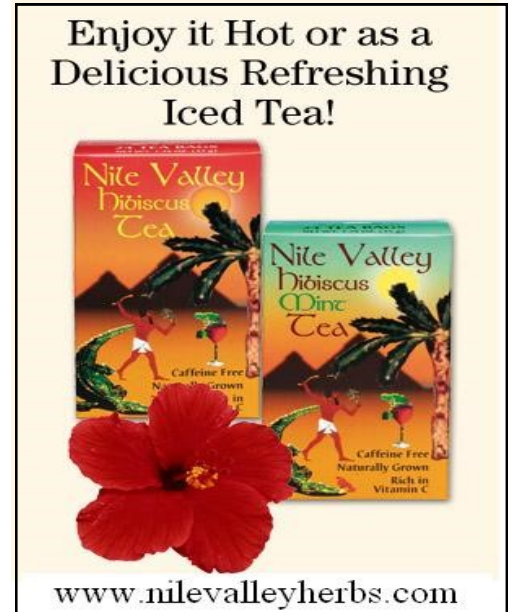
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work on the 1950s archives. Visit "60 Years of Zilker Pride," on the school Web site (austinisd.org), for more school history.

Thanks, too, to all the parents, teachers, staff, and students who have contributed to the school's history over the last 60 years.

Happy Birthday, Zilker.

. . . and Now

For many years, responsible dog owners in the neighborhood have followed certain informal rules about the use of Little Zilker Park. In 2008, they committed to paper these guidelines for canine courtesy in the park.

**LITTLE ZILKER PARK
DOG ETIQUETTE, 2008**

This park is not a leash-free zone. To protect the ongoing tradition of an open park, please follow these requests.

1. Restrain your dog near children.
2. Keep your dog from running on the tennis court, basketball court, and playscapes.
3. Scoop your dog's poop. Always, no exceptions. Remind others to do the same.
4. Respect other park users. When children or parents with children approach, call your dog and make eye contact to show that you are alert and in control of your pet. Other park uses, such as baseball, tennis, and soccer games, take precedence and should not be disrupted by wandering dogs.
5. Help your fellow dog owners act responsibly in the park.

Please be respectful of the park and others using the park.



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From the Files of Zilker PTA

The Traffic Problem Then and Now

Letter from the Principal, Zilker Elementary School, October 17, 1961

Dear Parent,

The traffic condition around the school premises needs our immediate attention. This is especially serious on Rundell and Bluebonnet streets. We of the staff are working hard with the pupils and bicycles.

As for the cars, only you can help. At the present time the most serious danger of accidents results from stopping cars on the opposite side of the street away from the building. When that is done, children either get out on the left side and step directly into traffic, or get out on the right side and dart around the car and into traffic. The same is true when leaving, except in reverse.

May we review some simple safety rules:

1. Pick up and unload children on side of street next to building.
2. Observe "No Parking" zones.
3. Do not turn into or park in School's Service Driveway.
4. Students are to cross streets at corners only.
5. Obey your school and safety patrollmen.
6. Students are to walk their bicycles on the sidewalks to the corners.

Sincerely yours,
Hollis Sanders,
Principal

From ZEN (Zilker Elementary News) for the week ending April 2, 2010

Safety reminder

If anyone has information about the driver of the SUV who hit the student on March 26, 2010, in the Faculty/Staff parking lot by the library, please contact Mr. Thomson. The student was hit at 7:40 am at drop off.

Please keep our kids safe!

Park in legal spots when dropping off and picking up

Do not park in the drop off area/bus area

Do not park/stop/wait in handicapped spots at any time unless you have a permit allowing you to park in handicapped spots

Do not park in the faculty/staff parking lots at any time

Do not use your cell phone in School Zones – it's against the law

Go slow!

Watch out for kids crossing the streets

ZEN is the e-mail newsletter of the Zilker PTA. Contact Cathy Sak, Zilker PTA Email Communications, zilkerpta@gmail.com, 689-4471, for information on the PTA list serve.

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New to Zilker? Don't miss Kindergarten Round-Up,

Tuesday, May 4, at 9 am, in the Zilker Elementary School library. Any children who will be five years old on or before Sept. 1, 2010, are eligible for kindergarten for the 2010-2011 school year, but a parent or guardian must register the child.

If your child will attend kindergarten at Zilker Elementary next fall, please come to Round-Up and pass the word on to families of other new kindergarteners. The event includes a welcome and introduction to the school, and an opportunity to meet other families with incoming kindergarteners. New students are welcome to attend with their parents.

When registering, please bring the child's birth certificate, Social Security card, current immunization record, proof of parent's residence in the Austin Independent School District (such as a current utility bill or lease agreement with valid address), parent's or guardian's driver's license or other picture ID. **If you bring two copies of each document with you, it will speed up the registration process tremendously.**

If you cannot attend Round-Up on May 4, you may still come by the school office May 5-8 between 8:30 am and 3 pm to register your child. Please try to register in May so the school staff can plan for next year's classes. Children may be registered between May 5 and June 2, from 8:30 am to 3 pm, and later registration will also be available in early August.

If you have questions about registration, please call the school at 414-2327.

*Randall Thomson, Principal
Zilker Elementary School*

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(Continued from page 1) and its median home price is 14% lower. Austin's high property values are central to the problem. Because Austin is considered property-rich under the state's school funding formula, AISD sends huge sums to the state (\$177 million this year). If the district raises taxes, most of the new revenue will go to the state, not to our schools, and a tax increase is likely to push Austin's cost of living even higher, without boosting teacher salaries enough to help the teachers.

The Appraisal Connection

Early voting for this election should coincide with the arrival of tax appraisal notices. Brian Rodgers (who owns commercial property on South Lamar) has taken the lead in researching inequities in our tax appraisal system, specifically, how the undervaluation of commercial property increases the burden on other taxpayers.

Through ChangeAustin.org, Rodgers and Linda Curtis are organizing workshops "for the many middle and low-income Austinites who will receive over-valuations" this spring. You can get together with your neighbors to bring a ChangeAustin workshop to the Zilker area, or you can sign up for "How to Protest Your Property Tax Appraisal" on Saturday, May 1, 10-noon, at Huston-Tillotson University, Dickey Lawless Auditorium, 7th and Chicon.

Visit ChangeAustin.org on the Web or phone 535-0989.

South Austin Civic Club
Student/AISD Board
Candidate Forum

Wednesday, April 21, 2010
6 pm at Covington Middle School
3700 Convict Hill Road

Neighborhood Watch

ANYONE INTERESTED IN CRIME prevention and Neighborhood Watch should be aware of the following events:

Austin Police Department's **Train the Trainer**, Section 3, James the Burglar Video and Guest Speaker. There are three Train the Trainer sections. You can take them in any order. Section 1 is "Introduction to Neighborhood Watch." Section 2 is "Physical Security." They're the second Tuesday of every month, except December and January, 6:30-8:00 pm; Police Department at 404 Ralph Ablanedo.

Citizen Led Austin Safety Partnership (CLASP) brings together volunteers across neighborhoods who want to address crime prevention at the neighborhood level. The first meeting presented some great ideas that Ole will share shortly. The second is Saturday, April 17, 2-4 pm, Spicewood Springs Branch Library, 8637 Spicewood Springs Road.

Barton Hills Neighborhood Watch will likely meet in May, but the date has not been set yet.

Remember to call 911 when you see something suspicious!

To get involved, contact

Laura "Ole" Olesen at 663-5776 or ole@oleaustin.com

Also, watch the Zilker Yahoo group for further updates. Go to www.Yahogroups.com and search for "Zilker," then click on

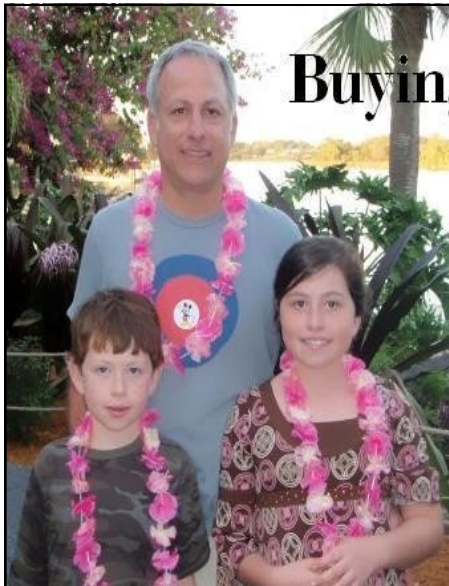
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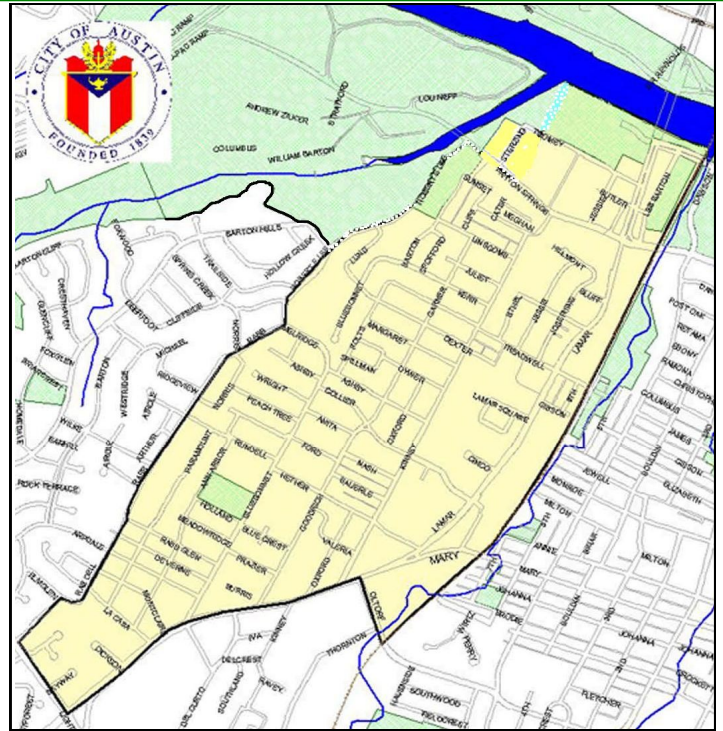
ZNA Appeals South Lamar Outdoor Music Permit

by Bill Neale, ZNA Sound Committee Chair

THE ZILKER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION is appealing the outdoor music venue (OMV) permit granted to Opa (formerly known as the Music Café), at 2050 South Lamar. The permit, granted on March 9, allows amplified sound outdoors seven days a week up until 10 pm, with a limit of 70 decibels. These terms were authorized without any input from the neighborhood association, so there was no real negotiation. This is one of the reasons for our appeal. Another is that the adjacent single-family (SF-3) property predated the venue and that outdoor amplified sound is incompatible with the nearby residences.

This is the only OMV permit issued in ZNA south of Barton Springs Road and the only new permit for a venue adjacent to single-family homes. This is also the same business that applied unsuccessfully for a late-hours permit last year (see *ZNews* April 2009).

In March, the North University Neighborhood Association appeal of Little Woodrow's permit resulted in negotiated limits on decibel



The boundaries of ZNA include Zilker Park on the west and extend to the railroad tracks on the east. The southern boundary is Barton Skyway. The northern boundary is the lake.

levels and hours, and a permit for Sustainable Waves was revoked after the Red Bluff Neighborhood Association appealed to City Council.

An old venue returns: On March 15, the OMV permit for the historic Paggi House, on Lee Barton Drive, was renewed with terms close to those requested by ZNA: 70 decibels with cut-off times of 3 pm on Sunday, 9 pm Monday-Thursday, and 10 pm Friday and Saturday.

EDITOR'S NOTE: As this *ZNews* goes to the printer, the Austin City Council has not yet set a date for the OMV appeal hearing.

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: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Dues: _____ Contribution for ZNA general fund: _____

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

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

Last Bus to Barton Hills

The Capital Metro board will vote April 26 on the elimination of Route 29. This bus runs along Bluebonnet to Barton Springs pool and to the University of Texas.

CapMetro staff spoke to a ZNA meeting about this last year. Alissa Schram, with CapMetro, has offered to meet with neighbors "individually or as a small group to discuss any final concerns or requests." Anyone who is interested should call 369-7759 or e-mail alissa.schram@capmetro.org.

A public hearing is also scheduled, for Thursday, April 15, noon to 1 pm, at CapMetro Headquarters, 2910 E. Fifth.

Other South Austin neighbors were recently alarmed to learn that CapMetro plans to eliminate Route 3, the main bus on South Lamar and Manchaca, in a few years. The concerned Manchaca neighbors recommend contacting board members by e-mail, at board@capmetro.org (cc the board liaison Gina Estrada at gina.estrada@capmetro.org to make sure the board gets your message).

L. Atherton

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(Continued from page 1) the park.

The archives show how important this little park has been since the school's beginning. The first records of the Zilker Parent-Teacher Association, from September 1951, note that "The project of the year was to secure a playground for this area." Well before the school was built, the City Council had approved plans for a park somewhere in the area, and apparently the new Zilker PTA persuaded the city to choose the site next to the new school. A clipping from the *American-Statesman*, dated January 25, 1952, says a "large delegation," including Angus McDonald, PTA president, and Mrs. A. G. Sievers of the PTA recreation committee, was supported by city parks director Beverly Sheffield.

In April 1953, the purchase of the property was stalled in court, and the PTA was back at city hall, urging the City Council to acquire instead three acres adjacent to the fire station on Kinney Avenue. A week later, the *Austin American* reported that the city had a new park property, but not next to the fire station. It was the original site that the PTA wanted, next to the school. The city had deposited \$13,000, the condemnation value, with the County Court, so development of the park could move forward.

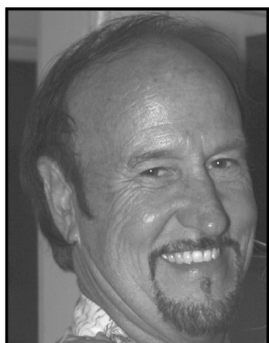
Under the headline "Good News," the Zilker Elementary School PTA newsletter, *Zilker-Zip*, reported: "The Canezio tract of land which is adjacent to Zilker School has been chosen as the site for our supervised park. It will be developed for use this summer. The work will be started

within the next ten to thirty days. Our Recreation Committee, headed by Mrs. A. G. Sievers, deserves a big hand from us all." ("Canezio" may also be "Cannizzo," a name that still appears on subdivisions west of the school. The school archives do not say whether the owner was John Cannizzo himself or someone else, or whether the owner ever received more than the condemnation value.)

The PTA immediately started planning improvements for the new park. In October 1953, Mrs. Girard Kinney, the PTA recreation chair, was planning a swimming pool for the playground. (By the end of the year, the PTA reported that although the "money was available, . . . improper drainage" made a pool "impossible.") In that same year, the Austin Civic Clubs "donated 25 trees, planted by the city."

The PTA excerpts that speak most poignantly to today's friends of the park are from the *Zilker-Zip* of March 1955: "Approximately 75 trees were planted on the playground adjacent to Zilker School as a start toward many improvements planned for the park this spring. Many thanks to Mr. Johnson and his committee for the work that they put in to make this all possible." There is no mention of it in the archives, but Central Texas was in the grip of a terrible drought at the time. Planting 75 trees was a powerful demonstration of the community's commitment to the future of the park and to the more than 600 students. The report is followed by a list of people who donated 26 trees to the playground, including one "In memory of Donny Johnson."

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According to the *American-Statesman* of February 27, 1955, most of the trees were sycamores and elms. Many of them must have been among the trees that were lost in last year's drought. Over the last ten years, with the help of neighbors like Carlene South of Tree Folks, the school community has embraced Zilker's tree tradition, planting new trees and adopting transplants at every opportunity. On March 6, the Friends of Zilker Neighborhood Park planted six new shade trees on the Ann Arbor side of the park, in the area under the last of those magnificent elms and sycamores planted 50 years ago by and for the schoolchildren of Zilker Elementary. *Lorraine Atherton*

On April 9, 2010, an oak and two anacacho orchid trees were planted in Little Zilker park near Ann Arbor in memory of Carlene South's daughter, Meagan Peterson.

For more history of the Zilker PTA and Little Zilker park, visit the ZNA Web site, zilkerneighborhood.org

To volunteer for upcoming workdays or other park projects, contact littlezilker@gmail.com.

Donate toward Little Zilker park improvements by sending your contribution made out to the Austin Parks Foundation (write "Zilker Neighborhood Park" in the memo line) at 816 Congress Ave, Ste. 1680, Austin TX 78701.

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President: Richard Gravois, 441-3430

1st VP: Bobby Rigney, 471-3758

2nd VP: Open

Secretary: Ryan Stryker, 431-4245

Treasurer: Andy Elder, 428-9180

Social Chair: Greg Shotwell, 797-4376

ANC Delegate: Open

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:

Holiday Family Program: Barbara Cossie, 447-4437

ZNews Advertising: Dave Piper, 916-9636

Parks and Environment: Gardner Sumner, 468-6200

Sound: Bill Neale, williamneale@hotmail.com

Zoning: Bobby Rigney

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