

Barton Hills News

It's what's going on in your neighborhood

What Do Members Care About?

If you are like many of your neighbors, you care about traffic on Barton Hills Drive and Barton Skyway. You're also concerned about safety and security, and you care greatly about the integrity of Barton Creek and the Greenbelt. These three issues (traffic, safety, and the creek) dominate the more than 60 topics that BHNA members identified on the survey which was distributed with the January newsletter. Many people cited the appearance of the neighborhood including yards, trash and trash bins, sidewalks, and oak wilt as issues of concern. And quite a few people indicated an interest in helping in cleaning and maintaining the Greenbelt, and working to enhance the entrances to the neighborhood, particularly at Barton Skyway and Lamar. You can find a summary of the survey results on the BHNA Web site at <http://www.main.org/bhna/>.

The Executive Committee is committed to working on the issues you've said are most important. Here are some of the initiatives the association has been involved with this past year:

Traffic

This past year, representatives of BHNA have participated in two pedestrian audits of the neighborhood and developed a grant application for sidewalk improvements. Traffic and safety issues will also be a part of the overall neighborhood planning that will be part of the City's strategic planning process for Barton Hills.

Barton Creek

The January general meeting was devoted to examining the issues concerning dangerous PAH chemicals in the creek and pool. Representatives from the city presented their perspective on the issue. A BHNA committee formed

to keep up with the developments on this unfolding situation and to keep the neighborhood informed. BHNA board member Peter Hess continues to serve as the committee chair.

Greenbelt

Under the direction of Glee Ingram, BHNA has launched the Greenbelt Guardians, a quarterly trail maintenance program. The Guardians work with city staff to identify maintenance needs and to fund initiatives such as repairing trail entrances.

Safety

We maintain regular communications with our liaisons on the Austin Police force, Officer Michael Summers, and the Park Police team responsible for the Greenbelt, Sgt Michael Wade. They regularly attend and report to BHNA membership at general meetings and through our newsletter.

In addition to these issues, people are also concerned about bicycle lanes and driver awareness and education about bicycles, development in neighboring areas, and fire prevention and awareness along the Greenbelt.

We can do more to collectively address these problems and improve our neighborhood and quality of life with your volunteer efforts. You don't have to tackle a problem alone – there are probably neighbors who care about the problem, too, and would be willing to work with you. Let any of the BHNA Executive Committee members know about your interest. We will put neighbors in touch with each other.

Your ideas and suggestions are always welcome on these and other issues.

Message From The President

The big news for this issue is to get ready for a major neighborhood event: the July 4th Parade! City Manager Toby Futrell will be the Grand Marshall, Professor Bill Brands will do the history, Sara Hickman will sing the national anthem, and Howie Richie as master of ceremonies. It's an event for everyone, not just kids and talented pets. Patriotism, games and a little silliness! Whether participating or spectating, you'll enjoy the morning... We also have a good line-up for the BHNA meeting on June 24th. Rene Barrera from the City will educate us about invasive plant species that are changing our Greenbelt. His discussion will provide a nice segue for Glee Ingram's information about the next Greenbelt Guardian event. Please join us on Saturday, June 28th, for trail maintenance and related activities... Also, Richard Troxell, a local expert on homeless populations, will join us to discuss camps in the Greenbelt. BHNA members requested the perspective to supplement recent Austin Police Department information.

Also, the Austin Parks Foundation recently announced its annual grants program for parks projects. Grants will be awarded in amounts of \$300 to \$2,500 to support physical improvements and community events as well as other activities. Applications are due on June 30th, and BHNA hopes to submit a winning proposal. Attend the meeting on the 24th to express your views and vote on a proposal for the application... We have a vacancy in the position of Vice President and we hope to propose a candidate for election at the meeting. We appreciate the many efforts of former Vice President Mark Gentle in serving the association... BHNA member Larry Akers will give us an update on the planning for the Town Lake Park adjacent to the performing arts complex at Auditorium Shores. Riverside Drive issues are still a problem for the overall plan... Finally, we'll discuss a recent "pedestrian audit" and Capital Metro's plan to spend \$25,000 along South Lamar. We'll also bring you up to date on BHNA efforts to improve sidewalks in the area. Hope to see you there!

Robin McKeever

President, 2003

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Peter Hess
Austin Neighborhood
Council Representative
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Ad Space

It's begun! The newsletter is now offering three new larger sized ad spaces!

Choose among quarter page, half page or even a full page ad. We will accept electronic files or we can custom design an ad just for you.

Rates are as follows per issue:
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For all the info call Lance at

3-1-1 for Non-Emergencies

The Austin Police Department with the Greater Austin Crime Commission and Motorola recognized the success of the 3-1-1 Non-Emergency System during Austin 3-1-1 Day on Tuesday, March 11, 2003.

Representatives from APD and the crime commission attended a special ceremony in the 3-1-1 Operations Center located on the 3rd Floor at the APD Main Headquarters at 715 E. Eighth St.

The 3-1-1 system has proven to be a vital link between the public and Austin Police Department. Since the 3-1-1 system began in September 2001, there has been a significant reduction of non-emergency calls for service to the 9-1-1 Emergency System.

Calls to 9-1-1 have been reduced on an average of 31 percent since September 2001. Emergency calls are handled more efficiently and timely when fewer non-emergency calls are being made to 9-1-1. This also enables residents to receive improved service to their non-emergency situations.

Residents of Austin can call 3-1-1 to report non-emergency incidents that are non-life threatening and not in progress. These calls include property crimes where the offender is no longer at the scene, animal control problems, illegally parked vehicles and general information about police services. BHNA members have used this service successfully for limiting illegally parked cars to deter traffic congestion at unofficial entrances to the Greenbelt.

For life-threatening or violent crimes in progress calls, residents should always call 9-1-1. These include robberies, sexual assaults, homicides, aggravated assaults, collisions and incidents that are still in progress and the suspect is at the scene. 9-1-1 call takers also handle fire and medical emergency calls.

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In Brief

St. Mark's Episcopal Day School Openings

St. Mark's Episcopal Day School has openings for the fall for ages 3 – Pre-K. Classes are from 8:30 am – 12:30 pm. A wonderful variety of after school classes are also available for the children, as well as extended care. St. Mark's Day School provides a safe and loving Christian atmosphere. The program is designed to develop fundamental math and literacy skills, physical growth and coordination, as well as music and movement and spiritual growth. For more information, please call Jan Kokoszka, Day School Director at 444-9401.

Additionally, there are some openings in our Summer Program for ages 2–4th Grade. The summer program is divided into 1-week sessions, each with a theme. The schedule is as follows:

June 16-20	To the Zoo
June 23–27	To Outer Space
July 7–11	To the Beach
July 14–18	To a Dude Ranch
July 21-25	On a Fossil Hunt
July 28-Aug. 1	To Fantasy Land

For more information, please call Jan Kokoszka, Day School Director at 444-9401.

St. Mark's Construction

Construction on the expansion of St. Mark's Episcopal Church has begun!

Phase I of the expansion includes adding 2 offices, a classroom and a chapel. The project is estimated to be complete by the end of the calendar year.

Report from the Barton Springs Committee

While Barton Springs has reopened for swimmers on April 19, the Barton Springs Committee continues to be involved with Barton Springs issues as many long-term issues remain unresolved.

The City of Austin hired an independent consultant, Crespo Consulting, to evaluate the situation at the Barton Park Place apartments. Generally, Crespo was asked to study how the polluted ravine can be cleaned up and how future pollution off the parking lot can be prevented. At this writing (June 8), the City has not released the report to us yet. They first will complete an internal review to check the report for clarity and compliance, and they have contacted Crespo with comments and requests for clarification. Once we have the report, members of our Barton Springs Committee will meet with City officials to discuss the matter. We should be able to report on this at the upcoming membership meeting.

In an earlier discussion on our listserve, the question was raised whether the 7-Eleven gas station that operated at the site of Barton Hills Market could have contributed to the pollution problem. We took this up with the Watershed Protection Department. The following is a synopsis of Nico Hauwert's response, which I received via Nancy McClintock. In 1992, Southland Corp. (the 7-Eleven parent company) determined that the risk of operating a gas station with large petroleum storage tanks at this environmentally sensitive site was too great for its benefit, even though there had not been any documented releases at that site. "The underground storage tanks were removed between September 20 to 22, 1992. The tanks showed no signs of leaks after careful examination. The soil in the tank pit was excavated into several spoil piles and sampled." Investigations found "levels of total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) at about 200 parts per million (ppm) in one location that we felt was typical of gasoline overfill situations at a gas station site. In other places we found levels of 84 ppm or less. Because there were no signs of a tank leak and relatively low levels of residual total petroleum hydrocarbons in the tank pit soil, I don't think that TCEQ assigned a Leaking Petroleum Storage Tank number to this site. The tank pit soil was field screened, sampled, and excavated until no detectable petroleum was encountered. Although it is difficult

to say with certainty that no petroleum ever reached the underlying rock of the Edwards Aquifer, we saw no evidence of any deeper contamination and looked carefully for it." The tank pit with was refilled with new soil on October 6, 1992.

In recognition of the fact that PAHs are not the only threat to the waters of Barton Creek and Barton Springs, the Committee is also looking at strategies for managing existing pollution problems in developed areas as well as studying long-term solutions for preventing further degradation of the water quality in both Barton Creek and Barton Springs. Prevention can be a big part of the solution, and we are considering an ongoing education program for our membership on what we all can do to protect this precious resource. An important part of this would be simply to create an awareness that whatever runs off our properties (garden chemicals, fertilizer, car fluids, dog droppings) will end up in Barton Creek and Barton Springs.

A big issue is how runoff from our neighborhood (and other developed areas) can be filtered before it hits Barton Creek. Of the highest priority is the Barton Creek tributary that drains most of the Barton Hills neighborhood (with the exception of the Horseshoe Bend area). It starts in the S. Lamar / Barton Skyway area, drains the valley along Barton Skyway (east of Rockingham) and along Barton Parkway (the drainage ditch, or culvert, as some prefer to call it), crosses underneath Barton Hills Drive between Cresthaven and Ridgeview, and enters Barton Creek a bit below Campell's Hole (just around the bend). This is the lowest major tributary to Barton Creek. The 1995 Barton Springs Contributing Zone Retrofit Master Plan Study highly recommends a retention pond at the mouth of this tributary, and we are currently investigating the feasibility of such a pond.

One little by-product of our dialogue with the Watershed Protection Department is that the concrete lining of the gully along Barton Parkway is being fixed. The repairs should be complete as you read this.

Austin Symphony Summer Kids Events

A kaleidoscope of sounds, colors, people and experiences awaits Austin kids this summer at Symphony Square, 1101 Red River St., from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Wednesdays, June 4-July 30.

Parents and children are invited to join the Austin Symphony to discover the magic of the arts at Children's Day Art Park, a summer program that features local musicians, dancers, storytellers, magicians, mimes and crafts people.

Your child can visit the Instrumental Petting Zoo to see, touch and play the instruments. They'll also see a Ballet Folklorico, hear live music, follow a real pied piper along the Lemonade Trail to the Magic Oak Tree for stories as well as participate in craft projects at the Art Tent.

Admission to Children's Day Art Park is 50 cents a child. Adults are free when accompanied by a child. The public is encouraged to pack a sack lunch and picnic on the banks of Waller Creek. And come early, it fills up fast!

The following is the Children's Day Art Park summer schedule. Performances begin at 10 a.m.:

June 4: Joe McDermott

June 11: Roy Lozano's Ballet Folklorico

June 18: Bill Oliver

June 25: Cowgirl Sue's Teddy Bear Picnic

July 9: Jon Emery

July 16: Sara Hickman

July 23: Beto y los Fairlanes

July 30: Lucas Miller, The "Singing Zoologist!"

For more information, call the Austin Symphony at (512) 476-6064. Sponsors include Target, 3M, Foley's, Blue Bell Creameries and City of Austin/Austin Arts Commission.

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A Call to Greenbelt Guardians

The season is changing and the Greenbelt is calling all BHNA volunteers! The second Greenbelt Guardian event is set for Saturday, June 28, starting at 7:30 am and ending at 3:30 pm. We will work on the Gus Fruh section of the Greenbelt, from the entrance to the switchback trail to the rock crossover dam and beyond.

Volunteers are needed for all or part of the day. A check-in table will be set up at the top of the trail with a list of tasks. A coordinator will be checking up and down the trail to provide instructions and tools.

There's plenty of work for lots of volunteers! The main tasks for the day:

1) trail repair on the switchback section of the trail

2) barrier improvements between the switchbacks

3) overgrowth pruning

4) improving the rock work for the crossover dam

5) ligustrum removal (we will have access to a fancy tool called a weed wrench)

6) general clean-up of trash and debris.

Please contact Glee Ingram at 443-7522, or gleeful@earthlink.net, to let her know you'll attend so that materials and tools will be available to match our volunteer base.

The Greenbelt Guardian inaugural work day in March was a great success. BHNA members worked hard and generously, contributing about 90-100 hours. By the end of the day, the hardy group of 18 volunteers had: cleared the entry trail of bermuda grass and repaired the fallen stone edging; pruned, chopped and yanked out scores of ligustrum invaders; edged the upper trail with cedar post sidebars to reduce trail erosion; retrieved numerous bags of trash; and con-

structed a new footbridge across a severely eroded arroyo (hikers and their dogs had a hard time jumping it) and built a stone retaining wall to protect the footbridge. The work is enduring well. The footbridge is firmly established and well-used enough that it has earned three graffiti messages that have almost faded away!

The BHNA Greenbelt Guardian project, coordinated by Glee Ingram, is a collaboration with the City's Parks and Recreation Department (PARC), which has too few resources to maintain our portion of the Greenbelt adequately. For



the first event, BHNA purchased high quality cedar logs from Bastrop for the footbridge and erosion control borders. The City provides an array of specialized tools to be used by volunteers for the scheduled events. BHNA appreciates PARC's cooperation and the exceptional dedication of staff member John Cook in making this effort a special success. With the help of BHNA volunteers, the Greenbelt Guardian work-days are a significant investment in an extraordinary

community and environmental resource.

Rene Barrera, a PARC specialist, will make a presentation on Invasive Plant Species at the BHNA general meeting on June 24. His discussion will be great preparation for our work on ligustrum control.

Become a Greenbelt Guardian and join us on the next work day, Saturday, June 28. You'll find it's a treat to roll up your sleeves with neighbors who care as much as you do about our wonderful Greenbelt.

BARTON HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD JULY 4th PARADE

Please join your neighbors
Friday, July 4th, 2003
Assemble at 8:30a.m. at Barton Hills Market
Parade starts at 9:00a.m.
to Barton Hills Elementary Playground

FESTIVITIES AFTER THE PARADE!

Pledge of Allegiance
National Anthem – Sara Hickman leads the neighborhood children!
The History of Independence Day – Dr. Bill Brands
Awards for Parade Participants
Cookies and Watermelon
Piñatas
Sack Races
Egg Toss
Visit with Neighbors



<p>Decorate your: stroller, wagon, scooter, bike, skates, hat, dog, or make yourself the Best Representative of South Austin (whatever that means to you) and join in the parade!!</p> <p>You just may win an award...</p> <p>Or join the kazoo band float and ride to the playground!</p>	<p>WANTED! Donations of cookies & watermelon Judges Teenagers to do face painting Help with set-up & clean-up</p> <p>Need more information? Want to volunteer? Call Jennifer Stuart @ 441-3186</p>
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Come on! It's a neighborhood tradition – 10 years running – and it keeps getting better! Get in the spirit and march in the parade. Everyone is invited!

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!

Grow Green

This is one of the many recommendations and tips included in the City's "Grow Green" environmental education program.

Why not fertilize before a rain? Austin's rainfalls are generally so intense that they cause lawn chemicals to run off instead of soaking in, wasting the time and money it takes to apply the fertilizer and damaging the Creek. Synthetic fertilizer runoff is deleterious to the water quality of the Creek. Fertilizer should be gently and carefully watered in to lawn.

Watering Tips

1) Water when footprints across the lawn remain visible or when it is difficult to push a screwdriver into the turf.

2) Water deeply (6-inch penetration or deeper). In sandy soils, 1/2 inch to 1 inch of water (1/3 to 2/3 gallon per square foot of lawn) will achieve a 6-inch penetration. Clay soils require about 1 inch of water applied slowly.

3) To measure your sprinkler application, place an empty 6-ounce tuna can on your lawn. Stop watering when it is full.

4) Rainfall for the year is below normal and mandatory water rationing for lawn care may be just around the corner.

Check out the city's website at www.ci.austin.tx.us/watercon/water_schedule03 for the watering schedule. For more details on this great program, go to <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/growgreen>.

July 4th Parade Plans

We want you to come join in this great neighborhood tradition, Friday, July 4th for the 10th Annual Barton Hills Neighborhood Association Parade.

The parade will assemble at 8:30a.m. at Barton Hills Market and at 9:00a.m. proceed to the Barton Hills Elementary Playground.

Show off your true blue patriotic and creative spirit. Decorate your bike, wagon, stroller, scooter, roller blades, pets, or yourself and march in the parade. We would like to start a new patriotic category this year "Most Representative of South Austin". Or come early and join the kazoo band in the parade. It will be three cheers for the red, white, and blue and you may just win an award or two!

The ceremonies will be held on the Barton Hills Elementary playground. Nationally known and locally loved singer/songwriter Sara Hickman will lead the children of Barton Hills in singing the National Anthem. Honorary Grand Marshall this year is our City Manager Toby Futrell. The Boy Scouts will lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Pulitzer Prize nominee will present the history of Independence Day. KUT-FM's Howie Richey will serve as Master of Ceremonies.

There will be tons of fun for everyone. Festivities include: watermelon seed spitting contest, sack races, egg toss, face painting, piñatas and awards for the parade participants. Watermelon, cookies, and plenty of water will be served.

Along with your patriotic spirit, we need donations of cookies and watermelon. Please bring them to the playground on your way to the parade. If you cannot bring them the day of the parade, but would like to donate something, you can contact Lisa Fehrenkamp at 444-3211 to arrange an early drop off.

If you have an eye for patriotic style and flair, you be the judge!!!! We are in need of three talented individuals to help judge the parade participants. We also need energetic early birds to help set-up the festivities at the Barton Hills School Playground at 7:30 a.m. on the 4th. All patriots who volunteer their services for this star spangled celebration will be officially recognized by the M.C. and greatly appreciated by all who attend this event.

The Barton Hills Neighborhood Association extends special thanks to the parade's business sponsors who have supported the event with resources or prizes: identify business sponsors. We urge Barton Hills residents to support these civic sponsors with their business.

Earth–Wise Fertilizer Recommendations

A new study commissioned by the City of Austin and conducted by Texas A&M, is expected to affect the entire state of Texas as awareness increases about our limited and vulnerable water resources. The study recommends new residential lawn fertilization practices, changing those that have been promoted state-wide for twenty years.

In 2001, the City of Austin Watershed Protection and Development Review Department and Texas Cooperative Extension launched a pilot program, Stillhouse Spring Cleaning, to improve water quality in the Stillhouse Hollow area. Water quality data for the local spring, which is located in the environmentally–sensitive recharge zone of the Northern Edwards Aquifer, showed that nitrate levels were some of the highest in the city.

High nitrates can cause algae blooms which deplete the water of oxygen and can lead to fish kills and other risks to aquatic life. Since high nitrates in water are frequently associated with fertilizer use, the pilot program’s goal was to educate the 300 Stillhouse neighborhood families on the earth–wise gardening practices promoted by the Grow Green program.

Soil tests of each of the pilot study yards included an assessment of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium, the basic ingredients in fertilizer. The results were a surprise in that the majority of the yards had low to very low nitrates, but extremely high phosphorous and potassium levels. Instead of recommending high nitrogen fertilizers which could degrade the spring, the City decided to contract with Texas A&M to do a greenhouse study comparing nine different fertility treatments. The resulting lawn plots were judged for appearance as well as the amount of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium that “leached” or filtered through the soil to groundwater. The findings have resulted in dramatic changes to both the quantity and types of fertilizer recommended.

Standing Recommendations:

- Test soil to determine individual lawn needs.
- Know the square footage of your lawn and calculate the amount of fertilizer needed. Use only that amount.
- Don’t Bag It !–leave your clippings on the lawn. This practice results in at least 60% of the clipping’s nitrogen and 100% of the phosphorous being available to the grass within the growing season. Additionally, iron and other

important micronutrients are returned to your soil.

New Earth-Wise Recommendations:

– *Choose carefully* – certified organic and other labeled, natural fertilizers out–performed inorganics in the study. There was substantially less nitrogen leaching to groundwater in the organically– fertilized test plots. After a slightly slower start, the grass was denser and more attractive. Other research supports the ability of organics to retain soil moisture and decrease runoff during heavy rainfall events.

– If using inorganic fertilizers, apply multiple, smaller applications. Larger amounts will run off or leach to the groundwater and your fertilizer will be wasted.

– Choose fertilizers with low phosphorous values because Austin soils are naturally high in phosphorous. (Fertilizer is based on a ratio of Nitrogen-Phosphorous-Potassium so phosphorous is the second number on the fertilizer bag..) 9-1-1, 8-2-4, and 6-1-1 are among the recommended options. Excessive phosphorous can block the availability of iron to your plants, causing yellowing.

These new fertilizer recommendations are substantial changes from previous ones. There are considerable differences in soil nitrogen from yard to yard and fertility treatments should take that into account. Remember that when the existing recommendations were made, there were no Don’t Bag It! programs to encourage returning nutrients to the soil – lawn clippings filled our landfills rather than being put to better use on the lawn. A&M scientists found organic treatments fared better across the board on color and density. And now that the organic fertilizers are in a pelletized form, they are as easy to use as the synthetic fertilizers. While organics are often more expensive than synthetics, the fact that we are recommending substantially smaller application rates should more than balance out the cost.


For further information, visit:

<http://www.growgreen.org>

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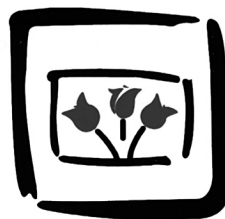
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B.H.N.A. General Meeting

Tues. June 24, 2003
St. Mark's Episcopal Church

AGENDA

6:00 – 7:00

Meet & Greet Social
BBQ Dinner catered by
Green Mesquite

7:00 – 9:00
General Meeting

Reports:
Invasive Plants in the
Greenbelt: Rene Barrera
City Parks & Rec. Dept.

**Greenbelt Enforcemnet
Impacts on Homeless:
Richard Troxell**

July 4th Parade Plan

**Greenbelt Guardian
Event–July 28th**

**BHNA App. for Austin
Parks Grant vote**

Town Lake Park Phase II

**CapMetro Plan for
S. Lamar Bus Stop
Improvements**

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B.H.N.A.
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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 January and June, and only to paid Association Members in April and October.