

Austin, Texas

April 21, 2006

Barton Hills News

Goings-on in our neighborhood

Pulling Up—Greening Up—Planning Out

From the Corresponding Secretary:

Burning the Mortgage

As many of you know, yours truly is in the unenviable position of facing the real and soon possibility of leaving Barton Hills—not by choice, but hardship. Although I still, to the brink, hope for some miraculous rescue, this essay assumes my departure from these curving, tree-lined lanes.

Don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you've got till its gone? I always enjoyed living here and recently rediscovered the charms of Barton Hills. How poignant to see the area as if for the first time as I do so for perhaps the last!

Just up Oak Park at the corner of Cedarview, one can behold a gently bending ridge to the east, atop which runs Rabb Road, the edge of our neighborhood. At the bottom of this little valley flows an unnamed creek, long ago channelized and flowing amidst Barton Hills Parkway's twin pavements, making its life-giving course toward Barton Creek. This same stream originates in a bowl across Barton Skyway above Oakhaven, demarked by a drainage easement at the back of lots between Oak Park and Oakhaven.

I sat next to this stream one recent spring morning. The little creek seems to perpetually flow. Algae and leaf litter line the concrete bed with grasses sprouting from cracks. It's quiet here, relatively speaking. I can hear a distant train horn, grass cutter, overhead jet plane, truck backing alarm, and occasional SUV humming past. Here also are the songs of white wing doves, cardinals, chickadees, titmice, mockingbirds, woodpeckers, and grackles. One person walks an old dog without noticing me, and a bicyclist wheels silently by. The cool wind fans the box elder just across the road as well as the crab apples, oaks, sycamores, elms, ashes, junipers, and wildflowers. The stop sign behind me rattles in the refreshing breeze.

Where is everyone? I'm certain lots of folks will appear with pets and kids this evening and weekend, but right now I'm guessing most people are working jobs to make money to live here.

I'm leaving Cheyenne because I cannot afford it. It's been a bitter lesson to learn how closely related are income and residence. Low-wage people do not live in Barton Hills anymore than PhDs reside in Del Valle. The fundamental price of admission to a Barton Hills address is beyond my present means. This isn't to say that I'll never earn enough—I'm confident I will, but just not now, not in time to remain. The red line of rising expenses has crossed my black line of declining salary. Alas, this isn't my plight alone.

Broader, big-picture questions come up at such life junctures: what's the future of suburbia, generally speaking? Here we are in the Land of Cars, a housing subdivision built in an era of post-WWII prosperity, inexpensive fuel, and expansive, seemingly unlimited optimism. One almost has to own an automobile to live here because you cannot walk to a decent grocery store, soccer field, movie theater, church (unless you're Episcopalian), or other service. City scholar Jane Jacobs, in her book *Dark Age Ahead*, notes that, more than illegal drugs or TV, cars account for the destruction of community across the US. I would add air conditioning to this list, especially since one can take a ride in an air-conditioned vehicle while watching television. Not only have we surrendered huge areas of earth for freeways and parking lots, our cars also isolate us from each other and from the land and its nonhuman critters. Even Barton Skyway's so busy twice a day that it creates a barrier between adjacent sectors of our neighborhood. South Lamar is even less inviting to pedestrians.

Continued on Page 9

Message from the President

Sunken Gardens Rise Again!

Join us for our General Meeting on Tuesday, April 25, at 7 pm at St. Mark's Church to celebrate the ongoing restoration of a cherished local landmark. Learn about how the Sunken Gardens are being revitalized by a team led by City of Austin Environmental Scientist Laurie Dries with help from Eagle Scouts of Troop 159 and coordination with Barton Hills resident Glee Ingram, a landscape architect who founded the Greenbelt Guardian program. Dr. Dries will talk about the history of the spring and the gardens and the current work to restore them. Barton Hills Neighborhood Association is underwriting the landscaping using funds that were donated and have long been held for this purpose.

According to Dr. Dries, the terraced stone amphitheater around the Zenobia Spring was built by the Works Progress Administration in 1937 under the direction of Lyndon Johnson, who was our U.S. representative at that time. The amphitheater overlooked the spring pool and was intended as a meeting place with stone picnic tables and benches. There was even a stage for live music.

Over the years, the gardens and stone structures were neglected and fell into disrepair. Zenobia Spring and the Sunken Gardens were closed to the public in 1997 to protect the Barton Springs salamander and its habitat. As part of a Habitat Conservation Plan, the City committed to restoring the springs and the surrounding terrestrial areas. The restoration has been a six-phase project culminating in the current landscaping improvements.

Several years ago, BHNA received donations to support the Sunken Gardens restoration. When we learned that the city would be doing other work at the site, we held off until it was completed. This long-dreamed-of moment is a soon-to-be reality. We will keep neighbors posted on the progress of this work. Meanwhile, be sure to stop by the Gardens to see the ongoing results of this collaborative effort.

See you on April 25!

Debby Kalk, President, 2006

**NEXT
GREENBELT GUARDIAN
WORK EPISODE:
Earth Day!
Saturday, April 22
9:00 a.m. — 2:00 p.m.
Both Greenbelt Entrances**

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442-8829 (h)


John Luther
Vice President/
Membership Head

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Membership and Safety

Special Invitation to Barton Hills and Horseshoe Bend Residents

If you are not currently a member of the BHNA we extend a special invitation to you to join the association this year and take part in the social, educational, and improvement projects that strengthen our ties to this very special neighborhood. Along with meeting good neighbors and keeping up with what goes on in neighborhood, you can also have opportunities, if you wish, to participate in various projects to keep our special neighborhood beautiful and safe.

The officers of the BHNA have committed themselves to seeing that all members are personally welcomed and included. Join us this year and help make this neighborhood association the best it can be. Welcome, neighbor!

Become a Friend of Barton Hills

For a mere \$20 per year, you can show your support of BHNA's programs by becoming a Friend of Barton Hills. Friends get special recognition in our newsletter and on our Website. Our special contributors help make possible our July 4th parade and celebration, our pilot luminaria project this past December which we hope to expand this year, our Greenbelt Guardian workdays, and other special happenings.

Friends of Barton Hills

Kathryn Bender
Bill, Nan, and Glenn Clayton
Teresa Cochran
Chris and Sally Crocker
Don and Diane Long
Don and Susan Madden
Dennis and Nancy McFadden
Sherine Thomas and Tom Nuckols
Fairy Davenport Rutland
Karen Dulaney and Scott C. Smith
Joe Leake

Neighborhood Watch

The recent BHNA membership/opinion survey has indicated an increased interest in neighborhood safety and security. More than 78 family membership/opinion forms of the 167 initial responses cited an interest in joining the NW program. This is great news as it means more and more of our neighbors are willing to become the eyes and ears of our community to prevent or reduce criminal activity in the Barton Hills/Horseshoe Bend area.

Participation forms will be available at the next BHNA meeting. Please pick one up, join the NW, and make your stand against neighborhood crime official. It takes only a moment to complete, and your participation is most important to the continued well-being of our neighborhood. If you are unable to come to the meeting this month but would still like to participate in the NW program, you can look for the participation form on the BHNA website or contact me at 441-0748 and a form will be sent to you.

- John Luther

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BH Planning

Barton Hills Neighborhood DRAFT Updated February 23, 2006

Vision

The Barton Hills neighborhood continues as a quiet residential community serving as an greening transition between the natural environment of Barton Creek and the built environment of the neighborhood and the city. It should be a place where new families and long-time residents are welcome and can engage in neighborhood affairs. The neighborhood should be safe for people as they walk or bicycle to nearby parks or stores or travel to other parts of the city.

Residential Goals

- I. **The character of the Barton Hills Neighborhood should be preserved.**
 - A. New single-family houses or significant remodeling of houses should respect the scale of the surrounding neighborhood.
 - B. Identify moderate income housing opportunities.
 - C. The neighborhood should become more eclectic.
 - D. The social mix of the Barton Hills neighborhood should support families with and without children, seniors, and singles.
 - E. The housing mix of the Barton Hills neighborhood should:
 1. Promote more home ownership.
 2. Maintain a modest mix of housing types.
 3. Maintain affordability.
 - F. Allow mixed-use or small-scale multi-family along commercial corridors.
 - G. Maintain infrastructure improvements.
 - H. Neighborhood Identity:
 1. Establish gateway entrances to the neighborhood.
 2. _____.
 - I. Create a safe neighborhood:
 1. Improve street lighting.
 2. Reduce burglaries of houses along the Barton Creek Greenbelt.

Environment Goals

- II. **The state of the natural environment in the Barton Hills neighborhood should be improved.**
 - A. Keep Greenbelt in good repair.
 - B. Reduce invasive non-native species.
 - C. Mitigate chemical pollution.
 - D. Maintain balance between the built and natural environment.
 - E. Ease light pollution.

Parks Goals

- III. **Create a public space in the Barton Hills neighborhood where the community can socialize and recreate outside of their houses but within the neighborhood.**
 - A. Establish a public space such as a recreation center, tennis courts, or a community pool.
 - B. Place additional amenities at the neighborhood play area.

Transportation Goals

- IV. **The Barton Hills neighborhood should have an integrated transportation network that is safe for all modes of transportation.**
 - A. Create a neighborhood where it is safe to walk with:
 1. Street lighting
 2. Sidewalks
 - B. Bicycle Issues:
 1. Improve connections to the city-wide bicycle network.
 2. Reduce cut-through traffic.
 - C. Transit Issues:
 1. Increase internal transit service/circulator service.
 2. _____.
 - D. Automobile Issues:
 1. Reduce traffic speeds.
 2. Reduce cut-through traffic.

Commercial Goals

- V. **There should be a few small-scale, local-serving commercial uses in the neighborhood.**

South City Planning Info:

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/zoning/slcnpa.htm>

South Lamar Planning

South Lamar Vision and Goals DRAFT Updated March 10, 2006

Vision:

The South Lamar neighborhood will be a community embracing economic and cultural diversity. Its varied housing—large-lot single-family homes, traditionally sized lots with modest houses, duplexes, townhouses, condominiums, and apartments—will promote this diversity. New development along commercial corridors should transition from greater to lesser intensity of use and design when it nears adjacent residential area. Safe and secure, residents can travel throughout their neighborhood by walking, bicycling, or motoring to nearby parks, shops, schools, services, and restaurants. The trees, open spaces, and natural environment will be preserved and valued as treasured assets to the community. Infrastructure in the South Lamar neighborhood should support current and future development.

Residential Goals:

- I. Preserve the unique residential character of the South Lamar neighborhood.**
 - A. Preserve the distinctive qualities of the community while maintaining the current balance between different types of housing.
 - B. Maintain and enhance affordability of current housing and protect the ability of current residents to continue to live in the neighborhood.
 - C. Increase the level of home ownership in the neighborhood.

Parks, Open Space, and Environment Goals:

- II. Maintain the quality of the natural environment and open space as community assets.**
 - A. Protect and preserve the integrity of local creeks and drainage areas to reduce flooding and enhance water quality.
 - B. Promote neighborhood connections to a city-wide network of greenbelts.
 - C. Protect wildlife habitat.
 - D. Create neighborhood parks and open space for public use.

Transportation Goals:

- III. Create a safer transportation system to improve mobility for all types of transportation while minimizing the amount of vehicular traffic in the neighborhood.**
 - A. Provide transportation infrastructure that safely and adequately serves existing and future traffic loads/needs/demands.
 - B. Provide safe routes of transportation for bicyclists and pedestrians.
 - C. Provide additional mass-transit options.

Commercial Goals:

- IV. Encourage only those commercial uses compatible with and appropriately scaled to the neighborhood.**
 - A. Ensure compatibility between commercial and residential land use.
 - B. Preserve locally owned small businesses.
 - C. Encourage new businesses to locate within convenient walking or bicycling distance of residential areas and provide goods and services desired by the neighborhood.
 - D. Locate mixed-use development on specific major corridors.

Infrastructure Goals:

- V. Provide comprehensive, adequate infrastructure commensurate with neighborhood need.**
 - A. Provide a comprehensive and adequate transportation network for motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
 - B. Provide adequate storm water mitigation to prevent existing and future roadway flooding and property damage.
 - C. Provide adequate utility infrastructure, including water, waste water, electricity, and natural gas.

General Comments: Maintain and increase single-family ratio. Single-family character should be preserved and limit multi-family developments. Maintain well-kept green space on private property (add as a recommendation to the plan). Install adequate infrastructure (roads, curbs, flooding problems, sewer system, drainage, etc.).

Greenbelt Guardian Glee-Nings

Greenbelt Trail Work Days

The Greenbelt Guardians are doing double duty this first half of the year. We had a successful work day at Gus Fruh on March 4, with 22 volunteers donating a collective 89 hours of service to the good of the trail. And before our April BHNA meeting, we will have had another ambitious effort working at both of our adopted trails, on April 22, to celebrate Earth Day and participate in the city-wide "It's My Park Day!" sponsored by the Austin Parks Foundation.

This is our third year to participate in the city-wide program, and our second time to work both trails on a single day. There is a lot of synergy and enthusiasm that we can take advantage of, and our strong leadership team makes working both trails possible. This year we also made an appeal to Save Barton Creek Association, and they will be providing team leadership for one of the trails, plus volunteers from their membership. They also made a generous sponsorship donation to the It's My Park Day! effort, in honor of the work that we will be accomplishing on Barton Creek.

Austin Parks Foundation Support

The "It's My Park Day!" event is a major fund raiser for the Austin Parks Foundation, which will be offering awards (like a big Amy's Ice Cream celebration!) for the volunteer groups that enlist the most Park Pal Memberships. I know our hard-working volunteers would enjoy such a treat! The basic membership fee is \$35, and supports the Foundations' numerous initiatives and programs that capitalize on citizen support for the use, care, and maintenance of the more than 200 parks in the City. Even though the City of Austin's Parks and Recreation Department was recognized as the best Parks Department in the United States last year, the Austin City budget never adequately funds parks maintenance. It was for that reason that the Austin Parks Foundation came into being, to serve as a citizen-based advocacy and volunteer base for the care of our parks. Membership donations can be made at www.austinparks.org.

Expanding our Invasive Species Removal Initiative

We are seeing modest progress in removing the invading exotic plants that threaten the

biodiversity of the greenbelt. These exotic plants reseed abundantly and become so dense that they crowd or shade out the diverse grasses, forbs, and perennials that are critical components of native lands, for providing habitat and food for wildlife, and for establishing a more balanced relationship with the soil microorganisms essential to a healthy system.

The plants that we have been targeting as the greatest threat to our area greenbelts are two popular "old fashioned" landscape ones: Ligustrum and Nandina. These easy-to-grow evergreen plants have been widely supplied through retail nurseries for more than 60 years, well before there was a developed native plant grower and distribution system. They compete so successfully because they came to this country without their natural predators that keep them in balanced containment in their native lands. It is only in recent years that awareness has grown about the extensiveness of their harm to these native ecosystems.

We have determined that simply removing the plants from the greenbelt (as daunting as that goal is!) will not solve the problem. The abundant presence of the plants in the residential landscapes that are in close proximity to the greenbelt will just continue to support the proliferation of the invaders. So, we are initiating a program that encourages voluntary removal of these invasive plants from the landscape.

We are offering the use of the Greenbelt Guardian weed wrenches and the experience-based expertise of our volunteers to support those neighbors who are interested and willing to remove these plants from their yard. Nancy Koch, our Invasives Team Leader, has already provided her voluntary labor in removing large numbers of Ligustrum and Nandina from the St. Marks Church grounds, and from her own and a neighbor's home landscape. Stan Ostrum and Robbin Trusty, Greenbelt Guardian team leaders, are currently borrowing a couple of the weed wrenches and removing the invading plants from their yard that overlooks the greenbelt.

Please notify Nancy Koch (nkoch@sbcglobal.net) or Glee Ingram (gleeful@earthlink.net) if you would be interesting in participating in this voluntary program. We will develop strategies and support based on the interest expressed by our neighbors.

More on the Greenbelt

Kid Wisdom

Barton Hills Elementary School
6th grade students of Collins Van Nort

This is the first of the new collaborations between the Greenbelt Guardians Program and students from Barton Hills Elementary School. Collins Van Nort is the 6th grade science teacher and actively uses the greenbelt as a teaching inspiration and tool. He has also organized a group called "Earth Kids" that meets after school to explore and learn from the Greenbelt. He will be recruiting school kids and their families to work on the trails with us on our quarterly work days, and in return, our community will be benefiting from the voices and studies of the children in this newsletter column.

- Glee Ingram, Greenbelt Coordinator

My 4th Almanac Entry from the Greenbelt

- Sadie Wolfe

A cool breeze wraps around me like a blanket, a blanket filled with sounds. Birds and crickets chirp to each other. I see Drew throwing squirrels and rocks. The once dry and lifeless puddle is filled with green water. A light breeze ripples the surface of the water. The small bugs squirm and move frantically back and forth. Bright yellow sunflowers and little purple flowers are out soaking up the rays of sun that penetrate their delicate petals. The creek has more water in it from the rains. It looks almost like a picture from a postcard. Everything changes here. Before, it was filled with pandemonium. Things moving, water rushing—I had no control over it. None. But now, everything has stopped. It's as if the animals' minds are connected. I only hear the traffic and the creek; they are the only things that don't know everything has stopped. They probably wouldn't care; they are oblivious. They just keep moving. Forever. Soon, birds begin to chirp again. The silence has stopped. The strange animal connection has gone back to normal. The wind picks up again. The water is cool. I gently place my fingertips on the surface of the water. The rapids in the water look like they are trying to move in unison with the wind. I see a cardinal in some evergreens. It's trying to hide but its color is too bright.

*Chirping is the sound I hear,
Telling me that a bird is near
The rain flecks my skin
Something new is about to begin.*

Barton Hills Neighborhood Association Statement of Financial Position March 31, 2006 (unaudited)

ASSETS	
Cash	\$7,477
Reserved Cash	2,282
Deposits	<u>2</u>
Total assets	\$9,761

LIABILITIES & HOMEOWNERS' EQUITY	
Reserves for Special Projects	2,282
Homeowners' Equity	<u>7,479</u>
Total liabilities and homeowners' equity	\$9,761

checks (0)

Statement of Operations for the period from 1/01/06 through 3/31/06 (unaudited)

Income	
HOA dues	\$2,880
Advertising revenues	<u>500</u>
Total revenues	\$3,380

Operating Expenses	
Newsletter printing	\$1,819
Dues and subscriptions	51
Legal fees	—
Postage expense	218
PO Box rental	72
Greenbelt Guardians	106
4th of July	—
Other	<u>56</u>
Total operating expenses	\$2,322
Net income (loss)	\$1,058



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Other Neighborhood Items

About the Salvation Army

The Salvation Army Rehabilitation Center is a wonderful place where 124 men come for six months to overcome their alcohol and drug problems. It consists 8-hour work days at the different stores and at the huge warehouse on South Congress one block south of Ben White.

The program involves a twelve-step program, Bible study, and church on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings. It is also connected to the Austin Recovery Center, which gives a week of counseling in group therapy settings just as is done in treatment centers.

Taking no government money, The Salvation Army is supported by public contributions and selling different items in their stores around town.

I am on the advisory board, and I've seen this series work for more than 25 years. Please support it with donations of cars, furniture, etc.

- Phil Sanders,
2900 Cedarview

Billy-Bob says:
"Go to Bat against Graffiti!"



Call the Graffiti Hotline
974-1028

Sidewalks

Michael Curtis, Program Manager, Pedestrian and Bike Team, will be at our next meeting to answer any questions about our imminent sidewalk coming to Barton Hills Drive. The Sidewalk Committee has been working on this for a long time and we are all excited that this is finally going to happen. If you have questions or concerns, the city wants to hear about them before they start work. Contact Jennifer Stuart jenstuart78704@yahoo.com with any pre-meeting questions.

May 2: Ann Molineux - Reefs of Texas Past and Present

Location: LCRA Hancock Building, 3700 Lake Austin Blvd. Doors open at 6:30 PM; the program starts at 7 PM. Free and open to the public; children welcome.

Ann Molineux, Ph.D., is the Texas Memorial Museum's Collections Manager of its Non-vertebrate Paleontology Lab. Reef building organisms have been active in Texas history for over 500 million years and continue to flourish in the near pristine Flower Garden coral reefs of today. This slide lecture explores the living reef as a model of evolution of the varied reef builders of the past.

Phoebe Allen,
Sierra Club program coordinator
and Barton Hills resident
444-1326

Help Stop Mosquito Breeding!

After the recent (welcome) rains, don't forget to walk your lawn and check for standing water. Remember that mosquitoes can breed in as little as a tablespoon of water!

Austin School Trustees have approved an order calling for a general election on May 13, 2006, for AISD Board Districts 1, 4, 6, and 7, and Trustee At-Large Positions 8 and 9. Barton Hills resident Karen Dulaney Smith seeks the place 9 slot. Get more info at her website:

www.smartwithaheart.com

Our address:

**BHNA
P.O. Box 2042
Austin, TX 78768-2042**

Of Further Note

First Thursday every month on South Congress, food, music, VW parade, lots of great fun April 21st, Battle of San Jacinto, 1836, wherein Sam Houston's Texas army defeated Santa Anna's Mexican troops and secured Texas' independence. Keep on the lookout for more cool events!

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Continued from Page 1

Much of the problem has always been individualism: it's MY house, MY yard, MY lawnmower, MY washer/dryer, MY mortgage. If I'm having trouble making it, it's MY problem. That's the way things "work."

These houses may well have been designed more for cars and isolation than interaction, but we don't have to put up with that nonsense. In a recent listserv posting, I offered my own amply sized property as a place for pedestrian-based community gathering. Many of you liked the idea, but I still haven't figured a way to implement such a notion, especially if my time here's getting woefully short. Who wants to help?

As you've seen in the planning goals on previous pages of this newsletter, people all over town express similar sentiments: we want more walkable places and smaller, closer services. This vector, sometimes called New Urbanism, seems to be a direction worth pursuing.

When I first found this house in 1990, I had been hoping to design and build a place of my own. Instead, a second choice was to recycle an older, existing home. It might be time to return the structure to the recycling stream.

In these 16 years, I didn't get to everything I wanted, such as install solar panels or a rainwater collection system. But I threw an amazing series of elaborate theme parties and built the only permanent Yurt in South Austin. Like any other home, this was the stage on which I performed my life drama, with all its tragedy and comedy, living here longer than anyplace else in my 53 years. Not a bad run, by any means!

Where might I go from here? Lina and I are looking into housing co-ops, a 5-acre farm east of town, and scenic Rancho Richey Refuge 60 miles south. Whatever happens, it'll be an adventure.

All said, I'll miss you friendly, smart, active, concerned, involved folks!

—Howie Richey

P.S. Get an update on my fate at the meeting on April 25. You just might be surprised!

Support Our BHNA Sponsors!

To place an ad, please contact Howie Richey at 444-4550 or zow@io.com

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Certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization in Criminal Law

BHNA General Meeting Agenda

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Tuesday, April 25, 2006

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

**6:00 to 7:00 p.m., Meet-and-Greet Social Outside on Deck
BBQ and Peach Cobbler from Green Mesquite**

7:00 to 9:00 p.m., General Meeting

Opening Business	Neighborhood Watch News
Sunken Gardens	Greenbelt Guardian Events
4 th of July Parade & Festivities	Other Committee Reports
Membership and Financials	Open Forum
Neighborhood Planning Updates	Adjourn

Babysitting (\$5 per child) for entire General Meeting

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Barton Hills News

The newsletter of the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association is published quarterly, and is supported by the advertisements of our generous sponsors. It is distributed in print to every home in Barton Hills in February and June, and only to paid Association Members in April and October.

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