

Barton Hills News

It's what's going on in our neighborhood

NEITHER RAIN, NOR SLEET...

Will stop this year's July 4th Parade!!!

Yes, this year the annual Barton Hills Neighborhood Association July 4th Parade will go forward, rain or shine, with the exception of lightning (well, maybe hail, too)! Please join in this wonderful tribute to our country and our community by parading on foot, bicycle, trike, scooter, buggy, or other vehicle of your choice, along with your dog, goat, or other legal and tame animal.

Many thanks go to Wells Fargo on South Lamar, who has generously offered to sponsor our parade this year. We look forward to a long relationship with this community institution that has a great record of civic leadership and service.

We are also honored this year to have two co-Grand Marshals who have graciously agreed to lead the parade: the Honorable Elliott Naishtat, District 49 State Representative, and the Honorable Darryl Slusher, City Councilperson. Kay Wallingford, Barton Hills Teacher of the Year, is also an invited guest.

The parade will assemble as usual at another one of our community partners, Barton Hills Market, at 8:30 am on Sunday, July 4th. At 9:00 am the procession will begin to Barton Hills Elementary School, where the Grand Marshals will deliver keynote addresses worthy of Lincoln. Pulitzer-prize winning historian, Bill Brands, will again inspire the day with a historical perspective on the Declaration of Independence. Girl

Scouts and Boy Scouts will lead the Pledge of Allegiance, and our own nationally known singer/songwriter Sara Hickman will sing the National Anthem.

Festivities will follow and include such time-honored favorites as a watermelon seed spitting contest, sack races, egg toss, face painting, pinatas, and the

judges' awards to the best parade entries in various categories. In fact, three people with an eye for patriotic style and flair are needed to judge the parade participants. So don't forget to decorate your stroller, wagon, scooter, bike, skates, dog, hat, humvee, airplane...

Refreshments will be served at the playground as well, and volunteers are needed to donate cookies, watermelon, and water. Lisa Farenkamp, 444-3211, has graciously agreed to be the cookie coordinator again, and Art

Stone, 444-5757, will ice down 8-10 watermelons if you will deliver them to him the night of July 3. Other volunteers are needed to help set up at 7:30 at the Barton Hills Elementary Playground, and to help clean up afterwards. Please contact parade co-chairs Shannon Noble at 916-9513 or Valinda Bolton at 383-8909 to volunteer in any capacity. All patriots who volunteer for this star spangled celebration will be gratefully acknowledged by the emcee at the ceremony!

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

Message from the President

First of all, a very special thanks to Shannon Noble and Valinda Bolton for all their hard work and creativity in organizing this year's Fourth of July parade. And of course thanks also to all the other many volunteers. Rain or shine, Barton Hills will grandly and merrily celebrate together in the streets and hills the most eloquent and resonant document in political history, the Declaration of Independence. Certainly we have many extraordinary and too rare blessings and fortunes to reflect upon and appreciate. And what is most inspiring is that this document is always a beacon leading us to ever a greater common sense and fulfillment of what these inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness should mean for ourselves, our own communities and nation, and our honor and burden in defending and supporting others throughout the world in following this beacon too. To me, a flood of feelings always attends this day, of what we have achieved as an exceptional people and what remains unfinished. Thoughts and feelings brought on by the 60th anniversary of D-Day, the current sacrifice of so many young men and women and their families and friends, the passing of a president who exuberantly believed in and embodied the ongoing renewal of "morning in America" – we have so much to be proud of and grateful for. And so much to give back through service to others.

At the last general BHNA meeting, concern was expressed about a new citing of Oak Wilt infestation (Arthur Lane and Wilke Drive). I investigated this site with Eric Beckers, Texas Forestry Service (TFS), and thereupon reinitiated BHNA's decade-old relationship with the forestry service in dealing with Oak Wilt. Beckers is updating the map of Oak Wilt in our area and is coming to the June 22 BHNA meeting to present this map for our verification and the most current information about this disease. Please see the article for background. Thanks to many who shared their time, insights, and experiences related to Oak Wilt, especially Eric Beckers, Jorjanna Price, Lynn Bridge, Robin McKeever, Glee Ingram, and Leon McMorrow.

Les Tull, COA, is returning for the June 22 meeting (he was last here in October 2003 to update us on the status of the remediation ponds planned for Barton Creek (current proposed location is "soccer" field below park Place apartments. Please read the article on the Barton Springs parking issue. Members and BHNA board members, especially Derek Stuart, are working the issue with Toby Futrell, Warren Struss, and Daryl Slusher. Warren and Michael McDonnell, Assistant City Manager, are coming to the June 22 BHNA general meeting. I still am researching whether this policy started last year or not. The COA and PARD both say that it started July 4 and went up to Labor Day.

There is too much more to say (as I'm sure you were afraid of) but fortunately too little space. I want to especially thank Lance Shriner, our Newsletter Editor, for his service and leadership for our BHNA board but more importantly for our community. Only the former is ending. He is resigning and will be greatly missed, not only for his creativity with the newsletter but also for his thoughtful and caring engagement with issues, generous and calming spirit, and good humor. Please thank him too.

Don Long
President, BHNA

Officers

Don Long

President

416-0679 (h)

Rayma Chase

Vice President

462-1424 (h)

Derek Stuart

Treasurer

441-3186 (h)

Debby Kalk

Recording Secretary

442-8829 (h)

Vacancy

Corresponding Secretary

Your name here!

Robbie Botto

Austin Neighborhood

Council Representative

NEXT
GREENBELT
GUARDIAN
WORK DAY:

Saturday, July 17
8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Gus Fruh
Greenbelt Entry
2642 Barton Hills
Drive

Imagine All The Bicyclists

On a Long and Winding Trail Through The Greenbelt

Imagine a continuous greenbelt trail stretching from Town Lake through Zilker Park, past the Barton Springs pool, southwest all the way to the LBJ Wildflower Center and beyond, into the Texas Hill Country. Such a scenario might actually be possible if a new community planning effort takes off.

Existing parks and greenbelts on Barton Creek, Williamson Creek, and Slaughter Creek can be connected to one another through just four properties. By chance, each of these four tracts are associated with proposed 'big box' retail developments atop the aquifer which feeds Barton Springs.

These properties are: 51 acres on Davis Lane at MoPac formerly sought by Wal Mart for a controversial superstore; 56-acres slated for a Lowe's/ fast food/ carwash complex between Brodie Lane and MoPac; 118 acres for a proposed Costco, offices, and other retail; and finally, 8.8 acres directly adjacent to the Barton Creek greenbelt owned by Sam's Real Estate Trust, whose parent company is Wal-Mart.

The SR Ridge (former Wal-Mart), Garza (Lowe's), and Forum (Costco) properties are currently embroiled in lawsuits, zoning cases, and other controversies over big box development. Last year, a large community coalition of neighborhoods, environmental groups and local small businesses fought the location of proposed superstores over the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer. At that time, a desire was voiced within this coalition that the community not only try to prevent destructive development plans but also to constructively plan our future.

Austin Metro Trails and Greenbelts, Barton View Neighborhood Association, Clean Water Action, the Oak Hill Association of Neighborhoods (OHAN), Save Barton Creek Association, Sierra Club, Zilker Neighborhood Association and other community groups are joining in a common effort to create a new vision for the southwest area. We propose convening a design workshop (also called a "charette" by architects and urban planners) with a professional facilitator. Here, the involved stakeholders can dialogue and create a comprehensive neighborhood plan. Neighborhood residents, environmentalists, Barton Springs swimmers, parks/open space advocates, bike/pedestrian trail advocates and designers, existing commercial businesses, and area landowners should all be asked to participate.

The outcome of this design charette might become the area's official adopted neighborhood plan, guiding city zoning decisions. The design documents could become the template for laying out open park-like spaces for pedestrian and bicycle use for developers to use in their site plans. Otherwise, with each tract planned separately -- not considering its relation to other nearby properties, parks, and neighborhoods -- a unique opportunity to create a beautiful new public facility will be irretrievably lost. Please visit <http://www.austinction.org> to view a map and for more information.

A representative of Austin Action will present this vision and discuss issues with members at the June 22nd meeting. We should support this effort! Yes?

FIRE ANTS!! Along with cedar fever and sweltering summers, fire ants are just part of the Austin experience for many of us. Fortunately there is something you can do to address this problem _ and without harming the delicate natural beauty that we enjoy in and around Barton Hills. The first step in treating a fire ant mound is to make sure you're actually dealing with fire ants. Fire ants form mounds up to 18_ tall, usually in sunny areas such as lawns. Fire ants often nest in protected places under sidewalks, slabs, or the base of trees. If you're still unsure whether your yard's ants are fire ants visit <http://fireant.tamu.edu> or call County Extension office at 854-9600 for more information.

Treatment of a fire ant infestation should begin with the least toxic option. Amazingly, pouring a 3-gallon pot of boiling water on a fire ant mound kills the mound approximately 60% of the time! Another non-toxic approach is the application of beneficial nematodes (*Steinernema Carpocapsea*). These small roundworms attack fire ant larvae and are best applied to moist soil at dusk. Texzen nursery, as well as others, offers these biological controls. If boiling water and nematodes don't do the trick, choose baits over contact products. Eliminator and Extinguish brand products are thought to be among the least toxic baits available. A great resource for evaluating the toxicity of different baits and contact products is the Fire Ant Fact Sheet at <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/growgreen/insects.htm>. Never use leftover contact products that contain diazinon or Dursban (chlorpyrifos). These products have been banned by the EPA and are especially threatening to our neighborhood given its runoff drainage to Barton Springs. To properly dispose of these chemicals, take them to the City's Hazardous Waste Disposal site at 2514 Business Center Drive or call 974-4343. If you have leftover baits, you might consider sharing them with a neighbor. Open bait containers only last a few months, plus treating a larger infestation in only your yard can give the ants a chance to have safe haven in your neighbor's yard _ only to return to your yard later! Better still, organize your neighbors to treat a fire ant infestation. Call the County Extension office 854-9606 for more information on this option.

Parks or Parking and Recreation?

Barton Springs Parking Update

The traffic congestion and subsequent danger to pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers caused by the weekend Barton Springs parking fees has been a hot topic recently in the neighborhood. Many emails and calls have been made by concerned residents and the BHNA Executive Committee in an effort to remedy this situation. Although we haven't yet reached a resolution, progress slowly continues. City Manager Toby Futrell and Interim Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) Director Warren Struss have been very responsive and are concerned about the impact the new parking charge has had on the Barton Hills and Zilker neighborhoods. They have promised to monitor the situation carefully and will come to our June 22nd BHNA meeting to discuss this issue directly with members.



In welcoming this opportunity for full discussion with COA but still concerned about the immediate dangers of pedestrians and bicyclists being put in harm's way, BHNA proposed a moratorium on this parking policy to Toby Futrell, Warren Struss, and Councilperson Daryl Slusher, starting immediately so that this very serious problem of overflow parking up Robert E. Lee could be resolved in time for Memorial Day Weekend. This moratorium would give us all time to explore the issue fully and hopefully come up with options that meet our concerns as well as those of PARD and COA. Toby Futrell and Daryl Slusher said they would keep this proposal under consideration as they monitor the situation. The city tells us that the parking charge is currently being evaluated.

Unfortunately, Warren Struss responded to BHNA's concerns with a letter in which he politely yet firmly indicated that no change is in the works. Mr. Struss also stated that the parking fee was in fact begun last summer, a position with which neither the BHNA Executive Committee members nor anyone else we've spoken with can agree. Mr. Struss's letter to BHNA is available on the email listserv in addition to the BHNA website at www.bhna.net.

It is very important to seek the kind of larger solution that many BHNA members expressed, seeking a good balance

of the difficult and competing values and goals raised by this issue that is reasonable for all parties. We should acknowledge the budget pressures and competing demands and interests that COA and PARD face. If we are to preserve the quality of our neighborhood, we need to preserve and enhance our good working relationships with PARD and COA. These seemingly small issues often reflect much larger potential changes to the city political, social, economic, and cultural landscape.

It is after all a growing city whose services are feeling the strain of increasing budget pressures. As Larry Akers advised, every year COA feels compelled to place PARD under greater and greater duress with budget cuts, and hard economic times place the parks system under even greater stress as people turn to parks for low-cost recreation. PARD must try to cope with overcrowding and overuse and at the same time look for any way to return its revenue stream to survival level. A turn to user fees makes sense in this perspective and may even be good public policy depending on one's values.

But a better policy may also be for the City Manager and City Council to fund parks appropriately rather than forcing the department to resort to measures that make the parks less attractive to Austin citizens. Increasing the costs of access to public parks and meeting places is a kind of enclosure movement of shared public meeting and recreational areas that in effect moves public parks toward "gated communities." Soon we will be asking, Where is the public? Perhaps this larger discussion can begin at our next meeting. If you are concerned, you should also make your voice heard at COA and City Council.

In the interim before the meeting, please monitor this dynamic situation. PARD placed traffic cones last weekend in an effort to prevent the overflow. It was effective in that regard but actually worsened the danger for bicyclists by forcing them out of bike lanes and into traffic! Barton Hills resident Gil Oakes kindly provided photos of the northern stretch of Barton Hills Drive on a weekend day that were forwarded along to the city and PARD as documentation of the parking congestion and an illustration related dangers.

Warren Struss from PARD and Michael McDonell, COA assistant city manager are slated to attend our June 22nd BHNA meeting at St. Marks. As always, Green Mesquite will offer barbeque (and Jambalaya!) for \$5 at 6PM, with the general meeting beginning at 7PM. We encourage you to attend the meeting so that your concerns about the parking charge are clearly heard! A strong turnout would be a great indication of the resolve our neighborhood possesses.

Update on Parking in Bike Lanes

Barton Springs Parking Update

Parking in the bike lanes on Barton Hills Drive and Barton Skyway is a concern because it pushes the bicyclist out into traffic lanes where it is difficult for them to maintain the same speed as vehicles, particularly with all our hills. The City of Austin has adopted parking restrictions in bike lanes on some streets in other neighborhoods to promote bike safety, but it is not uniform across the city yet. The question begs: If you have a lane dedicated to bicyclists, why allow vehicles to park in it at all? This question was asked at the last BHNA meeting. Members asked for the research provided in this article before further consideration of options to remedy the situation.

The City of Austin staff considers restrictions on parking in bike lanes on a case-by-case basis. Up until about 2000, they were proceeding at a rate of restricting about several street segments each year. In recent years, the city staff has approved very few parking restrictions in bike lanes.

The best way for a neighborhood to get parking restricted in bike lanes is to include the parking restriction in their neighborhood plan before contacting the city staff to make a formal request. Approval can come administratively. Parking restrictions could take the form of allowing parking starting in the evening hours until the commute hours of the morning (i.e., 8pm-6am). This type of schedule has been implemented on Duval Rd. in the Hyde Park N.A. Such a schedule could be enforced during events in Zilker Park. Let's discuss the potential pros and cons of such a proposal at our next BHNA meeting.

Viva La Lance!!

Lance Armstrong is continuing his incredible journey to maybe an unprecedented five (or is it six?) Tour de France victories in a row. Just think, it all started here in Austin on open bike lanes!!

Neighborhood Watch Update

Are you concerned about mailbox theft or the loss of valuables from your own yard or garage? Do you want to make our neighborhood safer with very little effort required?

Would you like to have all of this at your fingertips?!

Then read this article and join the BHNA Neighborhood Watch!

At the January BHNA meeting, members expressed interest in reactivating the Neighborhood Watch (NW) in our community. I received a very good initial response from those who were interested in being a part of the Watch. Several more have volunteered since. And I expect more interest will follow as this initiative gets started.

Stephen Lysey has generously offered to lead this new effort, organizing the first few training meetings. He has called individual volunteers and hopes to schedule the first meeting in early July. Stephen rightly says that all this requires is simply being attentive, especially during the day, and having a clear procedure for reporting and alerting neighbors and/or police of suspicious activity. Art Stone has offered to host the first meeting at his home. Officers Dawn Leonard and Rosie Salinas will serve as liaisons and resources, and provide the initial training. One concern is to strike the right balance between helping us all to be alert while not appearing like Big Brother. But it is up to us as to how to set it up, how to inform members of suspicious activity, etc. Officer Leonard also sent an useful commercial website at <http://www.nnwi.org/> for purchasing needed NW materials such as signs or window decals.

Since we really have discretion as to how we wish to set this up, volunteers have the flexibility to tailor the commitment required to individual schedules. Stephen and the volunteers will decide on the best reporting method, whether the listserv or a phone tree, and whether to organize by blocks or the seven sectors of BHNA. Or you may wish to have a separate area on the website so that the listserv is not used for this activity. I have talked with Officer Salinas at the Community Liaison Office. She said that one person per block should be a captain. There is not much time involved, as a captain. Their main role would be to pass information to and from other blocks to their block.

Special thanks again to Stephen and all volunteers for your important service to our community.

Water System Rehabilitation Planned for Neighborhood

BHNA is slated to host major construction this Fall when the City of Austin embarks upon a project to replace faulty polybutylene ("PBL") potable water service tubing for all residents in the Horseshoe Bend portion of BHNA.

PBL is a polymer-based compound similar in nature to poly-vinyl-chloride ("PVC"), but more flexible in nature. It is ideal in settings where straight trenches and rigid connections for underground piping are costly or infeasible. Most of the development in Horseshoe Bend occurred in the 1970's and 80's when PBL piping was popular among utilities for its low cost and ease of installation. As across most of the southern United States, the City of Austin approved PBL service tubing for use in its water distribution system, and a good portion of the City's infrastructure was constructed with this material. Horseshoe Bend was constructed with all PBL service connections.

After time, PBL service tubing began to fail repeatedly. Chlorine and chloramines, used to disinfect potable water, were found to degrade PBL and cause failures in the piping. Based on these failures, the City decided to file a products liability lawsuit against the manufacturers of PBL. In 1999 the City settled this lawsuit wherein it was awarded approximately \$5,000,000 for purchasing the defective product, and the money is earmarked to replace PBL service tubing throughout the City (Ordinance #990913-A).

Some of this money has already been used to replace service tubing across the city.

As you may know, water system pressure in the Horseshoe Bend area is high due to topography and other operational issues. As such, elevated water pressure, coupled with the age of infrastructure, has led to many service tubing failures over the last few years. The City's project will replace the service connections to and from the City's water main with standard copper service tubing. This means that each service tap buried in the street will have to be exposed by excavation, and a new trench will have to be cut to and from the water meter in each yard. The existing service tubing will then be removed and replaced with copper service tubing and the appropriate connections at the resident meter and the City main. The City does not intend to replace any of the water mains, only the service tubing supplying each resident. Depending on the location of the water main to the resident, this may involve substantial pavement cuts throughout BHNA. Moreover, residents will have to be cognizant of ongoing construction when driving through the neighborhood.

COA says the project should begin around August 2004 and take between 3-4 months to complete. This means that residents should prepare for traffic disruptions and heavy machinery in the neighborhood this Fall. For more information, feel free to contact Matt Cullen at 912-0250 for more specific project information.

South Lamar With 6 Lanes?

The future of South Lamar Boulevard is once again up for review before the Capital Area Planning Organization (CAMPO) as part of the **2030 Mobility Plan**. The 25-year plan for Central Texas includes authority to widen Lamar between Barton Springs Road and Ben White from four to six lanes. CAMPO's Transportation Policy Board will consider the plan during May and June before voting on July 12th. Potential impacts of the plan could result in major changes to the character of adjoining neighborhoods. The purpose of widening the road would be to reduce vehicular congestion on this north-south artery, which carries traffic originating mainly south of Ben White. But widening would also attract significant additional commuter traffic from outside the neighborhoods adjoining Lamar south of the river and north of Ben White. The obstacles and hazards for pedestrians and cyclists would increase as the amount and speed of vehicular traffic rises. Also, many small businesses lining South Lamar could anticipate losing parking spaces for expansion.

Mike Aulick, CAMPO Executive Director, and Tom Forrest, City of Austin Transportation Planning Department, presented information to the Zilker Neighborhood Association (3/26/2004). Don Long, Nan Clayton, and Robin McKeever attended from BHNA. Mr. Forrest said the City has previously rejected any plan for widening Lamar south of Barton Springs Road. According to Mr. Aulick, provisions of CAMPO's regional Mobility Plan that are within the City's jurisdiction and opposed by the City would probably not be implemented. As long as a provision remains in the plan, however, there is the potential for City support by a majority of future Council members.

In 2003, BHNA members voted to support a City of Austin advisory committee's recommendations for improving pedestrian and bicycling safety on South Lamar. The committee's proposals, developed in consultation with neighborhood representatives, included more and safer crosswalks, with special attention for pedestrian safety at the Oltorf intersection. Another priority is completion of sidewalks with wheelchair/stroller ramps along Lamar between Barton Springs Road and Ben White. City staff has been unsuccessful over several years in requesting adjustments by the Texas Department of Transportation to eliminate dangerous conditions at the Ben White intersection for pedestrians and cyclists.

Public concerns about the 2030 Mobility Plan should be expressed to CAMPO's Transportation Policy Board during May and June. A proposed letter from BHNA to the Board to oppose any expansion will be considered at the June 22 BHNA meeting. The 2030 Mobility Plan is posted on CAMPO's website at http://www.campotexas.org/programs_plan_pubs.php.

New Feature: Neighborhood Spotlight

In looking forward (for the neighborhood plan), it is often helpful to look backward. Note the zoning dispute in this early BHNA newsletter. The last line is clearly the wisdom of the ages speaking to us!!

NEWSLETTER, BARTON HILLS-HORSESHOE BEND
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, OCT. 4, 1980

QUARTERLY MEETING

The 1980-81 Association year will begin with the fall quarterly meeting at Faith United Methodist Church, 2701 S. Lamar, on Monday, October 20, at 7:30 p.m. Faith Church is reached by turning left on Lamar at the light at Barton Skyway, driving past Manchaca Road, and taking the second church driveway to the right to Fellowship Hall, behind the church. It is only a five-minute drive from Barton Hills. The serving of refreshments will be followed by a business meeting, during which the election of officers for the coming year will be held. Our program will be on the Edward's Aquifer, that vast, underground pool deep in limestone caverns which furnishes a great deal of Central Texas' water as well as the crystal clear Barton Springs! A videotape on the subject will be presented by Janette Grainger of ACTV, Austin. We hope to have a good crowd to start off the year and enjoy the evening.

NEIGHBORHOOD ZONING CASE

The Association led the opposition to a proposed zoning change for the property located at 1240 Barton Hills Drive, in the same building as the 7-11 store, which would have allowed an arcade featuring pinball machines. The Executive Committee voted its opposition for the reasons (1) that the commercial zoning required is wholly inappropriate for a residential neighborhood, and (2) that the arcade would attract teenagers and be a disrupting influence on them. Already the 7-11 is a gathering place for young people who have created disturbances around the neighborhood. A canvass of the Barton Terrace addition was made to determine residential opinion, and a list of 67 families who oppose the arcade was compiled. One of our officers spoke in opposition at the zoning hearing, along with several other residents, on September 4, and the Planning Commission voted unanimously to deny the requested zoning. On October 3, the City Council upheld the recommendation of the Planning Commission. The outcome of this case demonstrated vividly how an organized neighborhood can determine its own residential character and see that it is maintained.

JULY MEETING AND SUPPER

About forty families enjoyed an evening at the Zilker Park Clubhouse on July 10, when the Association held its July meeting and covered dish supper. There were tables full of delicious food, and much socializing was done inside and outside, on the terrace, which was also great for dancing and running around by the kids.

JOIN THE ASSOCIATION

It is time to renew Association dues for the year October 1, 1980, to September 30, 1981. For only \$5.00, a family may join the Association and be a part of the many civic and social activities enjoyed by its members. We have been organized for only two years, but have grown to a membership of 122 families and have engaged in many and varied endeavors for the betterment of the neighborhood and the environment. Our objective is to seek to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood, and we have worked vigorously toward that goal, meantime meeting our neighbors and having a lot of fun. We would be happy to have you join us. You may do so by attending the meeting on October 20 or by sending the detached form below, filled out and including your check, to Mrs. Kirsten Sotebier, 2908 Cedarview, Austin, Texas 78704.

Please enroll our family as members of the Barton Hills-Horseshoe Bend Neighborhood Association. Enclosed is \$5.00 in dues for the year October 1, 1980, to September 30, 1981. (Please give first names of husband and wife and both home and office phone numbers.)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE NUMBERS _____

Survey Says: Members Express and Act on Concerns

The results of the 2004 BHNA survey are in and reveal a startling new concern. *There may no longer be a need for this annual survey!* It's not just that results are so similar to those of past surveys, though they are. Members are again most concerned about traffic, protecting and enhancing the beauty of our neighborhood (Greenbelt, Barton Creek, the beautiful trees), and safety. This year survey participants were asked to prioritize their concerns by listing their top three. This provided a wider range of responses. Complete survey results are on the BHNA website at <http://www.bhna.net>.

No, the survey may no longer be needed because BHNA members make their concerns and values so well known by both word and deed. This is seen on our BHNA listserv, in our correspondence and advocacy with city officials, at Greenbelt Guardian events, and at our many and various meetings and social gatherings. We are a very vocal and active community! The major concerns expressed this year correspond with long-standing BHNA initiatives and activities. While always alert for new challenges, we should also celebrate these efforts and ourselves. We are many extraordinary people who together make this a wonderful place to live.

The major concerns are presented below, along with corresponding initiatives and activities in italics. This celebrates and shares our vitality. It is also done with full confidence that we know this vitality takes and will continue to take a lot of hard work. So, if you see an activity you were unaware of that matches a concern of yours, **Take action and join! What a great way to celebrate the Fourth of July!**

Traffic

Members want to stop speeding traffic, especially on Barton Hills Drive and Barton Skyway, but are opposed to traffic calming devices such as "speed cushions." Comments: "Traffic calming devices such as roundabouts like on West Mary are a nuisance." "Some deterrent is needed to commuters who live south of the neighborhood from using Rae Dell as a cut through to avoid Lamar - it is a constant flow of cars, many who speed."

The Neighborhood Planning and Sidewalks Committees, as well as the upcoming City of Austin neighborhood planning process, address traffic issues. BHNA has also consistently advocated that city officials consider traffic issues in planning events at Zilker Park like the Austin City Limits concert and in making policy such as the new weekend parking fee at the south entrance of Barton Springs. See related article.

Greenbelt and Environmental Protection

Members deeply cherish the natural beauty of Barton Hills, Creek, and Springs. Strong requests were made for heightened law enforcement in the Greenbelt and comprehensive fire protection for our treasured trees and homes (our area is similar to where devastating fires were in California last summer). Comments: "We should mitigate detrimental impact of storm water runoff from Barton Hills Drive into Barton Creek." "Too much commercial encroachment on Greenbelt."

The Greenbelt Guardian is a leading community-based environmental preservation and beautification effort in a city known for such efforts. Last January, BHNA began an effective relationship with the City of Austin to research and remedy the

findings of dangerous chemicals in Barton Creek near Barton Springs. A Barton Springs committee has kept members informed and involved. Les Tull, COA Environmental Protection, will provide an update on the status of the Barton Creek remediation effort at the June 22 meeting. See related article.

Crime Prevention and Neighborhood Safety

This is once again a top priority. Comments: "What happened to the neighborhood watch program?" and "[We need] police surveillance of the neighborhood during the night - I have had three car break-ins taking new stereo equipment."

Officer Dawn Leonard, Austin Police Department, is our neighborhood liaison and is dedicated, accessible and responsive. She has addressed crime and safety concerns at both BHNA meetings this year. The listserv is one of the best ways to help the neighborhood be attentive to suspicious activity. Reports should be made to 911 if an emergency and otherwise to 311. We are reactivating the Neighborhood Watch, with the help of Officers Leonard and Rosie Salinas and the first meeting is forthcoming. See related article.

Sidewalks

This remains a topic of concern, with neighbors taking issue with not only the lack of sidewalks on many streets but also the poor condition of some existing sidewalks. Comments: "Fix broken curbs." "We should have sidewalks and safer driving near the school." "Improve walking safety with adequate sidewalks."

The Sidewalks Committee has done extensive research and work on this issue; this will likely be a concern in the neighborhood planning process. As part of the planning process, the COA offers \$20,000 that could be used for sidewalks. See related article.

Oak Wilt

This unfortunately is still a problem, and touches upon many community values such as our quality of life and the beauty of this area. Comments: "I believe the city is spreading oak wilt via tree trimming."

This is a current serious concern and a presentation from the Texas Forestry Service will be made at the June 22 meeting. See related article for background for this presentation.

Finally, by a two-to-one margin survey respondents preferred a paper edition of the newsletter to the alternatives of email or "both" methods.

If you would like to join one of these efforts or start another, please contact any executive committee member or committee chair. Contact information is at <http://www.BHNA.net>.

As said at the beginning of this year, we need to get out front of the COA neighborhood planning process and fully discuss and clarify the values and goals of our community. Expect many opportunities and a great variety of ways to join this discussion and act on these values. From this deliberative and informed discussion, we can create a shared vision that can guide the planning process. Otherwise it will be guided by the vision and values of others outside the community.

The Trouble with Oak Wilt in Barton Hills

This article provides background information to prepare for the discussion with the Texas Forestry Service at the June 22 BHNA meeting. We should discuss next steps at this meeting: posting the updated map on the website; sending alerts to people in a timely way for preventative treatment; door-to-door campaign with flyers to educate residents, especially new ones unfamiliar with this problem; organizing similar efforts to SRRC and joining forces with them. For more information, call the TFS/Lower Colorado River Authority's Oak Wilt Hotline at 512-473-3517 or visit the following websites: www.texasoakwilt.org and <http://texasforests.tamu.edu/forest/oakwilt/>

What is Oak Wilt?

According to the U.S. Forest Service, Oak Wilt is one of the most destructive tree diseases in the United States and is killing trees in central Texas at epidemic rates. Aside from the loss of these beautiful and cooling trees, the devastation of Oak Wilt can cause a 20 percent drop in property value. It is an infectious fungal disease, which invades and disables the water-conducting system in susceptible trees. While all oaks are susceptible to some degree, Red oaks, particularly Spanish oak, are extremely susceptible and may have a role in establishing new Oak Wilt infections. Red oaks often die within 3 to 4 weeks after showing initial symptoms. White oaks are resistant to the fungus and rarely die from Oak Wilt. Live oaks are intermediate in susceptibility but are most seriously affected due to their vast interconnected root systems that spread the fungus between adjacent trees.

How to Identify Oak Wilt

One easy way to tell if a tree has Oak Wilt is to look at any fallen leaves and examine the coloring on the leaf. If it is distinctly darker along the veins of the leaf, then that is a good indication of Oak Wilt. You can also get help identifying Oak Wilt from the TFS (see contact information below). Any professional private arborist should also be willing to come out to diagnose your tree and give a free estimate. Several members recommended Guy LeBlanc, a highly regarded arborist who cares for the trees at Umlauf Sculpture Garden, the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, and other arboreturns out-of-state.

Good Prevention Practices

In the case of Oak Wilt, it is absolutely true that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. **Paint all oak wounds including pruning cuts.** Throughout the year, immediately apply a thin coat of "pruning" paint to all fresh pruning wounds and other injuries that expose the inner bark or sapwood of oaks. This prevents contaminated sap beetles from infecting the wound with Oak Wilt spores. Also make sure all cutting tools are thoroughly cleaned before pruning.

Avoid wounding oaks during vulnerable seasons – generally from February through June. TFS advises that the best times for pruning of oaks are during the heat of summer (minimal spore production) or the cold of winter (minimal insect activity).

Treatment Options

There are currently three primary approaches used for Oak Wilt management in Texas. The first approach attempts to prevent new infections by removing Red oaks immediately and following proper prevention practices. The City of Austin has an ordinance that requires the removal of diseased Red oaks. Tree removal can cost up to \$800 to \$1,000.

The second involves injections of the fungicide "propiconazole" (Alamo™) into individual "high-value" trees that help reduce crown loss and may extend the life of the tree. These anti-fungal measures must be timed to meet the advance of the Oak Wilt. One arborist recommends that you should do the injections when Oak Wilt is 100 feet away from your trees. If not, you may lose the efficacy of the fungicide because Oak Wilt travels slowly. Members have had mixed success with this method, probably due to this difficulty of timing.

The third involves trenching to disrupt root connections responsible for spread of Oak Wilt. Exact location of the trenching will depend on several factors including symptom expression at time of trenching, landowner participation, utility layout, terrain, etc. While often done in the country, this is clearly a costly and challenging project in an urban setting.

History of Trenching Projects in Area

There have been several trenching projects in BHNA. One began in 1998 to address Oak Wilt at Rae Dell and Barton Skyway (another in 1994 was also on Rae Dell). Neighbors initially raised \$3,600 and received 50% matching funds from the state. The problem started in the mid-1990s when a tree became infected, probably due to a passing truck that wounded an overhanging limb. From that one tree, the disease marched downhill on both sides of the street at a pace of 80 to 100 feet a year. First neighbors spent thousands of dollars on unsuccessful trenching, then thousands more to treat surviving trees or remove the dead ones. At least 40 trees died.

According to one neighbor, "Apparently our terrain is so hilly and so rocky that we were not good candidates [for trenching]." The TFS, however, says that advancements in trenching have resulted in cuts into the soil being made 5 feet deep to more completely sever all the tree roots. Previous trenching projects, such as the two on Rae Dell, were only to a depth of 3 feet.

Currently, the TFS has designed a massive five-foot deep trenching project for the Travis Heights area for an estimated cost of \$200,000. The COA has a vested interest in the success of containing this Oak Wilt since its spread threatens significant high-value oaks around and in Stacy Park. However, due to budget constraints, the City discontinued its Oak Wilt Program in 2002, leaving very limited city resources. The TFS has tried to fill the gap by providing technical assistance and in some cases matching grants up to \$10,000.

South River City Citizens (SRCC - the neighborhood association for Travis Heights) has created the *Save Austin Oaks* organization to try to raise the funds for their project. Jim Rooney, TFS, said the Travis Heights campaign is ambitious but could succeed. There is a precedent — the Northwest Hills neighborhood faced a big trenching project several years ago. They put together a website, raised \$110,000 and were successful.

Tentative Conclusions

- Intensive education campaign is needed.
- Prevention is the best approach.
- The best use of scarce funds is to save the most valuable ancient trees and to "plant" for the future by diversifying.
- All efforts require considerable neighborly cooperation and concerted effort and funds.



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BHNA General Meeting

This Issue

Tues. June 22, 2004
St. Marks Episcopal Church

AGENDA
6:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Meet & Greet Social

Outside on Deck (cooled by fans!)

BBQ and Jambalaya
Green Mesquite

7:00 to 9:00
General Meeting

4th of July Parade and Celebration

Oak Wilt Presentation - Texas Forestry Service
Barton Creek Remediation
Ponds Update - COA

Barton Springs Parking Fee Issue –COA and PARD

Greenbelt Trails Project – Austin Action

Utilities Work in Barton Hills

Neighborhood Watch

Bike Lanes

Committee Reports:
Neighborhood Planning
Greenbelt Guardian

Austin City Limits Summer Concert: Lottery of Free Tickets!!

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

Fourth of July Parade
President's Message
Greenbelt Trails
Greenbelt Guardian
Barton Springs Parking
Bike Lanes
Neighborhood Watch
Neighborhood Planning
Utilities Work
Neighborhood Spotlight
Fire Ants!!
What Members Care About
Oak Wilt

BHNA
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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.