



Newsletter of the
Zilker Neighborhood
Association

FEBRUARY 2015

Austin, Texas
Established 1981

A Message from ZNA President David King:

When a Park Is More than a Venue

THE GREAT CYCLO-CROSS WASHOUT of January 2015 gave the leadership of the Zilker, Barton Hills, and Bouldin Creek neighborhood associations an excuse to meet with Parks Director Sara Hensley and other City staff, along with District 5 Councilmember Ann Kitchen, to talk frankly about the City's process for approving and managing events at Zilker Park. The Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) hosts more than 100 special events each year. Just a few of those events (Blues on the Green, ACL Fest, Trail of Lights, and Cyclo-cross) have closed most or part of Zilker Park for a total of 151 days, and counting.

It's time to set some limits.

As we shared notes on February 4, 2015, on how the cyclo-cross promoters came to secure "approval" to hold the event in Zilker Park, the meeting itself became the first lesson learned. *(Continued on page 10)*

ZNA Meeting

February 23

Monday 6:30-9 PM

at

Zilker Elementary School

1900 Bluebonnet



Meet Councilmember Ann Kitchen

**Uncle Billy's Late-hours Permit
(discussion and possible vote, page 4)**

Cyclocross and Other Park Events

South Lamar Corridor Study (page 5)



Newcomers, homeowners, renters,
business neighbors

❖ ❖ **All Welcome** ❖ ❖

Our Voice at City Hall

Editor's Note: In November, Ann Kitchen was elected to a four-year term on Austin's first 10-One City Council in District 5. Ann won 68% of the vote in Zilker precincts 332 and 340. ZNA's officers hope all our Zilker neighbors will join us in welcoming her to the February 23 ZNA meeting and take this opportunity to meet her and her staff in person. Here is an introductory message from her office.

OUR GOAL IS TO BE YOUR VOICE for South Austin. We work for the citizens of District 5 and the city. Please contact us whenever you have a question, a problem you'd like our help with, or an idea for how the city can work better for you and your neighbors.

We are working to: Obtain your ideas on key issues and potential solutions, create opportunities to talk with and be available to people who are not able to come down to City Hall, help individuals receive quality city services, and keep our District 5 informed about key issues.

(Continued on page 11)

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Kite Time in Zilker Park



DON'T MISS THE ZILKER PARK KITE FESTIVAL on Sunday, March 1. (Rain date March 8.)

The Exchange Club of Austin created the event as a kite tournament in 1929, with a mission to encourage creativity in children. The event has been held in Zilker Park since 1936, shortly after the park opened. Now the Exchange Club has teamed with Austin's parks department and ABC pest control, and many other sponsors, to continue this historic event. The Kite Festival is free for everyone and benefits Communities in Schools of Central Texas.

ZNA donates to the Kite Festival as one way to support fun, family, and free community events in our most treasured park.

Visit ABCKiteFestival.com for more info.

Beautify Robert E. Lee This Spring

VOLUNTEERS FROM ZILKER AND BARTON HILLS neighborhood associations have joined forces to transform Robert E. Lee Tributary, which runs parallel to Robert E. Lee Road and flows into Barton Creek downstream of Barton Springs Pool. The group is building on the City's efforts, started several years ago, to allow vegetation to grow, which lessens erosion and pollution and creates a more natural-looking waterway. The next step is to reduce invasive species like ragweed and plant native species of trees, grasses, and flowers. This is where volunteers from the neighborhood (and beyond!) come in. Anyone can participate and help add to the beauty of the south side of Zilker Park.

The next workday is scheduled for **Saturday, February 21, 10-noon**. The primary task will be planting native species. Keep Austin Beautiful loans us tools, but please feel free to bring your own. Please bring a personal water bottle and dress appropriately. Children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Public parking is available at lots along the tributary.

After It's My Park Day on March 7, your next chance to volunteer will be the Keep Austin Beautiful "Clean Sweep Day" on April 11. Mark your calendar; details will follow.

For more information contact Gail Rothe (grothe@austin.rr.com) or David King (dking@austin.rr.com).

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Give Spring a Boost in Little Zilker

COME JOIN US for the Little Zilker Park/Zilker Elementary Spring work day!

Friends of Little Zilker Park (FLZP) has its next big community event on Saturday, March 7, from 10 AM to 2 PM as part of the citywide It's My Park Day, sponsored by the Austin Parks Foundation (APF).

FLZP is partnering with the Zilker Elementary School Sustainability Committee to tackle several projects around Little Zilker Park and the school campus. In partnership with the Odd Duck restaurant, volunteers will work on the Zilker Edible Garden build out as well as general maintenance of the grounds, including cleaning out garden beds and clearing bermuda

Join the Friends of Little Zilker Neighborhood Park

through FLZP@yahoo.com, or contact littlezilker@gmail.com to find out how to volunteer for projects, planning, and events

grass from tree wells.

This is a fun event for the whole family and a great way to visit with neighbors and school friends. Bring work gloves, shovels, rakes, wheelbarrows, and other useful implements. Be sure to wear a hat and bring your own water bottle and coffee mug. Coffee, water, snacks, and a T-shirt will be provided for volunteers.

RSVP to littlezilker@gmail.com (with your T-shirt size) so we can send you updates.

According to the APF, the 100+ projects on It's My Park Day last year, with over 10,000 hours of labor contributed by over 3000 volunteers, "represented an investment of over one quarter of a million dollars for Austin's parks." To learn more about supporting Austin parks, visit austinparks.org.

photo by alison narro

veda, that's right girlybird, \$29

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Restaurant Row After Midnight *by Lorraine Atherton*

UNCLE BILLY'S Brewery and Smokehouse on Barton Springs Road was recently cited for a code violation after it was discovered that the City of Austin had mistakenly approved a late-hours permit for the restaurant many years ago. A late-hours permit, issued by the state alcoholic beverage agency (TABC), allows establishments to sell alcohol after midnight. (Neither the state nor the City restricts the hours that a restaurant may stay open.)

The problem is that a city must verify that a restaurant meets the zoning code before the TABC issues a liquor license. Austin's Code requires that restaurants receive a conditional use permit (CUP) through the Planning Commission before they can serve alcohol after midnight. That's what Uncle Billy's is lacking, and owner Rick Engel has asked ZNA to support his application for a CUP. His request will be on the agenda of ZNA's general meeting on Feb. 23 for discussion and possible action.

Over the years, ZNA has negotiated various agreements with Mr. Engel to preserve the neighborhood character of his properties and to protect nearby residents from noise and traffic problems. We are confident that this cooperative relationship will continue. The big issue in this case, however, is precedent and whether other establishments that don't have a history

of responsible operations will apply for late-hours permits and disrupt the delicate balance along Restaurant Row.

Last month, the City's Waterfront Planning and Advisory Board did not recommend the CUP for Uncle Billy's. Cory Walton, one of the board members who opposed the late-hours request, was concerned about: "one, the proximity to single-family residential neighborhoods, as well as the large number of multi-family residents, and resultant traffic and possible drunken driving and noise; two, the existing large number of pedestrians on the street at all hours but especially during and after large Zilker park events; three, most WPAB members did not want to be the voice that set a precedent of late-night alcohol sales in a transitional corridor between waterfront, parks, and residential neighborhoods."

Typical comments from Zilker residents echo those concerns: "I am concerned with drunk crowds leaving later, creating loud crowd noise, garbage on the easements, and drunk driving" and "I am concerned about Barton Springs Road becoming a Sixth Street bar scene." At the same time, most residents are satisfied with current conditions and want to maintain the status quo.

As this newsletter goes to press, the nearest neighbors to Uncle Billy's are considering additions to ZNA's existing private agreement with Mr. Engel, and the zoning committee is working with Mr. Engel and City staff to research the issue of precedents. We hope to have a resolution ready to present to the ZNA membership on Feb. 23.

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South Lamar Corridor Planning Update

THE PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS for the South Lamar Corridor Plan and Mobility Study (see the October 2014 ZNews) began with an open house at Zilker Elementary School on December 10. Along with exhibits and data displayed at the event, a summary report of community input from the open house and online surveys is now available on the project Web site, at austintexas.gov/SouthLamar. All of the comments that were made on the map at the open house have been geocoded online to make it easier for you to see exactly where people had questions, comments, and/or concerns for South Lamar.

Public involvement will continue with a presentation by members of the study project team at the February 23 meeting of ZNA (at Zilker Elementary, 7 PM). Other groups are encouraged to invite the project team to meet with them; contact the team through austintexas.gov/SouthLamar.

The Austin Transportation Department has also announced that it is installing a signalized crosswalk, otherwise known as a pedestrian hybrid beacon, on South Lamar between Oltorf and Oxford Streets. The new signal will allow pedestrians to cross between parking facilities and businesses, and provide enhanced access to the Metro Rapid and other transit stops in that block. The pedestrian hybrid beacon will be constructed over the next few weeks and is anticipated to be operational near the end of February.

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Zilker School Events

by Jacquie Benestante, Zilker PTA Communications

Backyard Jam

The Backyard Jam, Zilker Elementary School's annual outdoor concert, will be held Friday, March 6, 5:30-9 PM, behind the school. We will have live music, food vendors, face painting, and more. This is a free, family event. We welcome Zilker neighbors to join us for a fun evening! Bring your chair or blanket.

Spring Fling

The Zilker PTA's annual FUNdraiser, Spring Fling, will be April 24, 2015, at the new Highball in Lamar Union. We are currently seeking items for our silent auction, such as restaurant gift cards, professional services, entertainment, sporting event tickets, etc. We also need a couple of vacation homes or weekend getaways to auction off. Do you own a local business? We're also looking for business sponsors to sponsor the event. Businesses will be recognized at the event and in our marketing materials. We're excited to have DJ Manny spinning some great dance tunes, as well as delicious appetizers included in the cost of the ticket (\$15 in advance, \$20 at the door). Visit our website, www.zilkerelem.org, for all Spring Fling information, to buy tickets to the event, or to find out how to donate to or sponsor the event, or e-mail Jacquie Benestante at jacquie.be@gmail.com. Thank you! We'd love to see our Zilker community there!

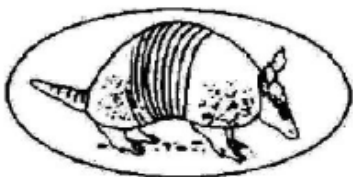
Thank You, ZNA

The Zilker Elementary PTA would like to say a big thank you to the Zilker Neighborhood Association for their gift to our school of \$4500 from funds raised from the sale of ACL tickets. We are happy to say that we've already been able to put \$2000 toward replacement of the very old computers in the lab. New computers have been ordered thanks to this generous donation, and money collected during the "We Are Zilker" campaign. We've also spent \$2000 to support Spanish language instruction for pre-K-2nd graders this Spring, and we'll be spending the remaining \$500 on our gardening program! We are so excited to have this wonderful gift, and we really appreciate the neighborhood support for our school!

Why are we raising money?

If you are a Zilker homeowner, you may be thinking, "I pay so much in property taxes, shouldn't the school have tons of money?" Unfortunately, the Texas school funding formula is outdated and has not been working out well for Austin ISD. Much of our property tax money is redistributed out, and it is up to local PTAs and booster clubs to provide a lot of the "extras" that our schools need, such as computers, arts and cultural activities, classroom supplies, etc. We are happy to do it, because we like our students to be well rounded and have high-caliber learning opportunities, and for our teachers and staff to feel supported. We are truly thankful to be in such a wonderful neighborhood that supports its local school. Thank you!

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Property Tax 101:
Fair taxes and affordability

*A Workshop Organized by
Austinites for Fair Taxes*

NEIGHBORS FROM ACROSS AUSTIN began meeting in May 2014, after observing the trends cited below, and eventually formed Austinites for Fair Taxes. This workshop is our effort to help educate one another about the links between property taxes and affordability in Austin.

We hope to learn how to separate facts from myths regarding our property taxes and their impact on affordability in our community. The workshop will include small group discussions to explore potential actions we might take to improve the situation. One workshop goal is to help inform Austinites about current bills being introduced in the Legislature and actions we can take related to those bills.

You should attend if you have seen long-time neighbors forced to sell their homes or renters chased to the outskirts for affordability, or if you are concerned about adequately funding our public schools, police, fire, and other important infrastructure needs.

Please join us

Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2015
6:30-8:30 PM (workshop begins at 7)
at Town Lake Center Conference
Room, 721 Barton Springs Road
(free parking in garage)

Speakers:

Marya Crigler, Chief Appraiser,
Travis Central Appraisal District;
Dick Lavine, Senior Fiscal Analyst,
Center for Public Policy Priorities;
Ann Kitchen, Austin City
Councilmember District 5;
and others

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The Zilker Elves Deliver Again!

by Barbara Cossie, ZNA Holiday Families Program Coordinator Emerita

THIS IS FOR ALL my wonderful Zilker neighbors who have given so much to our Holiday Families Program over the years. When I first became the coordinator of this program, in another century, ZNA was sponsoring two families who were being helped with their holiday needs. Over the years the number of families ZNA served rapidly increased (especially in 2005, when we doubled our efforts to help nine families who landed here after Hurricane Katrina). This past year, the Zilker neighborhood

elves brought joy and happiness to eight families.

I am so proud to have been the coordinator of this program for the past 16 years. What an honor and pleasure it has been to work with our neighbors and businesses to gather toys, clothes, furniture, and food for those families in need. As I delivered gifts to our holiday families, I was humbled at how their lives, if not rich in material goods, were more than rich in love and caring. I got to see lots of smiles, as well as looks of amazement and surprise, on the faces of many children, and the par-



These neighbors donated gifts or money, sponsored families, shopped for, wrapped, and delivered gifts to the families of Zilker Elementary schoolchildren in December 2014. Thanks to all of them for being great neighbors and Zilker Elves.

Gretchen Barber	Michelle Eager	Jennifer Mansfield	Molly Shannon
Daniel Bennett	Rachel Elder & Family	Ricky Martinez	Mary Sledd
Luan & Chuck	Shudde Fath	Eileen McNally	Marilyn & Jerry
Borgeson	Betsy Fath Hiller	Mike Meier &	Smolinsky
Linda Boxberger	Dave Floyd &	Lorraine Atherton	John & Patty Steward
Dorsey Cartwright	Sara Foskitt	Amelie Parks	Gardner Sumner
Jan Castleberry	Jean Floyd	Mary Christine Reed &	Ann Bratten Thomason
Susan Coe	Edward & Harriet	Robert Read	Kathleen Tice
Barbara Cossie &	Gonzalez	Jill Rhoden	Sarah Tower
Kaye Trybus	Richard Gravois	Crispin Richey	Jean Warren & Friends
Joy Cunningham	Luis Guerra	Bobby Rigney	Helen West
Pat Cramer	Aletha Huston	Mary & David Rogerson	Susan Whyne
Sue Currey	Jill Kempf	Gail Rothe	Elizabeth Yevich &
Tom Doyle	Ann Kennedy	David & Joan Saidel	Friends
Kris Dudley	David King	Clayton Lee Samford	Kathie Younghans
	Barbara LeGere	Steven Schrom	Bondell D. Zeugin

BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY

Membership is open to Zilker residents (renters or homeowners) 18 years old or older. (See map on page 9.)
 Nonresident property owners are not eligible for membership.

Annual dues are \$7 per person. Please list each member's name and e-mail address below.

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Dues amount: _____ Additional contribution: _____ Total Enclosed: _____

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

ZNA Memberships, 2009 Arpdale St, Austin, TX 78704
 or bring this form with you to the next ZNA meeting

For ZNA bylaws and other information, visit zilkerneighborhood.org.

ents always expressed gratitude for the gifts that arrived.

As the coordinator of this fine program, I realize that I did not do all the work alone. It took you—our Zilker neighbors—who brought presents to my door, mailed or left checks in the mailbox, wrapped presents, and delivered the gifts to our families. It truly took a village to make this program work over the years! From the bottom of my heart, I thank you. I thank you for caring and sharing in this program of giving. I thank you for your support, kind words, and volunteerism to keep bringing this very special program to hundreds of children.

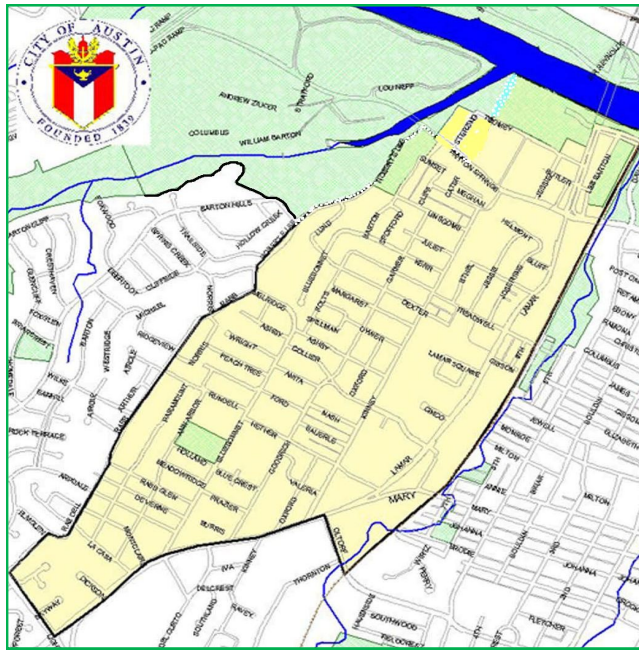
This past year, I stepped back as the coordinator. The Holiday Families Program is now in the capable hands of ZNA's social chair, Dave Floyd, and a fabulous team of Zilker elves. I will continue to serve as a Zilker elf (can't let those gift-wrapping skills go to waste). Again, thank you everyone for your kindness and compassion in seeing that our Zilker children have a wonderful holiday season!

New ZNA Officers

AS ZNA'S NEW PRESIDENT, I am happy to introduce two newcomers to the Executive Committee. Dave Floyd was elected to the office of Social Chair last October, and in January the Executive Committee elected Sabrena Wright to replace me as Treasurer. They are both excellent additions to our executive team, and we all look forward to working together in 2015.

*Your neighbor,
David King*

Contact ZNA by e-mail through www.zilkerneighborhood.org or through ZNews at ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com.



ZNA includes Zilker Park and Rabb Road on the west and extends to the railroad on the east, Barton Skyway on the south, and Lady Bird Lake on the north. Residents on both sides of boundary streets may join ZNA. ZNA is within City Council District 5.

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- 3815 Manchaca Rd. #30

(Continued from page 1) Gathering the PARD managers, on-the-ground staff, and an interested councilmember in the same room with the leadership of the affected neighborhoods represented real progress. Those lines of communication were closed in 2011, so that the neighborhoods did not hear PARD's reasons for rejecting the event, twice, and PARD was unaware that the neighborhoods had the same misgivings about the event and had attached significant conditions to their support.

Here's how this problem landed on our neighborhoods' agenda.

The Sales Pitch

In 2011, the Austin Convention and Visitor's Bureau decided that Austin should compete to host the National Cyclo-cross Championship in 2014 and 2015. The Austin Sports Commission submitted an application to use Zilker Park for the race. PARD declined the request to hold the event at Zilker Park and recommended other sites.

According to PARD, "In fall 2011, Matthew Payne (Austin Sports Commission), Hill Abell (Bicycle Sport Shop), and Gary Metcalf (Cadence Sports) approached the Zilker and Barton Hills Neighborhood Associations as well as the Austin Parks Foundation."

PARD did not know that the event producer told a Barton Hills officer if the neighborhoods didn't support the event, he would go directly to the City Council for approval. (The

City Council routinely waived the event limit for Auditorium Shores.) The leadership of both neighborhoods expressed concern about holding the event at Zilker Park and asked members of their respective associations to consider the matter.

In early 2012, Mr. Metcalf presented his proposal to Zilker and Barton Hills NA members. He indicated that the event would put Austin on the national cycling map. He also conveyed that the event would cause some damage to the grass and promised to remediate the damage and return the park in better condition than it was before the event. The resulting Barton Hills resolution asked that the event coordinators mitigate traffic and parking issues, provide proper park restoration, and put money back into Zilker Park. The ZNA agenda for Feb. 27, 2012, listed "parking, park closure, damage (esp. rain), precedent" as concerns. The ZNA membership voted to support the Barton Hills resolution, "with the addition that ZNA will require final approval to review plans for parking, damage remediation, parkland improvements, and contingencies to limit future Zilker Park events."

The Delivery

ZNA's next contact with the event organizers was almost three years later. At a planning meeting on December 12, 2014, Mr. Metcalf assured representatives from the neighborhood and PARD that the race course would be routed away from trees to avoid damaging them. As we know, despite those assurances, the roots of many trees including heritage trees were damaged by the event.

The damage to the trees is just the last in a year-long series of failures by the event organizers. The parks department's original assessment has been confirmed: Zilker Park is not the appropriate venue for a cyclo-cross event.

Our recent meeting with PARD and Councilmember Kitchen produced a long list of issues, improvements, and policies, including revisions to a proposed Special Events Ordinance that we hope the new City Council will consider later this year. We have agreed to continue the conversation.

Look for updates at the ZNA general membership meeting on Monday, February 23, at Zilker Elementary School, and on the ZNA Web site, www.zilkerneighborhood.org. ZNA also welcomes your feedback on other park events, especially the Trail of Lights and the Ferris Wheel, to help us coordinate with PARD.

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(Continued from page 1)

Opportunities for Participation

Responsive Office (512-978-2105, kelan.robinson@austintexas.gov, or www.austintexas.gov/government)

Town Hall meetings (3 times a year and/or for key topics)

Council Cabinet, quarterly meetings (neighborhoods; small businesses; PTAs)

District Coffees (monthly, office hours in coffee shops/homes)

Neighborhood association and other meetings (invite us!)

Appointments to Citizen Commissions

Call or send us an e-mail if you would like to be notified of future meeting opportunities!

ANN KITCHEN, District 5 Councilmember; ann.kitchen@austintexas.gov

KELAN ROBINSON, Constituent liaison; kelan.robinson@austintexas.gov

DONNA TIEMANN, Senior policy advisor; donna.tiemann@austintexas.gov

KEN CRAIG, Policy advisor; ken.craig@austintexas.gov

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**Newsletter of the
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**2015 Executive Committee of
the Zilker Neighborhood
Association**

Officers:

President: David King, 512-415-6016

1st Vice President:

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2nd Vice President: Dave Piper

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Treasurer: Sabrena Wright

Social Chair: Dave Floyd

Austin Neighborhoods Council

Delegate: Elizabeth Yevich

Newsletter Editor:

Lorraine Atherton

Other executive members:

Parks and Environment Chair:

Gardner Sumner, 512-468-6200

Zoning and Code Chair:

Bill Neale, bneale15@yahoo.com

The Executive Committee may be contacted by e-mail through www.zilkerneighborhood.org

About the Zilker Neighborhood Association

ZNA holds quarterly meetings, usually the last Monday of February, May, July, and October, at Zilker Elementary School, 1900 Bluebonnet Lane. The Executive Committee meets at the Umlauf Museum, 605 Robert E. Lee Road, 7 PM the first Monday of most months. Watch the Web site for updates.

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.

**Thursday, April 23, 2015
6:30 – 9:30 PM**



FEATURING THE WORK OF

Lance Letscher

HONORARY CHAIRS

Paul Qui & Deana Saukam

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