

July Meeting

When: 7:00 p.m.
Monday, July 7, 2008

Where: Hyde Park United
Methodist Church
4001 Speedway

Who: YOU and your neighbors

Note: HPNA general meetings usually take place on the first Monday of each month.

HPNA General Meeting Agenda for July 7th

- ♦ **Graffiti Abatement Program** - discussion
- ♦ **Preview: "View on Shipe Park"** homes, 4400 block of Avenue F

See you there!

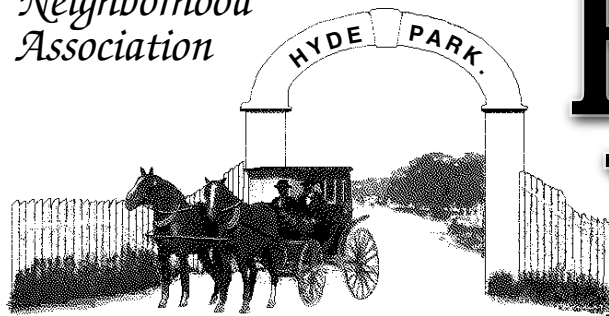
Note to Nature-Loving Neighbors: Take the Wildlife Habitat Challenge!

Austin has registered with the National Wildlife Federation as a Community Wildlife Habitat Program. The City of Austin is challenging Austin neighborhoods to certify the most number of yards within their boundaries as wildlife habitats. Participating neighborhoods will have a chance to win the challenge and help Austin earn points towards becoming certified as Texas' first National Wildlife Federation Community Wildlife Habitat.

The Parks and Recreation Department is sponsoring the challenge with the goal of educating and assisting Austinians in the creation of habitat to benefit its people, wildlife and biodiversity. Yards that provide food, water, cover, places to raise young for wildlife and practice sustainable gardening practices are eligible for NWF certification. Creating habitat is as simple as planting native plants that provide nectar, pollen, seeds, and berries year round, including a reliable water source such as a pond or birdbath, and providing

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*The Hyde Park
Neighborhood
Association*



Pecan Press

July, 2008 • National Register District Neighborhood • Vol. 34, No. 7

Schenken-Oatman House is Dedicated

When there's something that needs to be done and there's no legal entity and no organization to do it, all that's left is individual effort — and a group of committed Hyde Park individuals proved how powerful that can be. Their efforts came to fruition at the dedication of the Schenken-Oatman house on June 15th, Father's Day, 2008.

Restore Hyde Park LLC, eleven Hyde Parkers who united to purchase and restore the Schenken-Oatman house, presided over the recognition of the house as an Austin Historic Landmark. Joining them to celebrate the occasion were Representative Elliot Naishtat, HPNA President Elaine Meenehan, 2009 Homes Tour Chair Barbara Gibson, Heritage Society of Austin representative Lin Team, descendants of the original Schenken family and all the interested Hyde Parkers who came to view the restored house.

Elaine Meenehan began the ceremony by pointing out the need for neighborhood preservation. "Today, we are saving our historic structures one house at a time, and the Schenken-Oatman house is certainly a poster child for preservation. But what we really need if we are to be successful in this endeavor is a local historic district. In the 1970s, a lot of this neighborhood was in ruin. But a few forward-thinking residents were able to take back our neighborhood and turn it into what we see and love today. I would love for our legacy to be that we were forward-thinking enough to create a local historic district in order to preserve our historic houses for our future generations."

Elaine concluded by introducing Catherine Moore and Wanda Penn, managing partners of Restore Hyde Park LLC. Catherine recapitulated



Neighbors gather on the restored front porch of the Schenken-Oatman house. Photos by Lorre Weidlich. Photo essay on pages 12 & 13.

the history of the house and its restoration (see the article in the June, 2008 issue of the *Pecan Press* for a summary) and recounted her adventures tracking down the Schenken family. Her success began with a phone call to Cedar Park realtor Kathy Schenken and led to branches of the family across the United States and in Germany. Schenken family descendants had gathered from Dallas, Cedar Park, Oklahoma, and Oregon to participate in the house dedication.

Barbara Gibson spoke briefly about the inclusion of the house on past and future homes tours. Lin Team stood in for John Donisi, Heritage Society of Austin President, to salute both the Restore Hyde Park LLC partnership and the larger Hyde Park community for their preservation efforts. (See the complete text of

Continued on page 6

From the President's Desk:

City Asks Neighbors to Post Their Street Address in Alleys

In case any of you haven't noticed the temperatures outside, summer has settled in and it's not going anywhere any time soon. School is out and people are taking vacations. So it's not a huge surprise that we typically see an increase in crime during these months.

I recently received a letter from Shirley Gillespie with the City's Solid Waste Department. Shirley writes:

"Our collection crews that currently provide service from the alleys have a difficult time locating some of the addresses. I would like to ask if the homeowners could post their street numbers in the alleys so our crews could identify the customers easier. It would create better customer service for the homeowners and also provide

a safer working environment for our employees if they should get injured.

"Our crews are out during the day and have made many calls to the Austin Police Department of criminal or suspicious activities in the areas they are servicing; but without reporting the exact location, they are unable to provide good information, which results in a slower response time on those calls. With posted addresses in the alleys, our department will be able to better serve the needs of our customers more quickly and efficiently regarding missed stops and special service collections. Solid Waste Services strives to provide

the best service possible to all our customers so it is important for our collection crews to be able to quickly locate any addresses in the alleys."

Neighbors, putting our street numbers on the back of our houses or fences is a very easy and inexpensive way to increase our safety and allow the solid waste department to provide faster service to our homeowners. If you currently do not have your street number listed on the alley side of your property, please consider doing so soon.

— Elaine Meenehan
 HPNA President
 <elaine.meenehan@gmail.com>



Pecan Press

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The Local Historic District Corner

Writer's note: This column will appear regularly while the Local Historic District project is underway. If you have any questions or concerns about local historic districts that you would like addressed, please get in touch: <lweidich@mail2sevens.com> or 300-2228.

Sometimes, when I tell someone that I'm working to have Hyde Park declared a local historic district, the person responds, in a baffled tone of voice, "I thought Hyde Park was already a historic neighborhood." I realize, when this happens, how many meanings "historic neighborhood" or "historic district" can have. It's important to clarify some of them, because otherwise the need for becoming a local historic district won't be apparent.

Any area that includes a high percentage of vintage houses or has some kind of connection with an important historical figure can be referred to, in a casual or colloquial sense, as historical. However, that use of the word does not refer to any official recognition of the site by any sanctioning body. Both Hyde Park residents and Austin residents in general have always thought of Hyde Park as an historic neighborhood, long before it received any official recognition as such. Unfortunately, popular recognition of a site as historic offers it no protection. We've all heard of Sherwood Forest, but not a tree of it is still standing. Protection requires the force of law. In the United States, those laws exist on several levels — federal, state, and local.

On the federal level, both individual structures and districts can be recognized as historic. A federal historic area is designated as a National Register Historic District. Hyde Park achieved this status in August, 1990. Because of that status, every permit for demolition or building in Hyde Park is subject to a non-binding review by the City of Austin Historic Landmark Commission; tax credits exist for rehabilitating contributing structures; and there is some protection against federal projects that affect historic property (we can thank this provision for the fact that we do not have a cell tower on the periphery of the neighborhood).

States have a part in administering National Register Historic Districts, but they do not themselves designate state historic districts, only individual historic structures. Several houses in Hyde Park fall into that category, such as the Kopperl House at 43d and Ave. F, and the Williams-Weigl House at 4107 Ave. H. A State of Texas historical designation protects the interior of a structure as well as its exterior.

This brings us to the local or city level. Most cities in the United States provide official recognition for both historic areas and individual historic structures. Austin lags behind the rest of the country in its historic preservation efforts. Individual structures have been eligible for local historic landmark designation for some time (and there are many in Hyde Park, the newest being the Schenken-Oatman house), but a provision for the designation of historic districts is recent. Since it was enacted, about a dozen neighborhoods in Austin have been working toward that goal, and one — Harthan Street — has achieved it.

Given that Hyde Park is already recognized popularly as historic, and is already designated as historic by the federal government, why is it important for Hyde Park to become a local historic district? The answer is that only the local historic district designation provides protection

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Take the Habitat Challenge...

...cont'd from page 1

places for cover and rearing young by planting evergreen shrubs, leaving brush and rock piles or putting up a bird-house.

The Neighborhood Challenge began May 1st and ends October 31st, 2008. The top three neighborhoods that have met all the challenge criteria and certified the most number of habitats will be awarded 1st, 2nd and 3rd place prizes. Neighborhoods that take the challenge must also organize a community invasive plant removal and promote gardening for wildlife through neighborhood newsletters and websites in addition to certifying the highest number of yards as habitats during the contest period.

This is right up Hyde Park's alley. Our neighborhood is concerned about the environment, is community oriented, and always rises to the challenge. Many of you may already provide for wildlife habitat. All you need to do is get certified by going to the National Wildlife Federation website and click on Community Wildlife Habitat. There is a simple survey which takes less than 10 minutes. The 10 bonus points are earned when you pay \$15 to certify your yard as a wildlife habitat. This fee helps support the NWF and its goals of creating a place where people, flora and fauna can all flourish.

Why should you create a NWF certified wildlife habitat? It's fun watching wildlife in action. Replacing grass lawns with native wildflowers, shrubs and trees will increase the beauty of your property, decrease water needs and maintenance and will provide a nurturing refuge for wildlife. Sustainable gardening practices, like reducing chemicals, conserving energy and water, and composting also help to improve air, water and soil quality. Gardening for wildlife helps to build community by sharing your love of wildlife and the environment with your neighbors. Most of all, it's the right thing to do!

Residents can certify their yards by visiting the National Wildlife Federation's website, <http://www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife/> or can request a pre-paid habitat certification application from the Wildlife Austin program: 327-8181 x29.

— Carol Welder

Crime Report

HPNA Crime and Safety Chair Carol Welder is Hoff this month, but wants to wish everyone a happy, safe and crime-free summer, and to remind folks that our APD representative is Officer AJ Rodriguez - 974-4527 <armando.rodriguez@ci.austin.tx.us>. Thanks to Carol and Officer Rodriguez for all their efforts!

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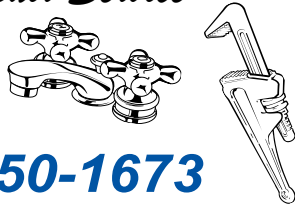


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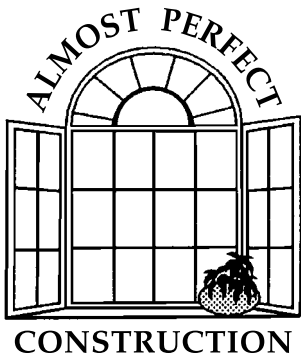
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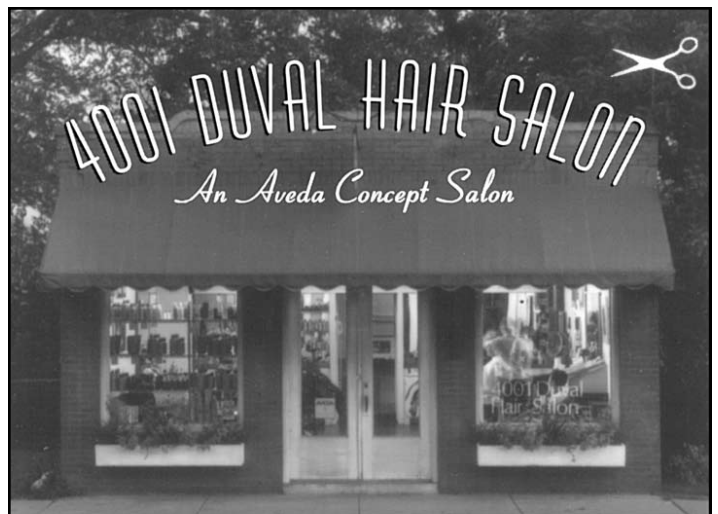


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Local Historic District Corner...

...cont'd from page 3

for the entire neighborhood, not just the individual land-marked houses. It does this by preventing demolitions and adopting building guidelines designed to ensure that changes and new structures fit in with the look and feel of the existing neighborhood.

So, for anyone who wonders why we need this additional historic designation in Hyde Park, the answer is simple: so that we can keep it looking and feeling historic.

An update: The Design Guidelines Subcommittee anticipates completing its first draft by the end of July. After a presentation to the Development Review Committee and the Steering Committee in August, there will be a Local Historic District Workshop for the neighborhood in September. Watch this column and the listserv for more details closer to the date of the workshop.

— Lorre Weidlich, LHD Chair

Shenken-Oatman Dedication...

...cont'd from page 1

Mr. Donisi's letter on page 10 of this issue). The ceremony culminated in the dedication of the new City of Austin Historic Landmark plaque by Texas House Member Elliott Naishtat, and Catherine finished up by inviting bids on the house.

Within the house, neighbors viewed the new rear addition, the 1912 bathtub, the back porch and not-yet-landscaped back yard, before and in-progress photos of the restoration, and the pair of knickerbockers discovered during the initial exploration of the house. Hyde Parkers and members of the Schenken family were invited to sign the upper walls in the front foyer; the walls will be sealed, covered with wallpaper, and left for future inhabitants of the house to discover, in the hope that those inhabitants will also appreciate the historic nature of Hyde Park.

— Lorre Weidlich

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Shipe Pool Reopens!



Fill 'er Up: Come on in, the Water's Fine! Photo by Lorre Weidlich

On the afternoon of June 21, neighbors held a festive picnic to celebrate the reopening of Shipe Pool - and as these pictures suggest, a good time was had by all! Many thanks to event co-sponsors Grande Communications and Friends of Shipe Pool, to HPNA Shipe Committee Chair Mark Fishman, and to all the other neighbors who helped to make the celebration such a success.



Meat and Greet: Neighbors Gather 'Round the Grill



On the Fence: Banner Day for Event Cosponsors

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Letters Dept.

Heritage Society Salutes Hyde Parkers

Dear Neighbors,

The Heritage Society of Austin salutes the partners of Restore Hyde Park LLC on their day of celebration in restoring the historic Schenken-Oatman House.

The dedication of the City of Austin Landmark marker is an occasion for paying tribute to the years of dedication by Hyde Park residents who have made their neighborhood a model of preservation for the entire city. Countless hours by hundreds of neighbors have been invested in rescuing and restoring Hyde Park houses that are a remnant of Austin's history. Since the 1970's, Hyde Park has been in the forefront of the historic preservation movement in Austin. Those efforts included:

- Rescuing some of Monroe Shipe's Victorian keystone houses and fighting to have them designated among the first historic landmarks in Austin's historic preservation program
- Saving the Austin fire station from removal and keeping its historic presence to protect the neighborhood
- Raising and contributing funds to assist the Elizabeth Ney Museum in its preservation mission
- Becoming one of the city's first National Register Districts, a national designation that brings with it both recognition and potential resources for preservation
- Achieving a Neighborhood Conservation Combining District ordinance, a labor-intensive project that took years to accomplish, then encompassing North Hyde Park as well, with legal protections that have prevented the erosion of your neighborhood character
- Conducting years of historic homes tours for which you have opened your homes and invited the city in to see your wonderful old homes and the quality of life in this intimate, tree-shaded neighborhood
- Preparing to enact a Local Historic District that will bring further protections from demolitions and inappropriate infill development

The efforts of many, many Hyde Park neighbors are reflected in these accomplishments, but today we especially recognize and congratulate the partners of Restoration Hyde Park for the depth of their personal investment in preservation. They have put their money where their values are, not for personal gain, but as an act of faith in the future of their neighborhood.

In the struggle to preserve the history and character of our city, the Heritage Society of Austin is proud to know these individuals and the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association who share our commitments and with whom we anticipate a continuing partnership for preservation in the years to come.

— John Donisi, President.

Restore Hyde Park LLC Partners:

Anonymous
Nick Barbaro
Deaton Bednar
Carolyn Grimes
Peter Maxson
Carolyn McFarland
Terri Myers
Susan Moffat
Catherine Moore
John Paul Moore
Wanda Penn
Jack Taylor

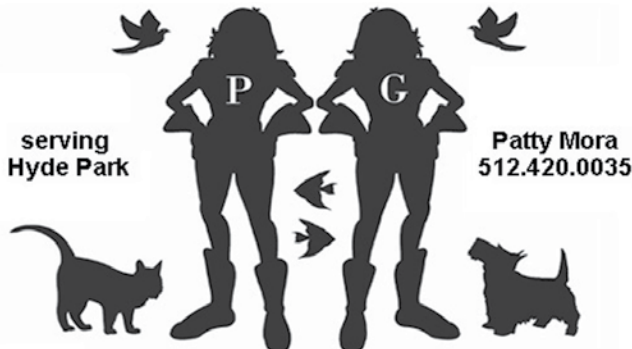
Our congratulations and thanks to them all!



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The Schenken-Oatman House Dedication



HPNA President Elaine Meenehan welcomes neighbors while the Georges listen



Schenken family member Ken Voet looks on while Elliott Naishtat dedicates the Historical Landmark plaque



Restore Hyde Park LLC managing partners Wanda Penn and Catherine Moore

Hyde Parkers gather on the porch



Lin Team reads letter from the Heritage Society of Austin



1912 Bathtub





The new back porch looks onto the back yard



Schenken family descendants

Karen McGraw and architect Steve Franke in the kitchen



Photo essay by Lorre Weidlich



Schenken signatures on the foyer wall



Susan Moffat (wo)mans the refreshment table

Neighbors Lin Team, Denise Girard, and Deaton Bednar explore the front room

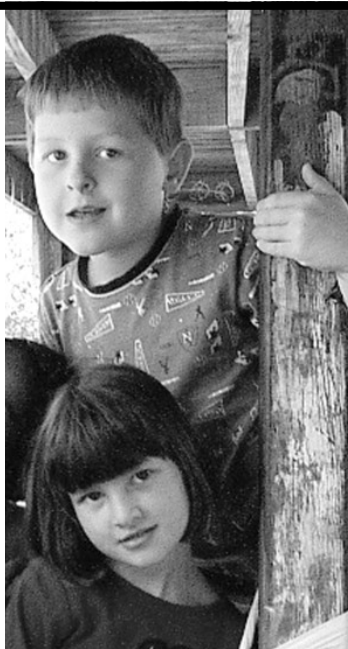


2009 Homes Tour Chair Barbara Gibson addresses the celebrants



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Last Stop Café

All the shadows of him that walk, slumped and listing over his hard-life history, puddled at noon, made space at his Dolce Vita table. A cuppa whispered to his urn, purple, marbled like the mountains where he'll wander soon. Coffee asked for one more poem. Huff's lyrical brilliance, burned to ash, held there, echoing stronger than death. His cadence interrupted the coffee's steam: Last Stop Café on Duval, coffee and the bus stop, no bus fare for the library, no job there now. Waiting, a crop of students, young women, no wild men today. I'll find my share of fire maidens in Santa Fe, but the Last Stop Café not the worst place a dead poet might wait.

— Nancy Taylor Day
4.29.2008

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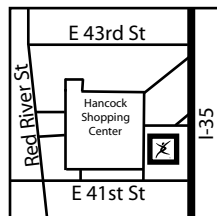
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Around & About the Avenues

⇒ **Good Neighbors Dept.:** Featured prominently, and justifiably so, in this issue is the Restore Hyde Park LLC -- the stalwart group of neighbors who banded together several years ago to save the Schenken-Oatman house on W. 41st, and who celebrated the successful culmination of their efforts at an official dedication ceremony on June 15. Their motives had very little to do with either profit or ego, and a great deal to do with immense respect and regard for our Hyde Park heritage. They could be aptly characterized as "unsung heroes" -- but in this case, we believe that a least a little laudatory singing would be entirely justified!



⇒ **Not-so-Good Citizens Dept.:** Also in this issue is Catherine Moore's report on the turnout (or lack thereof) of voters in Hyde Park's Precincts 136 (Ridgetop School, voters north of 45th) and 275 (Baker School, voters south of 45th) in the recent City Council runoff election between Laura Morrison and Cid Galindo. We could've done worse, in that turnout in Hyde Park precincts was @ 2% higher than the citywide turnout of approximately 5%. However, 5% ain't that lofty a target, and we didn't come anywhere near the @15% turnout of our friends up north in Allandale. So c'mon, neighbors; next time there's an election, think about it: We can do better, and we need to do better!



⇒ **Good Neighborhood Dept.:** Hyde Parkers who attend UT probably already know that the June 18th issue of The Daily Texan included a feature article by Trevor Boehm entitled, "Preservation of Hyde Park's History"; but for some of you older non-UT matriculants to whom all of this may be news, we'd like to share an excerpt from Mr. Boehm's piece:

"A few years back, I dated a girl who lived in a tiny two-room bungalow from the 1920s off Avenue D in Hyde Park. Sitting on the front porch on a cool autumn afternoon, or watching the fireflies in the early evening, it was easy to be swept back in time. I imagined gravel roads in front of me, the open spaces of fields dotted by live oaks, and the sounds of a phonograph riding lazily on the wind. You could feel it in the ground. This place has history....Sitting in front of Avenue B Grocery on a summer afternoon, with a cold root beer and a BLT in hand, it is not hard to believe that it is a history worth saving."

Indeed!

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Minutes of the June 2008 HPNA General Meeting

The June 2, 2008 HPNA Meeting was called to order by President Elaine Meenehan at 7 p.m.

The first item on the agenda was an announcement by Catherine Moore reminding the group to vote in the **June 14 Run-off Election** for City Council. Catherine stressed the importance of a good voter turnout at Hyde Park precincts in local elections.

Next was an announcement of the dedication of the **Schenken-Oatman House** to take place on Sunday, June 15. The house is located at 311 West 41st Street.

The next item was a presentation by Sergeant Mike Turner of the Austin Police Department **Crisis Intervention Team** (CIT) and Hyde Park Resident Judge Nancy Hohengarten, who is on the Travis County Crisis Intervention Team. These teams are trained to work with mentally ill persons in crisis situations when the person is a threat to himself or others. The two crisis teams are housed together and work together. In addition to Sgt. Turner there are six Crisis Intervention Officers on the City of Austin team and there are nine deputies on the Travis County team. APD also has 166 officers trained and certified as crisis intervention officers who do CIT work in addition to their patrol duties. A discussion period followed the presentation and provided more information about how the teams function.

Carmen Llanes then told the group about the **Neighborhood Habitat Challenge**. This program encourages citizens to provide food, water, and places for wildlife to raise their young in an area. It may be as simple as planting native plants that provide nectar, pollen, seeds, and berries and/or a reliable water source for creatures. Details on how you may participate in the program are available at www.keepaustinwild.com. (Also see related article on page one of this issue.)

Elaine called attention to the **16th Annual Flag Day Celebration & Parade** to be held on Saturday, June 14 at noon at the corner of Fairfield Lane and Eilers Avenue. Flyers with more details about the event organized by Jim Ellinger were also available.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

– Celeste Cromack, HPNA Co-Secretary
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Hyde Park Poets —

Anticipation

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a new world war,
a cracked engine block,
or a death in my family.
I believe I will reach the beach
under a law of averages,
and whether I do or not,
the mathematics never interferes
with sweet anticipation.
I underline here only one fact,
present and unalterable,
that in this moment
at this desk
without sand under my feet
and without the sound of surf
washing away my anxieties
I am happy.

— Robert Elzy Cogswell
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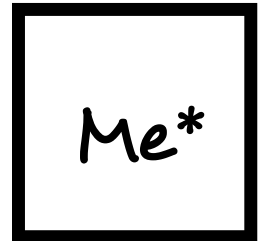
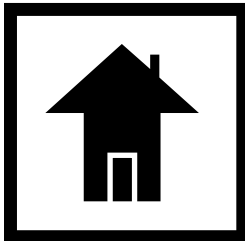
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Hyde Park Votes (Sort of)

This year the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association sponsored a get-out-the-vote drive, urging all neighbors to vote, especially in the City of Austin and AISD bond elections which so directly affect our quality of life. The message went out on the list serves, in this publication, at meetings and on "Hyde Park Votes!" bumper stickers. HPNA thanks all the neighbors who turned out and made their opinions known in both the May general election and the June 15 runoff.

Hyde Park precincts bested by about 2 % the average Austin voter turnout in the June 15 City Council Place 4 runoff election. Citywide, newly sworn-in Councilmember Laura Morrison defeated Cid Galindo, garnering of 13,831 votes (65.20%) to Galindo's 7,381 (34.80%). Only 21,646 (4.99%) of Austin's 433,807 registered voters cast ballots. In the May general election, 8.45% of those registered in Austin voted. In the general election Hyde Park precincts turned out at about an average 1.5% more than the citywide average.

The two precincts in Hyde Park exceeded the city-wide turnout by about 2% and voted for Morrison over Galindo approximately 85% to 15%.

The final results for Hyde Park precincts are:

Precinct 136 (Ridgetop School, north of 45th Street)
Total Registered Voters: **4,879** Total Votes: **323**
Voter Turnout: **6.62%**

Results:	Morrison	273 votes	84.52%
	Galindo	50 votes	15.48%

Precinct 275 (Baker School, south of 45th Street)
Total Registered Voters: **3,507** Total Votes: **245**
Voter Turnout: **6.99%**

Results:	Morrison	213 votes	87.30%
	Galindo	31 votes	12.70%

Clearly, a very small number of Austin citizens were involved in choosing one of the most influential policy makers for our community. Likewise, a small but hearty band of Hyde Parkers had great influence in choosing our new city councilmember. One neighbor recently observed that the combined number of registered voters in our two precincts, 8,386, could give us the ability to swing a city election, if we all turned out.

The right to vote is powerful only when it is used. In this election, our two Hyde Park precincts provided 2.6% of all the votes cast. In contrast, Allandale neighbor John Keohane reports that the two Allandale precincts, Precincts 236 and 239 in the areas north and south of R.M. 2222, turned out at an average rate of almost 15%. The Allandale precincts' votes totaled 748 or 3.45% of the city-wide vote. Allandale voters preferred Morrison over Galindo at an average rate of 75% to 25%.

With a little more help from our (currently) non-voting neighbors, Hyde Park could vote at the same rate as Allandale or even at a higher rate. We are a literate, involved, informed and opinionated group. What stops us from bringing those qualities to the voting booth?

— Catherine Moore



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Address: **708 Harris Avenue**

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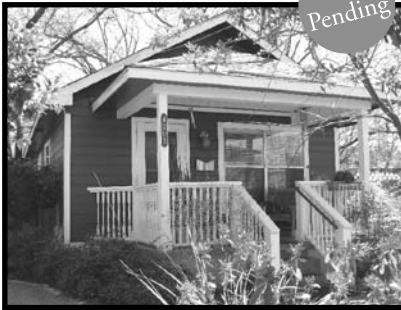
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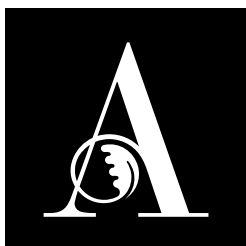


606 West 31½ Street

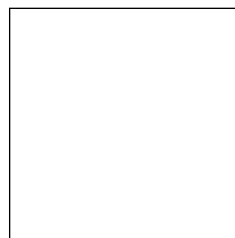
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